



Eastern Carolina Council

Minutes

Executive Committee Meeting

6:30 p.m. - Thursday, July 11, 2024

Third Floor Conference Room

233 Middle Street, New Bern, NC

Executive Committee in Attendance:

Jay Bender, Caucus Rep., Jones County (Pollocksville)
Roland Best, Lenoir County Commissioner
Kyle DeHaven, County Manager Caucus Rep., via Zoom (Greene County)
Cindy Edwards, City of Jacksonville
Bennie Heath, Greene County Commissioner
Chadwick Howard, Craven County Commissioner
Karen Lewis, City of Havelock
Mark Price, Onslow County Commissioner
Ed Riggs Jr, President (Pamlico County Commissioner)
Bill Taylor, Treasurer (Town of Morehead City)
Shane Turney, Caucus Rep., Craven County (Town of Trent Woods)
Danny Wooten, Caucus Rep., Pamlico County

General Membership Board in Attendance:

Clark Edwards, Town of Pine Knoll Shores
Barbara Jones, Town of Cove City
Linda Marshall, Town of Alliance
John O'Daniel, Town of Atlantic Beach, via Zoom
Charles "Twig" Rollins, Town of Magnolia

ECC Staff in Attendance:

David Bone, Executive Director
Melinda McGuire, Assistant Executive Director/Finance Director
Kim Baker, Finance Specialist
David Rosado, Human Services Manager – AAA

Guests in Attendance:

Knox Proctor, Attorney, Ward & Smith
Mayor Don Hardy, Kinston
Chris Suggs, Kinston

1. **Welcome, Invocation, and Call to Order** – Ed Riggs, Jr., President, called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. President Riggs welcomed everyone. Commissioner Heath provided the invocation.

2. **Adoption of Agenda** – President Riggs asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. *Commissioner Heath motioned to adopt the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Best; the motion was approved unanimously.*

3. **Consent Agenda** – *Ed Riggs, Jr., President*

- a. **Minutes – Executive Committee Meeting – May 9, 2024**
- b. **Economic Development Update – funded through E.D.A. Partnership Planning and Southeast Crescent Regional Commission**
- c. **Human Services / Area Agency on Aging Update**
- d. **Community Planning/Technical Assistance Update**
- e. **Transportation Update**

President Ed Riggs asked if there were any questions about the consent agenda or any items for discussion. *Commissioner Mark Price motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Council Member Cindy Edwards; the motion was approved unanimously.*

4. **Budget & Audit Committee Report**

- a. **Check Register**
- b. **Financial Statements**
- c. **FY2022-23 Audit Contract**
- d. **Budget Amendment #1**
- e. **Committee Information & Recommendations**

Treasurer Bill Taylor stated the Budget and Audit Committee met. He stated they reviewed some important items that he would like Assistant Executive Director / Finance Director Melinda McGuire to share info about with the board. Ms. McGuire referenced checks to Toyota of New Bern on page four of the check register. She stated that ECC is purchasing four vehicles from Toyota of New Bern for the Aging Staff. ECC wrote a proposal to the Division of Aging requesting to purchase the vehicles because the purchase cost was over \$5000. It was noted that the request was approved, and this purchase would help with travel costs and be an efficient use of the funds for Aging. Ms. McGuire went on to give an explanation about three checks written to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). She stated that ECC did payroll for the Re-Entry Council back in 2019. The taxes were withheld by ECC but not paid to the IRS. The re-entry council sent ECC information they received from the IRS showing the taxes were not paid. ECC received notification that during the same period in 2019, the taxes for ECC were not paid to the IRS as well. Melinda stated that all of these have now been paid to the IRS.

Treasurer Bill Taylor spoke about the RFP that was sent out for the FY2022-23 audit. Mr. Taylor asked Executive Director David Bone to give an update on the RFP. Mr. Bone gave a brief overview of the RFP proposal and the selection process. This information is included in the agenda packet for review. Mr. Bone stated that based on review of the proposals of the RFP responses received, staff recommends the selection of Thompson, Price, Scott, & Adams as ECC's auditor for the FY2022-23 fiscal year. Ms. McGuire stated they had just received a copy of the audit contract and would be reviewing everything.

President Ed Riggs asked if there was a motion to accept/approve this audit firm, subject to review of the audit contract by the attorney. *Council Member Cindy Edwards motioned to approve the audit firm, seconded by Mayor Jay Bender; the motion was approved unanimously.*

Treasurer Bill Taylor spoke about Budget Amendment #1 that is needed for grants. He asked Melinda McGuire to comment on the budget amendment. Ms. McGuire stated that the first grant is the EDA Partnership Planning Grant. ECC has received this grant for several years and it is a three-year grant. She stated it is typically received in January, but it was late this year due to software issues. ECC is only asking for the budget amendment for \$100,000.00 for this year. Ms. McGuire also spoke about the \$22,248.00 Aging Grant. She stated it is for Ombudsmen programming and is a one-time only grant. *Mayor Jay Bender motioned to approve Budget Amendment #1, seconded by Commissioner Best; the motion was approved unanimously.*

- 5. Acceptance of the City of Kinston as a New Member** – President Riggs welcomed Kinston as a new member. Mayor Bendor stated the board still needed to motion to accept Kinston as a member. *Mayor Bender made a motion to accept and receive the City of Kinston as a member, seconded by Commissioner Heath; the motion was approved unanimously.*

Kinston Mayor Don Hardy spoke up to say thank you to the board for welcoming Kinston, and he looked forward to working with everyone.

- 6. Executive Director's Report** – The following are some highlights of Executive Director David Bone's report:

- ECC wants to welcome our newest member – Kinston!
- NCARCOG and ECC Disaster Recovery Training Materials are available on ECC's website to continue providing this information for the benefit of our member governments.
- Regional Digital Inclusion Plan – ECC is partnering with North Carolina State University's Institute for Emerging Issues and the NCSU Friday Institute on a Regional Digital Inclusion Plan Initiative. Funding for this project is coming through a grant from the NC Department of Information Technology. We plan to have two kick-off events in mid-August to include:
 - Duplin, Greene, Lenoir, and Wayne counties
 - Carteret, Craven, Jones, Onslow, and Pamlico counties
- Digital Navigator Program (Aging) – As communicated last month, ECC is receiving funding from the North Carolina Division of Aging to support the role of a Digital Navigator, their equipment, and their travel for the region. The notice of grant award (NGA) has not been received but is expected any day. This will provide funding for one position for one year. Digital Navigators provide individualized or small group assistance and guidance to older adults who need affordable home internet service, affordable internet-capable devices, and/or coaching in introductory digital skills in order to become effective home internet users and be able to participate online fully.
- ECC City-County Managers / Mayors Meeting will be held Wednesday, July 31, 10:30 am, at the ECC offices.
- ECC will host the NC Association of Regional Councils of Government (NCARCOG) Board Meeting on September 5-6, at the ECC offices.

7. Member Comments

Mayor Don Hardy spoke up to say he was in favor of the Digital Navigator program. He asked about the one person to be hired and when this would be available. Executive Director Bone stated we are accepting applications and would be getting someone hired soon. We only have funding for one year, but we plan to seek funds to keep this position on longer, if possible.

Clark Edwards spoke up to say he was asked to bring up two points of concern to the board. He mentioned a Ride Post or Ride Service and asked is someone providing this. He also spoke about the problem that short-term rentals are causing in his community. He stated Pine Knoll Shores is seeking suggestions for these issues.

8. Closed Session pursuant to NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a)(6) – Personnel – President Riggs asked for a motion to go to closed session. *A motion was made by Council Member Cindy Edwards; seconded by Mayor Bender; the motion was unanimous.*

The board came out of closed session and the regular session resumed at 8:11 p.m. *On a motion made by Mayor Bender, seconded by Treasurer Bill Taylor, the executive committee voted unanimously to grant a salary increase for the executive director by a budgeted 5% rounded to the next \$1,000 to \$147,000, effective July 1, 2024. President Riggs also stated the motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Mark Price and the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.*

9. Adjournment – *A motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Bender; seconded by Council Member Cindy Edwards; the motion was unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted,



Ed Riggs Jr., President



David Bone, Executive Director