



Eastern Carolina Council

Minutes

General Membership Board Meeting

6:30 p.m. - Thursday, November 14, 2024

Third Floor Conference Room

233 Middle Street, New Bern, NC

Executive Committee in Attendance:

Jay Bender, Caucus Rep., Jones County (Mayor of Pollocksville)
Roland Best, Lenoir County Commissioner
Cindy Edwards, City of Jacksonville
Bevan Foster, Wayne County Commissioner-via Zoom
Ed Riggs Jr, President (Pamlico County Commissioner)
Chris Suggs, City of Kinston, via Zoom
Bill Taylor, Treasurer (Town of Morehead City)
Shane Turney, Caucus Rep., Craven County (Town of Trent Woods)
Billy Ward, Caucus Rep-, Duplin County
Lorraine Washington, 2nd Vice President (Caucus rep-, Greene County)

General Membership Board in Attendance:

John O'Daniel, Town of Atlantic Beach, via Zoom
Courtney Barnhill, Town of Cape Carteret, via Zoom
Ryan Kelley, Town of Indian Beach
Clark Edwards, Town of Pine Knoll Shores
Barbara Jones, Town of Cove City
Randy Mitchell, Town of Dover
Pam Hall, Town of Holly Ridge
Trudy Solomon, Town of Surf City
Linda Marshall, Town of Alliance
Evelyn Paul, Town of Grantsboro, via Zoom
Allen Price, Town of Oriental, via Zoom
Sandra Snipes, Town of Vandemere
Wayne Jackson, Town of Fremont
Danny Keel, Town of Mount Olive, via Zoom

ECC Staff in Attendance:

David Bone, Executive Director
Heather O'Connor, Deputy Finance Director
Kim Baker, Finance Specialist
Larry Faison, Planning Director
Mickey Anderson, Senior Transportation Planner

Sara Deskar, Community Planner
David Rosado, AAA Director
Susan Wolf, Administrative Assistant

Guests in Attendance:

Knox Proctor, Attorney, Ward & Smith
Oscar Mooring, Town of Fremont
Jonathan Allen, Town of Fremont, via Zoom

1. **Welcome, Invocation, and Call to Order** – Ed Riggs, Jr., President, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. President Riggs welcomed everyone. 2nd Vice President, Lorraine Washington provided the invocation.
2. **Adoption of Agenda** – President Riggs asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. *Council Member Cindy Edwards motioned to adopt the agenda, seconded by 2nd Vice President Lorraine Washington; the motion was approved unanimously.*
3. **Consent Agenda** – *Ed Riggs, Jr., President*
 - a. **Minutes – General Membership Board Meeting – June 13, 2024**
 - b. **Economic Development Update – funded through E.D.A. Partnership Planning and Southeast Crescent Regional Commission**
 - c. **Area Agency on Aging Update**
 - d. **Community Planning/Technical Assistance Update**
 - e. **Transportation Update**

President Ed Riggs then asked if there were any questions about the consent agenda or any items for discussion. *Commissioner Shane Turney motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mayor Jay Bender; the motion was approved unanimously.*

4. **Budget & Audit Committee Report**
 - a. **Check Register**
 - b. **Financial Statements**
 - c. **Committee Information & Recommendations**

Treasurer Bill Taylor stated that the Budget & Audit Committee held a brief session this evening and were able to review the check register and financial statements. He referred any questions to Deputy Finance Director Heather O'Connor. Council Member Cindy Edwards inquired about the Handyman Services for \$2,383.07; Deputy Finance Director O'Connor replied that the transaction paid for services through end of August 2024.

5. **Presentations about the ECC AAA ARPA and Choosing Home Programs** – *David Rosado, AAA Director*

AAA Director David Rosado provided a presentation about the ARPA and Choosing Home programs' available funding. The Administration on Community Living (ACL) and the North Carolina Division of Aging (NCDOA) are the oversight entities for the allocation

and distribution of all American Rescue Act Plan Act (ARPA) 2021 funding. The NCDOA was approved for an extension by ACL through September 2025 for the following funding sources: Title III-B Supportive Services, Title III-C Congregate Nutrition, Title III-D Health Promotion Programs, and the Title III-E Family Caregiver Support Program.

ECC-AAA is offering the opportunity for community-based service providers serving older adults as well as their caregivers to submit a Request For Funding (RFF) for projects. Also available is a Request For Funding (RFF), made possible through the State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF), for a program called Choosing Home, which is an extension of the Housing and Home Improvement Program that is intended to help reduce and/or prevent homelessness amongst older adults. All RFFs are due to ECC-AAA by no later than 5pm on November 29, 2024.

AAA Director Rosado also announced that November is National Family Caregivers & National Alzheimer's Awareness Month, and that Open Enrollment for Medicare is available through December 7th, 2024.

6. Presentations about the ECC's Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program and Update on the NCDOT State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) - Planning Director Larry Faison, Community Planner Sara Deskar, and Senior Transportation Planner Mickey Anderson

Planning Director Larry Faison introduced Senior Transportation Planner Mickey Anderson for an update on the NCDOT STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program). Mickey Anderson explained the SPOT 7.0 (The Strategic Prioritization Process) is the methodology that NCDOT uses to develop the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) which is updated every 2 years. The prioritization process was created to ensure input from local officials and the public in the transportation planning process.

ECC hosts two RPOs, the *Eastern Carolina RPO (ECRPO)* and *Down East RPO (DERPO)* and through their respective Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) advanced project lists for Prioritization (P) 7.0 this past October. Mr. Anderson then stressed the importance of continuing to apply for grants/funding for projects to get attention to your community needs or to contact him directly at ECC for assistance.

Jay Bender mentioned that NCDOT Secretary Joey Hopkins stated the State would need \$5 billion for highway repairs due to Hurricane Helene, which will impact the funding availability for other projects.

Mr. Anderson spoke about the efforts of RPO and MPO Planners east of I-95 to evaluate why proposed projects in our region are not getting NCDOT funding.

Planning Director Larry Faison next introduced Sara Deskar, Community Planner, for a presentation on ECC's Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program. Sara Deskar stated this is a FEMA program that has provided funding through NC Emergency Management (NCEM) to four Councils of Government in eastern North Carolina. ECC's portion of the

project involves Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Onslow, Pamlico, and Wayne counties. These counties were identified by the State as having the highest concentration of properties insured by the National Flood Insurance Program with repetitive flood damage.

This FMA program, which is dependent upon a property's categorization of either severe repetitive loss or repetitive loss (as determined by FEMA), can fund residential buyouts or elevate residential structures, determine jurisdiction participation rates, property owner engagement to determine individual interest, and property data collection to build a jurisdiction's application. Jurisdictions must express their intent to submit an Application via Letter of Interest (LOI) by the NCEM extended date of December 1st, 2024, and submit Applications in February 2025.

Next, Ms. Deskar explained FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), stating that there is no application deadlines set at this time. HMGP participation and eligibility criteria differ from FMA in a few notable areas:

- No cost-share for homeowners.
- Uninsured structures are eligible.
- Can opt-in, allowing the State to manage the grant and pay for contract work.

ECC will be offering assistance to interested towns, cities, or counties regarding the HMGP application process. Information on timeframes for this grant, as well as specifics about management of it, will be forthcoming.

7. Annual Update for 2023-27 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan – David Bone, Executive Director

The 2023-27 CEDS was approved by a resolution of this Board on January 12, 2023. The 2023-27 CEDS is available online at <https://eccog.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CEDS-ECC-FINAL-DRAFT-22.12.30.pdf>.

In addition to the 5-year major updates, an annual update is also required. This annual update is due by December 1, 2024. ECC sought feedback from Economic Developers, Planners, and Industry, Education, and Workforce Development professionals for this annual update. ECC also sought feedback from its Executive Committee.

ECC developed a strategic Partnership with the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), which is a non-profit, membership organization serving economic developers. IEDC assisted the ECC region achieve economic resilience through the development of three strategies that are incorporated into our 2023-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) regional plan, including:

- Regional Military Retention Strategies/Action Plan
- Workforce Housing Strategies
- Talent Attraction and Retention Strategies

ECC received recommendations / reports from each of these efforts.

Executive Director David Bone presented the 2024 Annual Update to the 2023-27 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan highlighting the Four Priorities:

- Priority Area 1-Cultivate and champion regional collaboration and partnership.
- Priority Area 2-Develop critical infrastructure to grow economic opportunities and support disaster resiliency.
- Priority Area 3-Grow and support skilled workforce and enhance educational attainment.
- Priority Area 4-Create healthy and connected communities and improve quality of life.

With this annual update, the priority areas remain the same. The consistent themes provided in the feedback received included:

- Developing skilled employees
- Supporting / increasing affordable housing opportunities
- Maximizing the impact of military-related assets
- Expanding regional partnerships

Based on the feedback received, the various implementation strategies were amended. The annual update is available online at <https://eccog.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CEDS-ECC-2024-Annual-Update-24.11.14.pdf>.

Council Member Cindy Edwards motioned to approve the Resolution to Approve the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2024 Annual Update as presented, seconded by Commissioner Shane Turney; the motion was approved unanimously.

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

- Welcomed New General Membership Board Members and offered New Board Members Orientation meetings.
- ECC is assisting Magnolia with its Town Manager search. Interviews were held last week. Another community has expressed interest in this service, for which a proposal has been submitted.
- I facilitated a retreat for the Town of Fremont on October 29th and another community has expressed interest in retreat facilitation.
- Wayne County had a "Leadership Wayne" program for up-and-coming county staff, and I provided a presentation to the group about councils of government and ECC'S regional efforts.
- Staffing Updates – We are recruiting for a Transportation Planner and Finance Director and interviews for both positions will be held in the near future. ECC has hired Dr. Cynthia Livingston as a Digital Navigator in the AAA through a temp service starting on December 2nd, 2024.

- Next City-County Managers and Mayors Meeting – November 22nd – The next City-County Managers and Mayors Meeting will be on Friday, November 22nd at Seymour-Johnson AFB. The meeting will include a mission brief and base tour.
- ECC Regional Opioid Asset Mapping Project – The primary goal is to create an assessment map of the ECC region to be used to identify resources and potential gaps in service that can be addressed through regional collaboration. The Recovery Alliance Initiative (RAI) is an organization that brings sectors of communities together to explore opportunities for collaboration and solutions to address the opioid epidemic. ECC has vetted RAI and found it to be uniquely qualified to complete the delivery of a comprehensive assessment and has pursued sole source procurement for the project. Seven of the nine counties have approved the agreement, and it is hoped the other two counties will approve it next week.

Executive Director David Bone also referenced some future events:

- **Grant Writing Workshop – December 3rd and 4th** – ECC is hosting a 2-day grant writing workshop for our members on December 3rd and 4th (9:00-4:30). If your community is interested, please register online.
- **Registration Open for UNC School of Government (County/Municipal) Class** – The School of Government, along with the NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) and the NC League of Municipalities (NCLM), is offering the Essentials of Government course. Each class will be held in New Bern this year:

Essentials of Municipal Government – January 9-10, 2025 | New Bern
Essentials of County Government – January 16-17, 2025 | New Bern

- **ECC Hosting Ethics Training for Elected Officials – Wed., February 5th from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.** – ECC is once again partnering with Attorney David Baxter of Sumrell Sugg to provide the required ethics training for newly-elected and re-elected local government officials.
- **Legislative Breakfast** – Now that the election is done, ECC hopes to schedule and plan a Legislative Breakfast for our region. This will likely be in January. Once we have confirmed this event, we will share the information and registration instructions.

9. **Member Comments** – President Riggs started the member comments by asking if anyone attending the meeting via Zoom had any questions or statement for tonight's meeting. All those attending on-line had no additional questions or comments. He then opened the floor for comments from other members.

Clark Edwards, Town of Pine Knoll Shores, thanked the staff at ECC for guidance and funding grants for the major eight-year project to assist Pine Knoll Shores with storm water solutions.

Ryan Kelley, Town of Indian Beach inquired if any members had information on relocation/work force efforts with the NC State Refugee Office for those effected by Hurricane Helene in the Western part of the State. Mayor Jay Bender stated that some efforts are being provided through private charities.

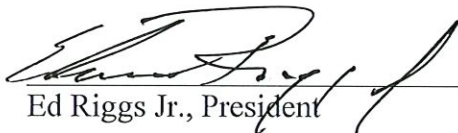
Mayor Jay Bender gave a shout out to the ECC Planning Department, stating the Town of Pollocksville won the 2024 NCDOT Mobi Awards, Rural Category submitted by Becca Eversole / Down East Rural Planning Organization (RPO) in February of 2024 for Improvements to the town's Main Street (U.S. 17 Business) – Pollocksville. He continued to stress the importance of working with ECC's two RPOs, the Eastern Carolina RPO (ECRPO) and Down East RPO (DERPO), to assist with carbon reduction plan grants.

Executive Director David Bone offered new members orientation meetings to go over the role and programs ECC has to offer. Mayor Sandra Snipes commented that ECC's Newsletter and Grant Resources & Opportunities Newsletter has assisted the Town of Vandemere apply for/obtain grant funding.

Councilmember Cindy Edwards announced an invitation to a Free Community Holiday Concert performed by 2d Marine Division Band 7 p.m. Friday, December 6, 2024, at River of Life Church 2460 Gum Branch Road Jacksonville, NC.

10. Adjournment – *A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Shane Turney, seconded by Mayor Jay Bender; the motion was unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted,


Ed Riggs Jr., President


David Bone, Executive Director