



Eastern Carolina Council

Minutes

General Membership Board Meeting

6:30 p.m. - Thursday, January 9, 2025

Third Floor Conference Room

233 Middle Street, New Bern, NC

Executive Committee in Attendance:

Jay Bender, Caucus Rep., Jones County (Mayor of Pollocksville)
Kyle DeHaven, County Manager Caucus Rep., via Zoom (Greene County)
Jesse Dowe, Duplin County Commissioner
Frank Emory, 1st Vice President (Jones County Commissioner)
Tim Harrell, Wayne County Commissioner
Bennie Heath, Greene County Commissioner
Chadwick Howard, Craven County Commissioner
Rick Prill, City of New Bern
Ed Riggs, Jr., President (Pamlico County Commissioner)
Chris Suggs, City of Kinston, via Zoom
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:

Ryan Kelley, Town of Indian Beach
Clark Edwards, Town of Pine Knoll Shores
Barbara Jones, Town of Cove City
Patty Leonard, Town of River Bend
Sandra Stocks, Town of Hookerton, via Zoom
Pam Hall, Town of Holly Ridge
Linda Marshall, Town of Alliance
Carol DeMoranville, Town of Minnesott Beach
Allen Price, Town of Oriental, via Zoom
Sandra Snipes, Town of Vandemere, via Zoom
Wayne Jackson, Town of Fremont
Charles Banks, Town of Magnolia, via Zoom

ECC Staff in Attendance:

David Bone, Executive Director
Carol Bell, Finance Director
Kim Baker, Finance Specialist

David Rosado, AAA Director
Cynthia Livingston, Digital Navigator

Guests in Attendance:

Knox Proctor, Attorney, Ward & Smith
Jonathan Allen, Administrator, Town of Freemont
Tom Edwards, RAI, via Zoom
Lizzie Toler, RAI, via Zoom
Mariel Swiggard, RAI, via Zoom

1. **Welcome, Invocation, and Call to Order** – Ed Riggs, Jr., President, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Commissioner Heath provided the invocation.
2. **Introductions – New Board Members and Staff** – President Riggs welcomed everyone and asked everyone to go around the room to introduce themselves. Executive Director David Bone introduced the participants online and asked them to say hello. Mr. Bone also introduced and welcomed ECC's new Finance Director, Carol Bell, to the board.
3. **Adoption of Agenda** – President Riggs asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. *Commissioner Heath motioned to adopt the agenda, seconded by 2nd Vice President Lorraine Washington; the motion was approved unanimously.*
4. **Consent Agenda – Ed Riggs, Jr., President**
 - a. **Minutes** – General Membership Board Meeting – November 14, 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. *Patty Leonard motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by 1st Vice President, Frank Emory; the motion was approved unanimously.*

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

Treasurer Bill Taylor was unable to attend tonight. 2nd Vice President Lorraine Washington spoke about the Budget & Audit Committee meeting. She stated they were able to review the check register and financial statements. Ms. Washington noted that the auditors will be on site next week to work on the audit. She stated there is no committee information or recommendations at this time.

6. **Virtual Presentation about the Regional Opioid Asset Mapping Project** – Executive Director David Bone introduced Tom Edwards, Lizzie Toler, and Mariel Swiggard, with Recovery Alliance Initiative who are participating via Zoom. Mr. Bone briefly went over the Regional Opioid Asset Mapping Project. 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. Mr. Bone noted that Craven County was already using RAI on other projects. He stated that we have 100% participation in our nine counties for this project. Mr. Bone turned the presentation over to Tom Edwards.

Mr. Edwards provided introductory comments and turned the presentation over to Mariel Swiggard to give an overview of the project. Ms. Swiggard shared a screen presentation and spoke about the initiative. She stated that in order to be successful, everyone needs to start from the same baseline. The goal of the project is to build a baseline understanding of utilization, need, and capacity from which local agencies and community coalitions can make decisions. The primary goal is to create an assessment map of the ECC region and a comprehensive report to be used to identify resources and potential gaps in service that can be addressed through regional collaboration. Armed with this additional information, each county's opioid settlement dollars and other funding can be allocated to the interventions of highest need. She stated the report will be useful to community-based organizations to submit grant proposals to fill in gaps and apply for funding from outside of the county. They hope to have preliminary results in April and delivery of the final report and presentation in June. She mentioned that they are having a Symposium at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center on March 13-14, 2025.

7. **Presentation about the ECC Digital Navigator Programs** – President Riggs introduced David Rosado, AAA Director, and asked him to start the presentation. Mr. Rosado spoke about the new Digital Navigator program ECC is participating in with funds from the NC Division of Aging. The grant period is for one year and goes through December 2025. The grant provides the resources for one staff position for a year. He stated that ECC recently hired Dr. Cynthia Livingston for the Digital Navigator position. He provided background information about Dr. Livingston and noted she recently attended training at Queens University in Charlotte to help prepare her to implement the program. Mr. Rosado introduced Dr. Livingston to the board and asked her to begin the presentation.

Dr. Livingston spoke about what her role will be as the Digital Navigator. She stated that working along with the Digital Inclusion plan, she will help older adults to get broadband service or some internet service that is available. She will work to help older adults to get devices they can use and help them to use them and to achieve their goals online. Challenges and concerns are affordability, ease of use, skills training, and safety. She will serve as a central point of contact. Dr. Livingston noted she will work with some people one-on-one, but she is just one person across nine counties. Mostly she will work with organizations that already exist across the counties such as senior centers, congregate meal settings, health care providers, community, and faith-based organizations. She stated her goal is to build something that can serve our communities long-term. These goals include

identifying old and new organizational partners, training organizational partners and staff in digital skills training, identify underserved groups of older adults, creating and maintaining information that is current, working one-on-one with individuals as needed, and creating a database of service providers and those served. Dr. Livingston went on to talk about what a Digital Navigator needs to build a sustainable program. She stated that her goal is to build a sustainable program to ensure that older adults in Region P have the digital access they need to connect with their families and communities as well as the goods and services they need to thrive.

7. Presentation – NC Association of Regional Councils of Government (NCARCOG)

Policy Goals / Agenda – Executive Director gave a brief overview of the NCARCOG and spoke about the 2025 Policy Agenda. The NCARCOG annually develops a Policy Agenda of items for which to advocate at the state and federal levels. The Policy Priorities for 2025 include five priorities, two of which seek specific funding for COGS that could provide resources for additional staffing.

- Priority 1 – Build partnerships and capacity for COGs to provide financial administration for local governments.
- Priority 2 – Provide ongoing funding for COGs to continue disaster resiliency efforts for communities and establish COGs as the entity to develop regional pre-disaster hazard mitigation plans.
- Priority 3 – Modify the Prosperity Zones to conform to COG regions.
- Priority 4 – Build strategic partnerships to improve regional delivery of services.
- Priority 5 – Modify rules, regulations, or legislation to include COGs as eligible entities for state and federal grants.

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.
- Staffing Updates – Welcome to our new Finance Director, Carol Bell, and our Digital Navigator, Cynthia Livingston. Jordan Kearney also started in a part-time capacity as a Transportation Planner. We anticipate Jordan transitioning to full-time later this year.
- FY2023 Audit – Work on the FY2023 Audit is moving forward. Completion of the FY2023 and FY2024 Audits are top priorities for ECC.
- Town Manager Recruitment – Magnolia-Since the November meeting, I completed our efforts with assisting with the Town Manager search for the Town of Magnolia. Charles Banks was hired and started in December.
- Town Board Retreats – With the blessing of another COG, I will be facilitating a retreat for a town outside our region in the near future. This will provide additional revenue for ECC. Additionally, I am communicating with other communities in our region about facilitating a strategic planning workshop.
- Legislative Breakfast – I have been working to schedule and plan a Legislative Breakfast for our region like we had two years ago. We had hoped to have this at

the end of January but coordinating schedules with Legislators while taking into consideration Board meeting dates for our members has been a challenge. We are now hoping to have the breakfast at the end of February. Once we have the date confirmed, we will share information and registration for the event.

Executive Director David Bone also referenced two future events:

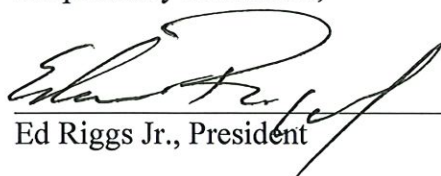
- **ECC Hosting Ethics Training for Elected Officials – Wed., February 5th from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.** – ECC is once again partnering with Attorney David Baxter of Sumrell Sugg to provide the required ethics training for newly-elected and re-elected local government officials. The training will be held on Wednesday, February 5th from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. at the ECC Offices. A light dinner (pizza) will be served.
 - **Grant Writing Workshop – February 18th and 19th** – ECC is once again hosting a 2-day grant writing workshop for our members on February 18th and 19th (9:00-4:30). If your community is interested, please register online.
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.


Mayor Jay Bender spoke up to say he was happy to see participation of at least twenty-five members tonight and at the November meeting also.

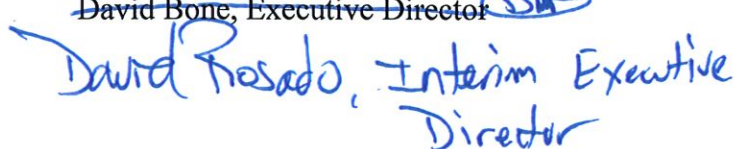
Clark Edwards wanted to thank the ECC Area Agency on Aging for the Dementia Live Simulation that is being held at the Pine Knoll Shores Aquarium on January 29, 2025. David Rosado, AAA Director, spoke up to give a quick overview of the Dementia Live presentation. He asked if anyone would like to see about scheduling this, to contact him.

10. **Adjournment** – *At 7:56 p.m., a motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Bender, seconded by Patty Leonard; the motion was unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted,


Ed Riggs Jr., President


David Bone, Executive Director


David Rosado, Interim Executive Director