

**JOINT MINUTES  
NORTHEAST TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AND  
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
September 30, 2021**

The Northeast Texas Economic Development District (NETEDD) and Board of Directors of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) met at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, September 30, 2021, at the Titus County Extension Office, located at 1708 Industrial Road, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, as well as, via teleconference/webinar.

Item 1. L.D. Williamson, Judge, Red River County, called the meeting to order.

Item 2. Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County, gave the invocation.

Item 3. Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb, Texas, provided the following public comments.

Mayor Walker presented the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) update. He advised that the State is currently discussing the release of \$5 billion in ARPA funds. TWDB is requesting all Texas Councils of Governments to notify their elected senators and representatives to ensure the TWDB is properly funded when funding becomes available. He further stated that if TWDB is awarded \$400-\$500 million, they can fund every application requesting to upgrade their infrastructure.

Mayor Walker requested that the ATCOG Board contact their elected officials and notify other Councils of Governments to support properly funding the TWDB so Texas can repair its aging infrastructure.

Mayor Walker thanked the Board for their time.

NETEDD Agenda Items

Item 4. The next order of business was to review and consider approval of the minutes as submitted for the NETEDD meeting held Thursday, June 24, 2021, at the Titus County Extension Office, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, as well as, via teleconference/webinar.

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

Item 5. Chris Brown, Executive Director, presented for review and consideration approval of NETEDD's portion of ATCOG's Financial Plan for fiscal year ending September 30, 2021

Motion to approve was made by Judge Brian Lee and seconded by Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County. It was approved.

Item 6. Toni Lindsey, Regional Development Manager, presented for review and consideration approval for the ATCOG Executive Director to apply for a Build Back Better Regional Challenge grant through the U.S Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Lengthy discussion regarding the application ensued.

Motion to approve was made by Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County and seconded by Marc Reiter, Mayor, City of Hooks. Discussion followed. It was approved.

*This concluded all NETEDD agenda items.*

### **ATCOG Board of Directors Agenda Items**

Item 7. Mr. Brown presented the following consent agenda items:

- Approval of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Board of Directors Meeting held Thursday, June 24, 2021, at the Titus County Extension Office, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, as well as, via teleconference/webinar.
- Approval of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Homeland Security Advisory Committee Meeting held August 19, 2021, at the Hopkins County Fire Department, Sulphur Springs, Texas.
- Ratification of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between ATCOG and the Public Safety Office within the Office of the Governor.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Mayor Reiter. It was approved.

### **Executive Closed Session**

Item 8. Judge Williamson announced that the Open Session would recess and go into Executive Closed Session to discuss personnel matters as allowed in the Texas Open Meetings Act, Section 551.074, Executive Director's performance evaluation.

### **Open Session/Regular Business**

Item 9. The Board of Directors reconvened in Open Session. Upon review of Mr. Brown's performance evaluations, Judge Williamson recommended that he should receive a 3% COLA increase.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Bell and seconded by Mayor Reiter. It was approved.

Judge Williamson then invited the Texas Attorney General's office to present Global Opioid Settlement information. The Board thanked the Attorney General's office for their informative presentation.

Item 10. Mr. Brown presented for consideration approval of ATCOG's Financial Plan for fiscal year ending September 30, 2022.

Mr. Brown noted that this was the ATCOG Work Program and Financial Plan combined and not necessarily a budget because ATCOG does not have taxing or oversight authority. As required by legislation, the ATCOG Work Plan and Financial Plan presents each grant's objectives, work tasks, performance measures, implementation schedules, human resource requirements and budget information.

Mr. Brown explained that within each State or Federal grant that ATCOG administers, the funding agency has complete oversight for the individual grant programs and that funding sources regulate categories in which ATCOG is allowed to spend funds.

Mr. Brown added that the Plan included recommended merit step increases for several staff along with a 3% COLA increase for all staff. Funding is provided for the Salary Schedule effective October 1, 2021.

Mr. Brown stated that ATCOG's revenues will increase by \$1,800,000 overall. He explained that

changes in funding from the prior year include:

- An increase of approximately \$1,700,000 in transportation. Vehicle purchases have caused some fluctuation to total revenue amounts, and funds will be rolling forward due to CARES/ARPA funding FY20/21. Most funding will expire this year and mid-2023.
- An increase of \$50,000 in housing revenue. It will begin to stabilize with the expiring CARES funds.
- AAA will see a decrease of \$400,000 based on current projections.
- Criminal Justice and Homeland Security will see a slight decrease in contract amounts FY22. However, Homeland Security does see an overall increase from radio infrastructure grant.
- Environmental will see an increase with the contract for the Region 2 Flood Planning Group funding.
- 9-1-1 Emergency Communications is experiencing a planned decrease with the utilization of the CSEC Fund Balance.
- Regional and Economic Development Programs continue to see a positive impact due to EDA CARES funding, the absorptions of the CTEDD RLF portfolio, and a focus to bring in new grant administration and 504 loans.

Mr. Brown added that ATCOG's health care provider will continue to be Texas Municipal League (TMLIEBP) and that the premiums for the basic medical plan increased again this year. ATCOG will increase its defined contribution amount from \$773.04 per month for each employee's basic medical coverage to \$789.82, which is 100% of the employee premium. Employee dental insurance premiums will remain at \$28.44 per month. Rates for life and AD&D did not change.

Mr. Brown explained that the published Indirect rate will fall slightly to 19.28% based on Total Direct Personnel Cost. The Benefit rate will increase to 56.6%.

Mr. Brown requested to utilize \$87,500 of ATCOG Unrestricted Funds for Aging match and dues payments.

Mr. Brown added that the housing program is budgeted to maintain a three-month reserve balance and ATRDC will maintain a \$20,000 reserve balance per contract.

A motion to approve was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Judge Brian Lee. It was approved.

Item 11. Mr. Brown presented for review and consideration authorizing the Executive Director to proceed with the procurement of a contractor to complete renovations at the Texarkana office building.

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

Item 12. Mary Beth Rudel, Deputy Director, presented for review and consideration approval of revisions to ATCOG Policy and Procedures Manual.

Motion to approve was made by Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County, and seconded by Mayor Reiter. It was approved.

Item 13. Ms. Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the utilization of ATCOG's indirect cost rate for ATCOG employees working on behalf of the Texarkana Urban Transit District.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Mr. Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO of TeXAmericas. It was approved.

Item 14. Leslie McBride, Human Resources Director, presented for review and consideration annual renewal of the ATCOG Ethics Policy Manual and review Transportation Program funding requirements pertaining to integrity and ethical behavior as mandated by the Texas Transportation Commission and Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT).

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Norton and seconded by Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County. It was approved

Item 15. Ms. McBride presented for review and consideration approval of updates to the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan as required by the Texas Department of Transportation.

Motion to approve was made by Mr. Norton and seconded by Judge Howell. It was approved.

Item 16. Ms. McBride presented for review and consideration adoption of the ATCOG Flexible Benefits Cafeteria Plan for FY 2022, as authorized under Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Judge Howell. It was approved.

Item 17. Whitney Fezell, presented for review and consideration approval of continual use of allocation formula for FY2022 as the method for allocating State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) funds to jurisdictions.

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

Item 18. Patricia Haley presented for review and consideration approval of the new resolution to include the updated grant ending date and the statement required by the Office of Governor, Criminal Justice Division.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Reiter and seconded by Judge Bell. It was approved.

Item 19. Ms. Haley presented for review and consideration approval of the appointment of two new Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (RCJAC) members to serve through December 31, 2021.

- Lieutenant Mark Shermer, Bowie County
- Chief Richard Slater, Lamar County

Motion to approve the appointments was made by Judge Brian Lee and seconded by Mr. Norton. It was approved.

Item 20. Marla Matthews presented for review and consideration approval to combine the November Executive Committee and December Board of Director meetings into one Board of Directors meeting to be held Thursday, December 9, 2021.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Brian Lee and seconded by Mayor Reiter. It was approved.

Item 21. The Texas Attorney General's Office presented at the beginning of the ATCOG Board meeting.

### **Other Business**

Item 22. Mr. Brown recognized ATCOG Board member longevity and thanked everyone for their service to the region. He also recognized staff achievements and announced ATCOG's Employee of the Year.

## Announcements

Judge Williamson announced that the next Executive Committee meeting will be held Thursday, October 28, 2021, at 10:00 a.m., at the Titus County Extension Office, in Mt. Pleasant, Texas.

With no further announcements, Judge Williamson adjourned the meeting.

### NETEDD BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville  
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County  
Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County  
Brian Lee, Judge, Titus County  
Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County  
L.D. Williamson, Judge, Red River County  
Marc Reiter, Councilman, City of Hooks  
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County  
Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County  
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center  
Travis Ransom, Mayor, City of Atlanta

### ATCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville  
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County  
Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County  
Brian Lee, Judge, Titus County  
Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County  
L.D. Williamson, Judge, Red River County  
Marc Reiter, Councilman, City of Hooks  
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County  
Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County  
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center  
Travis Ransom, Mayor, City of Atlanta

### ATCOG BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Harold Nash, Councilman, City of Sulphur Springs  
Jean Matlock, Councilwoman, City of Texarkana  
Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb  
Rebecca Crawford, Alderman, City of Deport

### GUESTS PRESENT

Brian King, Office of the Attorney General  
Dan Perry, Texas Department of Transportation  
Jennifer Harland, External Affairs Manager, SWEPSCO  
Kathy Comer, Office of United States Senator John Cornyn  
Lisa Thompson, Economic Development/City of Texarkana, Texas  
Nathan Tofoya, Executive Director, Mt. Pleasant Economic Development Corporation  
Ray Wilson, Office of United States Senator Bryan Hughes  
Rea Donna Jones, Texarkana Metropolitan Planning Organization  
Sharon Elkins, Office of Representative Gary Van Deaver  
Susan Hupp, Office of the Attorney General

Taylor Nye, Chad's Media  
Todd Kleiboer, Sulphur Springs News Telegram

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobby Williams, Transportation Manager  
Chris Brown, Executive Director  
Claude Ramsey, IT Director  
Kayla Wieferich, TRAX Dispatcher  
Lisa Reeve, Area Agency on Aging Director  
Leslie McBride, Human Resources Director  
Mae Lewis, Housing Director  
Marla Matthews, Executive Assistant  
Mary Beth Rudel, Deputy Director  
Melinda Tickle, Finance Director  
Melody Harmon, Economic Development Manager  
Patricia Haley, Criminal Justice Coordinator  
Paul Prange, Environmental Resources Coordinator  
Rea Allen, 9-1-1 Program Director  
Sheena Record, Transportation Coordinator  
Toni Lindsey, Regional Development Manager  
Veronica Williams, Transportation Planner  
Whitney Fezell, Homeland Security Coordinator



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L.D. Williamson, President  
Board of Directors  
Ark-Tex Council of Governments

ATTEST:



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