

MINUTES
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
May 26, 2022

The Executive Committee of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) met at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, May 26, 2022, at the Northeast Texas Small Business Development Center (SBDC), 2nd Floor, located at 105 North Riddle Avenue, 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. Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County, gave the invocation.

Item 3. Public Comment.

No members of the public made a comment.

Item 4. The next order of business was to review and consider approval of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Executive Committee meeting held Thursday, April 28, 2022.

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

Regular Business

Item 5. Mr. Chris Brown, Executive Director, presented for review and consideration approval of public input and the 2023-2024 TxCDBG Community Development Fund Regional Project Priority Scoring for the ATCOG State Planning Region.

ATCOG will compete with other projects within the region based on the scoring criteria. The maximum score for a Community Development (CD) Fund application will be 200 points in all regions. The points are assigned in the following three ways:

- 65% of the points are assigned based on objective factors adopted by the Unified Scoring Committee (USC).
- 25% of the points are assigned based on the Regional Project Priorities selected by the governing board or a designated committee of each state planning region.
- 10% of the points are assigned based on State Scoring factors adopted by TDA.

Mr. Brown stated that the Unified Scoring Committee met, and Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb, attended as the ATCOG representative. All scoring criteria remained the same except for the following grant match:

- 3% match - population under 1,500
- 5% match - cities with 5,000 in population
- No points will be awarded based on unemployment

The Board recommended the following 2023-2024 TxCDBG Community Development Fund Regional Project Priority Scoring for the ATCOG State Planning Region:

- First Priority: Water/Sewer; Yard lines; Streets/roads and bridges; Drainage; Septic tanks
- Second Priority: Housing
- Third Priority: all other eligible activities

Motion to approve was made by Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County, and seconded by John Sellers, Mayor, City of Sulphur Springs. It was approved.

Item 6. Ms. Sheena Record presented for review and consideration approval of a grant application to be submitted to the United Way of Lamar County in the amount of \$1,020 for reserve monthly bus passes for passengers in need.

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

Item 7. Mr. Brown presented for review and consideration approval of the ATCOG Housing Choice Voucher Program Annual Plan.

Mr. Brown reported no changes to the Plan.

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

Other Business

Item 8. Mr. Brown, presented an update and discussion regarding Texas Broadband Development Office and the Texas Rural Funders timeline and details of the IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) and regional speed testing and mapping improvements.

Mr. Brown provided the Board with information concerning the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program that includes \$42B for high-speed internet access. The BEAD Program prioritizes the unserved with no internet or only 25/3 Mbps and the underserved with only 100/20 Mbps.

The Digital Equity Act Program includes \$2.75B for digital inclusion and equity. The Act ensures all communities have accessible and affordable, reliable high-speed internet.

The Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure (MM) Program includes \$1B for high-speed internet access. The MM Program's Priority is to expand the middle mile infrastructure to reduce the cost of connecting the unserved and underserved locations.

The Texas Broadband Development Office (BDO) will oversee the state and federal dollars intended to close the digital gap by increasing access to reliable, high-speed internet in the state. The BDO provides grants, low-interest loans, and other financial incentives to internet service providers who expand access in prioritized areas. The BDO expects to have the process ready to accept applications and make initial financial awards by October 2022.

Mr. Brown will forward all pertinent service provider information and mapping updates to the Board.

Item 9. Ms. Patricia Haley presented the Computerized Criminal History System (CCH) Update to the Board for review.

Item 10. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel discussed the requirement of cybersecurity training for local governments.

Ms. Rudel informed the Board that all government entities must certify their cybersecurity compliance with training requirements using the Cybersecurity Training Certification for State and Local Governments on the Texas Department of Information (DIR) website. The requirement was amended during the 87th Legislature (HB1118) to tie completion and reporting of this training requirement to receipt or reclamation of funding from the Office of the Governor, Public Safety Office.

All local government staff are to complete the required training and submit the certification to DIR by August 31.

Item 11. Ms. Rudel presented a review of the Red River Leadership Institute (RRLI) program.

Ms. Rudel stated that the 2022-2023 RRLI application period is now open. She asked that the Board share RRLI information with community leaders and encourage them to apply. The application deadline is June 30.

Ms. Rudel provided a draft RRLI Brochure for review and will forward the final details to the Board when all leadership session dates are confirmed.

Announcements

Mr. Brown will provide a sample letter of support to the Board for the reauthorization of the U.S. Economic Development Agency (EDA). He requested the letters be returned to the ATCOG office for submission.

Mr. Brown announced that the ATCOG Executive Committee would not meet in July 2022.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 30, 2022, at 10:00 a.m., at the Northeast Texas Small Business Development Center (SBDC), 2nd Floor, located at 105 North Riddle Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, as well as via teleconference/webinar.

With no further announcements, a motion to adjourn was made by Judge Ransom and seconded by Mayor Sellers. The meeting adjourned.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Brian Lee, Judge, Titus County
Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Mihir Pankaj, Councilman, City of Paris
Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County
Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville
John Sellers, Mayor, City of Sulphur Springs
L.D. Williamson, Judge, Red River County
Stan Wyatt, NETX Municipal Water District

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Ronald Humphry, Mayor, City of New Boston
Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb

GUESTS PRESENT

Stephen Barnes
Ashley Boyles
Kathy Boyles, KBB Consultants
JoAnn Gray, Planner, Texarkana Metropolitan Planner Organization
John McElfish, GrantWorks
Jessica Nichols
Veronica Pauda
Sergio Rairez

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Rea Allen, 911 Program Director
Chris Brown, Executive Director
Mark Compton, Transportation Director
Whitney Fezell, Homeland Security Coordinator
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
Mary Beth Rudel, Deputy Director
Melinda Tickle, Finance Director



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

ATTEST:


