

**JOINT MINUTES
NORTHEAST TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, AND
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
JUNE 29, 2023**

The Northeast Texas Economic Development District (NETEDD) and the Board of Directors of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) Board of Directors met at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, June 29, 2023, at the Northeast Texas Small Business Development Center (SBDC), 2nd Floor, located at 105 North Riddle Avenue, Mount Pleasant, Texas, and via teleconference/webinar.

Item 1. Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County, called the meeting to order.

Item 2. Scott Norton, CEO/Executive Director, TexAmericas Center, gave the invocation.

Item 3. The Honorable Nathaniel Moran, Congressman of the United States Congressional District 1, provided the following federal updates:

- Texas Broadband expansion (Federal funding of 3.3 billion) – Discussions ongoing regarding how to access the funding at the State level to bring more funding to East Texas
- H.R. 1560 - Public Water Supply Invasive Species Compliance Act 2023
- H.R. 1558 - Saving America's Vulnerable and Endangered Species (SAVES) Act, "exempts certain interstate water transfers from prohibitions on the illegal trade of wildlife, fish or plant," and would facilitate water transfers between Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas where invasive species exist on both sides of the water transfer.
- Doppler Radar Coverage – Discussions ongoing to improve Doppler coverage in East Texas
- Foreign Affairs Bills:
 - H.R. 1779 - To direct the President to impose sanctions against foreign persons determined to have knowingly engaged in significant corruption in Mexico and for other purposes. (Fentanyl Sanctions Bill)
 - H.R. 4039 - To prohibit the use of funds supporting any activities within the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China.
 - Taiwan – Meetings ongoing to build economic alliances and increase Taiwan's investment in Texas. (Computer chips)
- Farm Bill – Currently composing language to add in the Farm Bill to provide robust crop insurance for our farmers and ranchers

The Board thanked Congressman Moran and his staff for attending the meeting.

Item 4. Public Comment.

No member of the public made a comment.

NETEDD Agenda Items

Item 5. The first order of business was to review and consider approval for the minutes as submitted for the NETEDD meeting held Thursday January 26, 2023.

Motion to approve was made by Scott Norton and seconded by Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County. It was approved.

Item 6. Ms. Toni Lindsey presented for review and comment on information from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) regarding future

and/or past funding applications and awards.

Ms. Lindsey stated that EDA has nine (9) open Funding Applications currently posted with information and links to the application site. TDA has various notices posted. However, transitioning into the new software system TDA-GO is the most impactful to cities and counties. The application links were provided to the Board.

This concludes all NETEDD agenda items.

ATCOG Board of Directors
Agenda Items

Item 7. Chris Brown, Executive Director, presented the following consent agenda items:

- **Approval of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Board of Directors meeting held Thursday, March 30, 2023.**
- **Acceptance of the minutes as submitted for the Ark-Tex Area Agency on Aging Regional Advisory Council meeting held Thursday, June 8, 2023.**

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Stan Wyatt, NETX Municipal Water District Board. It was approved.

Regular Business

Item 8. Ms. Melody Harmon presented for review and consideration ratification of ATCOG Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Revolving Loan Fund Plan changes approved by USDA.

The USDA Business & Cooperative Programs Director approved the first amendment to the plan on June 8, 2023, which included the following revisions:

- **All references to NETEDD Loan Review Committee were replaced with ATCOG Loan Review Committee**
- **The following was added to the Qualifying Projects section (pg. 3):**
 - **Refinancing debt will be exclusive to construction financing, which includes equipment elements that are considered "part of the building" as in typically built into the structure of the building and are not moveable.**
 - **The intermediary is responsible for making prudent lending decisions based on sound underwriting principles when considering restructuring an ultimate recipient's debt.**
 - **Refinancing debts may be allowed only when it is determined by the intermediary that the project is viable and refinancing is necessary to create new or save existing jobs or create or continue a needed service.**
- **The following was removed from the In-Eligible Projects section (pg. 4):**
 - **RLF loan funds will not be used to pay off any previous debt. Refinancing construction financing is an exception to this rule.**
- **The Loan Terms section (pg. 4-5) was amended to read: The loan term must be reasonable and prudent considering the purpose of the loan, expected repayment ability of the ultimate**

recipient, and the useful life of collateral, and must be within any limits established by the intermediary's work plan approved by the Agency. No loan will exceed 20 years.

All other conditions remain unchanged.

Motion to approve was made by Scott Norton and seconded by Judge Lee. It was approved.

Item 9. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the Investment Policy.

Ms. Rudel stated that Investment Policy was amended in April 2014, designating the ATCOG Finance Manager as the ATCOG Investment Officer, and the title was later revised to ATCOG Finance Director in June 2019. These are the only amendments to the original document approved in December 2002.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Scott Norton. It was approved.

Item 10. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the Ark-Tex Area Agency on Aging FFY2024-2026 Area Plan.

Ms. Rudel advised the Board that the Area Plan FFY2024 – FFY 2026 document describes, in detail, the identified needs within the Ark-Tex Plan service area and how the AAA plans to address these needs through the development and expansion of new and existing community services.

This area plan developed for FFY2024 – FFY2026 was reviewed and approved on June 8, 2023, by the AAA Regional Advisory Council. The Area Plan is included in the addendum.

Motion to approve was made by Stan Wyatt and seconded by Judge Lee. It was approved.

Item 11. Ms. Debbie Purifoy presented for review and consideration approval authorizing the Executive Director to enter into two separate contracts with Senior Citizen's Service of Texarkana, Inc., and Human Resources, Inc., to provide services for the Senior Nutrition Program.

Ms. Purifoy stated that the Senior Citizen's Service currently provides the nutrition program in Bowie, Cass, Franklin, Morris, and Titus Counties. Human Resources provides the nutrition program in Delta, Hopkins, Lamar, and Red River Counties.

The estimated funding for the FY2024 Senior Nutrition Program is \$785,140. The home-delivered meal program is estimated to receive \$580,033. The congregate meal program is estimated to receive \$205,107. The funding will be disbursed between the two providers according to the number of meals authorized by the Area Agency on Aging.

Motion to approve was made by Kent Cooper, Judge, Titus County, and seconded by Stan Wyatt. It was approved.

Item 12. Ms. Leslie McBride presented for review and consideration approval authorizing the Executive Director to sign the Rerate and Benefits Verification Form with Texas Health Benefits Pool (formerly Texas Municipal League Health) to continue to provide health, dental, and life insurance benefits to staff for Plan Year 2023-2024.

The Rerate Notice for FY 2024 includes an increase for health premiums (\$101.42 per month) and dental (\$2.28 per month); however, life insurance rates are the same as FY 2023.

ATCOG proposes to make a defined contribution of \$946.54 to each employee per month, a 12% increase, or a \$101.42 increase per month. The staff has the option to "buy up" to a more expensive

plan at their own expense. Also, a high deductible plan is available at a rate of \$834.16 per month, allowing staff to contribute the remaining defined contribution to a health savings account.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Scott Norton. It was approved.

- Item 13. Mr. Brown presented for review and consideration approval of the proposed Salary Schedule for ATCOG for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024.

The State requires ATCOG to submit a Salary Schedule by August each year to compare our employees' salaries with salaries of State employees in equivalent jobs; such salary schedule is to be approved by the full Board of Directors. All ATCOG employees are paid lower or are at the low end of the State salary scale. There are no positions at ATCOG that exceed the pay of State employees in equivalent positions.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Stan Wyatt. It was approved.

- Item 14. Ms. Mary Wormington presented for review and consideration approval of the submission of and application to the Texas Department of Housing Community Affairs (TDHCA) for the 2023 Emergency Solution Grant program funds (ESG).

Ms. Wormington stated that ATCOG wishes to apply for 2023 ESG program funds in the amount of \$163,775.00 to continue its efforts in preventing and reducing homelessness in the ATCOG region. ATCOG works to reduce Homelessness within the nine-county region and meet goals with TDHCA in transitioning ESG Homelessness Prevention. ESG Homeless Prevention clients will be offered a Housing Choice Voucher for permanent housing after receiving rental assistance for three months.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Cooper and seconded by Scott Norton. It was approved.

- Item 15. Ms. Roni Duran presented for review and consideration approval of revisions to the ATCOG Rural Transit District Title VI Program Plans required by the Federal Transit Administration.

Ms. Duran stated the following revisions have been made: New Title VI Coordinator contact information, number of vehicles in inventory, costs for a translator for LEP assistant, and the Board of Directors roster. Due to personnel changes, Veronica "Roni" Duran, Transportation Coordinator, is the new Title VI Program Coordinator for ATCOG's Rural Transit District. All the demographics for our service area have been updated with the 2020 Census Bureau, which includes Bowie, Cass, Titus, Lamar, Red River, Delta, Hopkins, Franklin, and Morris Counties.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Judge Cooper. It was approved.

- Item 16. Judge Bobby Howell presented for review and consideration approval of the appointment of the ATCOG Board of Directors Executive Committee member.

The Nominating Committee met on June 13, 2023, and approved the recommendation of the ATCOG Board Director, the Honorable Ken Cooper, Judge, Titus County, for appointment to the Executive Committee.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Scott Norton. It was approved.

- Item 17. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration to authorize the Executive Director to enter into two separate contracts for the purchase of radio infrastructure equipment with Continental Wireless, Inc. not to exceed \$181,486 for Franklin County's project and \$196,068 for Delta County's project.

Ms. Rudel stated that the ATCOG Homeland Security Program utilized The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS) governed by the Region 8 ESC Board of Directors to obtain quotes from Continental Wireless, Inc to purchase the following:

- 4 (four) p25 VHF Repeaters or compatible equivalent to install in Franklin County
- 1 (one) two-position dispatch console with accessories to install at Delta County Sheriff's Office

Any additional expenses beyond the grant award will be the responsibility of the counties respectively.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Cooper and seconded by Stan Wyatt. It was approved.

Item 18. Mr. Chris Brown presented for review and consideration approval to cancel the July ATCOG Executive Committee meeting and to move the annual meeting from September to August.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Lee and seconded by Stan Wyatt. It was approved.

Item 19. Ms. Toni Lindsey provided a presentation on the Section 3 Program.

Item 20. Ms. Patricia Haley provided the Computerized Criminal History System (CCH) update.

Beginning January 1, 2021, counties applying for grant awards from the Office of the Governor must commit that the county will report at least 90 percent of convictions and other dispositions within five business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at the Department of Public Safety. All ATCOG counties comply with this requirement.

Item 21. Mr. Brown provided updates on the Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) and National Association of Development Organizations (NADO).

Announcements

Mr. Chris Brown announced that the Annual Board Meeting would be held on August 31, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., at the Mount Pleasant Civic Center, 1800 N. Jefferson Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, and via teleconference/webinar.

With no further business, Judge Howell adjourned the meeting.

NETEDD BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville
Stan Wyatt, NETX Municipal Water District Board

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville
Stan Wyatt, NETX Municipal Water District Board

ATCOG BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Kent Cooper, Judge, Titus County
Rosina Duckworth, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Cumby
Juan Duenez, Mount Pleasant Independent School District
Becky Fellers, Liberty Eylau School District
David Fordinal, Commissioner, City of Como
Brad Johnson, Board Member, Northeast Texas Rail District
Shannon McGuire, Paris Junior College
Jean Matlock, Councilmember, City of Texarkana
George Moore, Board Member, Texarkana College
Dana Reeves, Franklin County Water District
Vicki Smith, Councilmember, City of Daingerfield

GUESTS PRESENT

Beverly Austin, Morris County Collaborative
Jessica Cassidy, University of Texas - Arlington

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Rea Allen, 9-1-1 Director
Chris Brown, Executive Director
Jenny Butler, Area Agency on Aging Manager
Roni Duran, Transportation Coordinator
Patricia Haley, Criminal Justice Coordinator
Melody Harmon, Economic Development Director
Mary Wormington, Housing Director
Toni Lindsey, Regional Development Director
Marla Matthews, Executive Assistant
Leslie McBride, Human Resources Director
Paul Prange, Environmental Resources Coordinator
Debbie Purifoy, Compliance and Purchasing Officer
Lisa Reeve, Area Agency on Aging Director
Mary Beth Rudel, Deputy Director
Bobby Williams, Operations Manager



Bobby Howell, President
Ark-Tex Council of Governments

ATTEST:


