

**JOINT MINUTES
NORTHEAST TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AND
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEETING
August 31, 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, August 31, 2023, at the Mt. Pleasant Civic Center, 1800 North Jefferson Avenue, Mount Pleasant, Texas, and via videoconference.

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

Item 2. Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County, gave the invocation.

Item 3. Public Comment.

No member of the public made a comment.

NETEDD Agenda Items

Item 4. The first order of business was to review and consider approval of the minutes as submitted for the NETEDD meeting held Thursday, June 29, 2023.

Motion to approve was made by Scott Norton, Executive Director, C/O TexAmericas Center and seconded by Stan Wyatt, NETX Municipal Water District Board of Director. 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 the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024.

Motion to approve was made by Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County, and seconded by Marc Reiter, Mayor, City of Hooks. It was approved.

This concluded all NETEDD agenda items.

ATCOG Board of Directors Agenda Items

Item 6. Mr. Brown presented, for information only, the Executive Director Report. He reviewed the indirect finance reports and provided updates and statistics for ATCOG Programs

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 29, 2023.
- Acceptance of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting held Friday, August 17, 2023.

Motion to approve was made by Scott Norton and seconded by Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville. It was approved.

Regular Business

Item 8. Mr. Brown presented for review and consideration approval of the ATCOG Financial Plan for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024.

Mr. Brown stated the ATCOG Strategic Work Program and Financial Plan reflects anticipated revenues of \$25,017,771 and proposed expenditures of \$25,017,771.

Mr. Brown noted that the combined Strategic Work Program and Financial Plan are not technically a budget because ATCOG does not have taxing or oversight authority. Within each State or Federal grant ATCOG administers, the funding agency regulates the categories in which we are allowed to spend funds. The funding source has complete oversight for each grant program.

Mr. Brown stated within each program area, specific project-by-project tasks and performance measures are delineated for the year. Each project is assigned an objective, work tasks, performance measures, and human resource requirements. ATCOG has 14 Managed Programs with over 60 Projects/Contracts that make ATCOG's revenue sources in the FY2024 ATCOG Strategic Work Program and Financial Plan.

Mr. Brown stated that the Plan includes merit increases for some staff and an 8.7% COLA for all positions. Funding is provided for the Salary Schedule, effective October 1, 2023. The total COLA increases for the past ten (10) years add up to 24.20%, while the SSI COLA increased a total of 24.30% prior to 2024.

ATCOG has 94 full-time and 19 part-time personnel, which totals 102.59 FTEs. Personnel changes include:

- Inclusion of an HR/Accounting Specialist
- Reallocation of Finance Duties
- Reclassification of Finance Specialist to Coordinator

Mr. Brown informed the Board that the premiums for the basic medical plan increased again this year. ATCOG will increase its defined contribution amount from \$845.12 monthly for each employee's basic medical coverage to \$946.54, 100% of the employee premium. Employees can buy up to a medical plan with a lower deductible and out-of-pocket costs and make extra contributions to their HSA. The employee will pay additional premium costs over the defined employer contribution of \$946.54 per month. Employee dental insurance premiums will increase from \$28.44 to \$30.72 monthly. Rates for life and AD&D did not change.

The ATCOG Retirement Plan is under the Texas County & District Retirement System (TCDRS). ATCOG is currently at a 200% employer-to-employee match with an employee contribution rate of 4%.

The Benefit rate is estimated to increase to 54.96%. When utilizing the FY2022 Over allocation, the rate is 53.07%.

The estimated Indirect rate is 23.69% based on the Total Direct Personnel Cost (6.71% based on the Modified Total Direct Cost). When utilizing the FY2022 Under allocation, the rate is 26.09%.

Mr. Brown added current estimates would utilize \$101,000 of ATCOG's Unrestricted Funds for Aging match and other needs to support ATCOG programs and personnel.

Mr. Brown stated that ATCOG program revenues have begun to trend down due to the utilization of CARES and ARPA Funding. Revenues and Expenses will continue to see some adjustments as the

timing of funding and other factors are considered.

Mr. Brown reviewed the following program funding updates:

- Housing is currently trending up due to the utilization of vouchers and the enrollment of new people in the program. Housing will flatten out.
- Transportation will see a decrease but still ahead of normal funding levels, and there are continued opportunities for additional capital improvements.
- All other programs show a moderate decrease or normal fluctuation.

Mr. Brown noted the following ongoing and future projects:

- TRAX-Paris Metro building is currently being renovated.
- TRAX-Sulphur Springs building to be leased to ATCOG by the Hospital District for \$1200.00 per year. ATCOG hopes to begin seeking proposals for the renovation of the building. TxDOT funds would provide capital improvements for the building upon their lease approval.

Mr. Brown presented the following future capital improvement projects in the near term:

- Roof repairs/replacement
- Parking lot repairs
- Common area carpeting
- Omaha Building

Judge Ransom recommended that ATCOG notify TML Property Insurance when a new roof is installed to receive a decrease in property insurance premiums.

Motion to approve was made by Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County, and seconded by Stan Wyatt. It was approved.

Item 9. Mr. Brown presented for review and consideration approval of a resolution in support of Chris Brown's nomination for President of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Board of Directors.

ATCOG has been a member of NADO for almost 25 years. In 2011, Chris began serving as one of eight (8) members of the NADO Board representing the Southwest Region, consisting of Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana. In 2018, he was elected Secretary and is currently the First Vice President.

NADO will elect new officers to the Board at the Annual Training Conference in November. Chris is being considered for election as President of the NADO Board. The NADO Board does require an endorsement of candidacy signed by the ATCOG Board President.

Motion to approve was made by Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb, and seconded by Judge Ransom. It was approved.

Item 10. Mr. Brown presented for review and consideration approval of the Hopkins County Hospital District request for membership to ATCOG.

The Hopkins County Hospital District (HCHD) submitted a resolution requesting membership with the Ark-Tex Council of Governments.

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

- Item 11. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of a one-year extension to the agreement with Guaranty Bank & Trust to provide banking services beginning October 1, 2023.

On July 6, 2020, ATCOG issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for banking services. ATCOG requested proposals for banking services to begin October 1, 2020, and extend through September 30, 2023, with two possible one-year extensions if approved by the ATCOG Board of Directors. The Board of Directors approved the selection of Guaranty Bank and Trust as ATCOG's banking services provider.

ATCOG requests to extend the agreement with Guaranty Bank & Trust to provide banking services beginning October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024, with one more possible one-year extension upon Board approval.

Motion to approve was made by Scott Norton and seconded by David Fordinal, Commissioner, City of Como. It was approved.

- Item 12. Ms. Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the removal of current signature authority, access, and permissions for Chris Brown on all ATCOG accounts at Guaranty Bank and Trust.

Executive Director Chris Brown submitted his resignation letter to the ATCOG Board of Directors on August 3, 2023. He stated in his letter that his last official day will be September 8, 2023.

Therefore, approval from the ATCOG Board of Directors is needed to remove Mr. Brown from all ATCOG accounts effective September 8, 2023.

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

- Item 13. Ms. Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the submission of the updated Certification of Signature Authority form to the Texas Department of Transportation.

Due to Executive Director Chris Brown's resignation and Mary Beth Rudel's appointment as Interim Executive Director, ATCOG needs to update the signature authority form.

The form lists Mary Beth Rudel, Interim Executive Director, as having authority to sign all documents. It also includes delegates for signature and approval authority for specific documents as listed: Mark Compton, ATCOG Transportation Director, and Bobby Williams, ATCOG Transportation Operations Manager.

With the submission of the updated form, Chris Brown will be removed from signature authority.

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

- Item 14. Ms. Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of revisions to the ATCOG Policy and Procedures Manual.

The following revisions to the policy and procedures manual were proposed:

- 6.22 Compensatory Leave and 9.07 Overtime. This addition clarifies when compensatory time is earned at straight time versus time and a half in accordance with US Department of Labor laws.

- 9.07 Overtime – General. This addition reflects the policy change referenced in section 6.22 above.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Walker and seconded by Stan Wyatt. It was approved.

- Item 15. Ms. Leslie McBride presented for review and consideration approval of the annual renewal of the ATCOG Ethics Policy Manual. No changes have been made.

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

- Item 16. Ms. McBride presented for review and consideration approval to the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan.

The plan provides guidelines for employment practices, the complaint process, and data representing the ATCOG workforce. This data includes employment practices such as separations, disciplinary actions, promotions, and hiring.

The only updates made in the plan are to update the employment practices data.

By approving the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan updates, ATCOG affirms committing to equal employment for all persons, regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, genetic information, sex, or age.

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

- Item 17. Ms. McBride presented for review and consideration approval of the ATCOG Flexible Benefits Cafeteria Plan for FY2024.

The ATCOG Flexible Benefits Cafeteria Plan will allow ATCOG to offer additional benefits to employees pre-tax, such as cancer, critical illness, and accident insurance.

Ms. McBride informed the Board that Colonial Insurance manages the ATCOG Cafeteria Plan.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Ransom and seconded by David Fordinal. It was approved.

- Item 18. Ms. Rea Allen presented for review and consideration approval of the 9-1-1 region-wide transit advertising contract.

The ATCOG TRAX Transportation Program provides advertising opportunities to approved agencies by way of window decals on its transit vehicles. The ATCOG 9-1-1 Program wishes to contract with the TRAX Program to place window decals designed to educate the public about available 9-1-1 services on the vehicles. The transit advertising campaign costs \$179,632.35 for a three-year contract for advertising on 18 vehicles that transport within the ATCOG region.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Walker and seconded by Vicki Smith, Councilmember, City of Daingerfield. It was approved.

- Item 19. Ms. Allen presented for review and consideration approval of the 9-1-1 equipment replacement purchases.

The ATCOG strategic plan and the 10-year equipment replacement schedule include Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) for FY2024.

The total cost for replacing the CPE front room equipment at all thirteen Public Safety Answering

Points is \$711,601.96. This price includes hardware (33 workstations including computers, monitors, handsets, keyboards, etc.), call-taking and mapping software, licensing, managed services for monitoring, warranties, and installation.

ATCOG will utilize Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for this NG911 equipment purchase and has completed the RFP procurement process in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth by the grant and the ATCOG Procurement Policy.

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

Other Business

Item 20. Mr. Brown recognized the ATCOG Board members' longevity and thanked everyone for their service to the region. He recognized staff achievements and longevity and announced ATCOG's Employee of the Year.

Announcements

Judge Howell announced the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Annual Training Conference 2023 will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, November 7-10, 2023. Please contact Marla or Mary Beth if you are interested in attending.

Judge Howell announced the next Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings will be held Thursday, September 28, 2023, at a time TBD, at the Sulphur Springs Country Club, 511 Country Club Road, Sulphur Springs, Texas, as well as videoconference.

Judge Howell invited all attendees to attend the Farewell Luncheon for Chris Brown in the Mt. Pleasant Civic Center Main Hall immediately following the Board meeting.

With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Walker and seconded by Judge Ransom. It was approved.

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
Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County
Marc Reiter, Mayor, City of Hooks
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
Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County
Marc Reiter, Mayor, City of Hooks
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville
Stan Wyatt, NETX Municipal Water District Board

ATCOG BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Rosina Duckworth, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Cumby
Juan Duenez, Mount Pleasant Independent School District
David Fordinal, Commissioner, City of Como
Brad Johnson, Board Member, Northeast Texas Rail District
Joe T. Kelsey, Red River Appraisal District
Vicki Smith, Councilmember, City of Daingerfield
Gary Spraggins, Councilmember, City of Sulphur Springs
Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb

GUESTS PRESENT

Reece DeWoody, Office of United States Senator John Cornyn
Tim Wilson, Northeast Texas Community College
Gaye Beard, Office of United States Representative Pat Fallon
Russell Devorsky, Heart of Texas Council of Governments
Ray Wilson, Office of Senator Bryan Hughes
Tom Whitten, Bowie County Commission, Precinct 2
L. D. Williamson, Ark-Tex Regional Development Corporation Board
Brenda Davis, AAA Regional Advisory Council
Megan Knight, AAA Regional Advisory Council
Dr. Mario Villarino, Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Troy Hudson, Region 2 Flood Planning Group Board
Reeves Hayter, Chairman, Region 2 Flood Planning Group Board
Mark Buhman, Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee
Tim Dial, Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee & Homeland Security Advisory Committee
Angela Price, Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee
Sherry Edwards, Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Rea Allen, 9-1-1 Director
Chris Brown, Executive Director
Jenny Butler, Area Agency on Aging Manager
Patricia Haley, Criminal Justice Coordinator
Melody Harmon, Economic Development 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
Melinda Tickle, Finance Director
Bobby Williams, Transportation Operations Manager
Mary Wormington, Housing Director



Bobby Howell, President
Ark-Tex Council of Governments

ATTEST:

