



Foothills Regional Commission  
Executive Committee Meeting  
November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Minutes

**Committee Members Present**

- **Chairman** Fred Baisden, Polk County
- **Vice-Chair**, Max Hopper, Cleveland County
- Jimmy Dancy, Town of Rutherfordton
- Ashley Wooten, McDowell County

**Committee Members Absent**

- **Secretary**, Bryan King, Rutherford County
- Dean Buff, McDowell County
- Jack Shytle, Town of Polkville

**FRC Staff Present**

- Danna Stansbury
- Charlotte Sullivan
- Laura Lynch
- Alan Toney
- Pam Hall
- Amanda Scott

**FRC Staff Absent**

- Annette Staley

**Call to order**

Foothills Regional Commission's (FRC) Executive Committee meeting was held at Rutherfordton Town Hall in the council room on November 14, 2024. Chairman Fred Baisden called the meeting to order at 12:23 pm and welcomed everyone. Chairman Baisden gave an invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and State Salute to the North Carolina Flag.

**Approval of minutes**

Chairman Baisden requested approval of the August 22, 2024, Executive Committee meeting minutes. The motion was made by Jimmy Dancy, with a second by Ashley Wooten. All were in favor.



## Reports

### 1. Deputy Executive Director Update

Charlotte Sullivan:

- Presented the Cash Flow Report:
  - i. \$2.2 million in North Carolina Capital Management Trust
  - ii. \$754,674 in Section 8 Housing Account
  - iii. \$31,430 in General Fund Account
  - iv. \$4,649 in Payroll Account
- Informed the board the investment account generated almost \$100,000 last year, with a portion allocated to Section 8 Housing and General Funds.
- Assured the board that there are no anticipated downsides so far, with hopes for continued interest growth.
- Presented the first budget amendment of the year, detailing increases in various funds, including:
  - i. Aging: \$144,037
  - ii. Economic Planning & Community Development: \$346,307
  - iii. Workforce Development: \$1,038,097
  - iv. General Operations: \$481,334
- Informed the board of the special disaster relief grants; Department of Labor for workforce and general operations are funds from the General Assembly.
- Asked for approval for budget amendment 1.

**Decision:** Chairman Baisden requested a motion to approve budget amendment 1. The motion was made by Ashley Wooten, with a second by Jimmy Dancy. All were in favor.

- Reported on the audit status, noting delays in the financial statements being released due to the flooding of Carl's office.
- Stated that the best option was to amend the current audit contract.
- Stated that Carl said he would finish the financial statements by December.
- Informed the board that there was one finding in the audit due to Carl not finishing the REAC report on time.
- Informed the board that FRC plans to bring the accounting procedures in-house when the contract ends with Carl in June 2025.
- Stated there will not be a penalty for the financial statements not being finished on time.

**Decision:** Chairman Baisden requested a motion to amend the audit contract. The motion was made by Ashley Wooten, with a second by Jimmy Dancy. All were in favor.

## Comments

- Chairman Baisden asked if the interest could be allocated anywhere.
- Chairman Baisden inquired about us bringing the accounting procedures in-house.
- Jimmy Dancy asked if there would be any type of penalty for the financial statements not being finished on time.
- Vice-Chair Hopper inquired about the timeline for transitioning audit work in-house.

## 2. Aging Department Update

Laura Lynch:

- Discussed the allocation of \$144,037 (Choosing Home Grant) for housing and home repair, highlighting the impact on seniors and the collaboration with Section 8.
- Informed the board that four clients have already benefited from the funds, with examples of how the money has been used to provide security deposits, appliances, and food assistance.
- Explained that her department will go back in their records to help individuals they could not help before receiving the Choosing Home Grant.
- Mentioned a new \$10,000 grant from US Aging for unrestricted use.
- Mentioned a new \$2,000 grant from SE4A for unrestricted use.
- Informed the board that they plan to pass out hygiene items at Kings Mountains meal giveaway.

## Comments

- Chairman Baisden informed Laura to contact Pauline Carpenter at the free clinic of Hendersonville to receive more essential items.

## 3. Housing Department Update

Pam Hall:

- Stated that the waiting list opened right after Hurricane Helene.
- Informed the board that over 1,100 people are on the waiting list.
- Discussed the timeline for processing applications and issuing vouchers, explaining that the process may take longer due to the destruction from the hurricane.
- Discussed the trend of converting non-traditional structures into living quarters.

## Comments

- Chairman Baisden informed the board that 65 Amish from Pennsylvania have been building tiny homes in Swannanoa.

#### **4. Workforce Development Update**

Danna Stansbury:

- Informed the board that WIOA received a \$4 million Department of Labor grant to help companies affected by disasters, with plans to hire laid-off workers.
- Explained that the Department of Labor grant requires you to hire someone at the current salary for the position for which you are hiring them.
- Briefed on the planning for the Legislative Breakfast at the Equestrian Center scheduled for the fourth Monday in January.
- Mentioned the potential involvement of a sound engineer to improve the event's audio quality.

#### **Comments**

- Vice-Chair Hopper stated that he has identified a sound engineer, willing to volunteer at the Legislative Breakfast.

#### **5. Community & Economic Development Update**

Alan Toney:

- Provided an update on staff certifications, including two new commercial drone pilots (Jack Elliot and Jerry Stensland) and a certified zoning official (Benjamin Bordeaux).
- Informed the board that the drone was used to survey Spindale's sewer plant.
- Informed the board that they plan to use the drone to survey Chimney Rock.
- Discussed recent grant submissions, including two CBDG grants totaling \$1.8 for Spindale and Cleveland County housing projects.
- Provided an update on broadband project estimates, noting the high cost of building fiber to every home in Rutherford County.
- Highlighted recent project completions, including a water and sewer project for the UTZ Chip in Kings Mountain and a training facility in Old Fort.
- Discussed the impact of recent hurricanes on various projects, including the need to close out incomplete projects and the challenges of working with federal funding.
- Provided an update on the use of drones for various projects, including waterline and sewer line inspections and treatment facilities.
- Discussed the importance of documenting project sites and the challenges of working with federal regulations.
- Discussed the benefits of using drones in agriculture projects, highlighting improved decision-making due to real-time data access.
- Mentioned the erosion issue at the Spindale wastewater treatment plant and its impact on the treatment basins.
- Highlighted the strong relationship with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and the potential for future funding.

- Noted that agriculture remains the number one economic driver in North Carolina, emphasizing the importance of their work.
- Discussed the current condition of houses and land in Chimney Rock.

#### **Comments**

- Vice-Chair Hopper praised using drones and aerial capabilities for faster and more effective problem-solving.
- Vice-Chair Hopper emphasized the importance of recognizing the value of drone technology in saving lives and money.
- Chairman Baisden inquired about properties lost due to flooding, including houses and land.
- Vice-Chair Hopper mentioned the insurance company's challenges in evaluating missing land and properties.

### **6. Executive Director's Report**

Danna Stansbury:

- Outlined the initial chaos and resource distribution efforts in the aftermath of the storm.
- Stated that Justin Hembree from Mid Carolina came up and helped FRC for a couple of days.
- Mentioned the creation of a new division for Disaster Recovery and Resiliency led by Penny Martinez.
- Briefed the board on what Penny has been doing to help our region.
- Discussed the need to hire additional staff to support Penny.
- Discussed the \$100,000 and \$383,000 FRC received from the General Assembly.
- Noted FRC does not have the funds from the General Assembly in the bank yet.
- Mentioned the application for additional funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission for \$276,000 for each COG in the western part of the state.
- Discussed the multi-state ask for storm relief funding of 2 million dollars from Congress and the potential benefits.
- Stated that she has been working with Hillary Sherman with EDA. FRC is filling out an application for \$500,000 through EDA.
- Informed the board that Dogwood Health Trust is giving FRC \$700,000, with \$210,000 of it going to Alan for the EDA match, and the rest will go to Workforce.
- Noted the EDA money will be used to hire another person in Alan's department.
- Discussed the RFP for disaster recovery assistance and mentioned the upcoming RFP meeting to decide who will be most capable.
- Announced the new website and email format, now recognized as a government agency (frcnc.gov).
- Announces that FRC won the Building Vibrant Places category in NADO's national photo contest for a photograph of downtown Rutherfordton on Halloween.
- Confirmed the next full board meeting scheduled for December 12 at ICC.



**Comments:**

- Vice-Chair Hopper suggested specializing in helping small communities, which often lack resources and expertise.
- Ashley Wooten expressed the need for a project manager with an engineer or manager background to support long-term recovery efforts in Old Fort.
- Board members discussed the importance of the new email format for official communication and recognition.
- Chairman Basden informed the board of Jack Shytle's absence due to health issues, including a shoulder replacement.
- Jimmy Dancy informed the board that construction on the bypass has been suspended until the new year, with workers redirected to other projects.

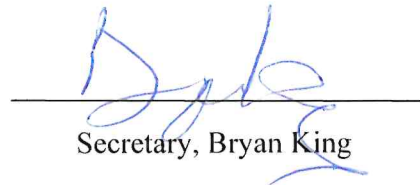
**Adjournment**

Chairman Fred Baisden adjourned the meeting at 1:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Chair, Fred Baisden



Secretary, Bryan King