



Foothills Regional Commission
Executive Committee Meeting
August 22nd, 2024
Minutes

Committee Members Present

- **Chairman**, Fred Baisden, Polk County
- **Vice-Chair**, Max Hopper, Cleveland County
- **Secretary**, Bryan King, Rutherford County
- Jack Shytle, Town of Polkville
- Jimmy Dancy, Town of Rutherfordton

Committee Members Absent

- Dean Buff, McDowell County
- Ashley Wooten, McDowell County

FRC Staff Present

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

Call to order

Foothills Regional Commission's (FRC) Executive Committee meeting was held at FRC in the conference room on August 22nd, 2024. Chairman Fred Baisden called the meeting to order at 12:02 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 May 22nd, 2024, Executive Committee meeting minutes. The motion was made by Jimmy Dancy, with a second by Bryan King. All were in favor.

Approval of closed session minutes

Chairman Baisden requested approval of the May 22nd, 2024, closed session minutes. The motion was made by Jack Shytle, with a second by Jimmy Dancy. All were in favor.

Reports

1. Housing Department Update

Pam Hall:

- Discussed their VASH program for veterans. They are in partnership with the local VA to apply for additional vouchers.
- Informed the board that the local VA has sent a letter to submit with the application and they are waiting for HUD's approval.
- Informed the board that funds have been approved for housing application fees, security deposits, utilities, and other related expenses for VASH families. They have not yet received them.

2. Finance Update

Charlotte Sullivan:

- Presented the Cash Flow Report:
 - i. \$1.7 million in North Carolina Capital Management Trust.
 - ii. \$651,194 in Section 8 Housing Account.
 - iii. \$61,120 in General Fund Account.
 - iv. \$6,751 in Payroll Account.
- Informed the board that the above amounts might change due to audit adjustments.
- Inform the board that the payroll account is kept with minimal cash due to frequent transfers.
- Informed the board that an audit will be conducted on September 30th and October 1st to finalize the fiscal year 24 audit.

Action Item

Chairman Baisden requested a motion to approve the cash flow report. The motion was made by Max Hopper, with a second by Jimmy Dancy. All were in favor.

3. Community & Economic Development Update

Alan Toney:

- Highlighted the training and implementation of the new drone program, which will enhance planning work.

- Informed the board that in 2022, over \$600,000 was allocated for housing projects, primarily in Rutherford and Cleveland counties.
- Stated to the board that the NCACC report highlights a significant rise in median home list prices, with Polk County experiencing a 100% increase. All counties saw at least a 50% rise.
- Informed the board they are applying for a grant through the Gateway Foundation to fund Foothills Region Land Bank Program, which will let each county sell land unused land to help assist in affordable housing.
- Announced new projects including a parking study for Tryon and a land use plan for Rutherford County.
- Informed the board they are working on a CBDG grant for low moderate income housing in Cleveland County.

4. Aging Department Update

Laura Lynch:

- Informed the board that the state has secured a no-cost extension for ARPA funds, allowing expenditure until September 30, 2025.
- Briefed the board of the ARPA funding as follows:
 - i. There is approximately \$200,000 left in ARPA funds.
 - ii. The remaining funds are mainly allocated for supportive services, including in-home aid hours, adult day services, and housing and home improvement projects.
 - iii. The expectation is to spend these funds by the extended deadline.
- Informed the board the region was promised \$144,000 in special housing funds, initially expected by July 1 but it's still delayed.
- Stated to the board that once the funds are available, they will be used for various housing-related expenses, including home repairs, deposits, and utility bills.
- Informed the board that there is potential to coordinate with the VASH program for veterans, integrating these funds into supportive services for that demographic.
- Promised to update the board when the funds are officially received and highlighted the importance of accurate information to avoid issues with fund management.

5. Workforce Development Update

Annette Staley:

- Briefed of the current unemployment rates as of August 14, 2024, as follows:
 - i. Region: 3.7%
 - ii. McDowell County: 3.9%
 - iii. Polk County: 3.8%
 - iv. Rutherford County: 5.5%
 - v. Cleveland County: 4.0%
- Announced the following as current job openings from several top employers in the region who are seeking employees.
 - i. Cleveland County Schools: 64 positions
 - ii. Baxter: 56 positions
 - iii. HC Healthcare: 56 positions
 - iv. Gardner-Webb University: 51 positions
 - v. McDonald's (Rutherford & Cleveland): 43 positions
 - vi. Asplundh Tree Experts: 42 positions
 - vii. Atrium Health: 40 positions
- Informed the board of the employer forum event held on August 6, 2024, with Foothills Workforce Board and NC Works, whose main purpose was to identify unemployment issues.
- Stated the main issues with unemployment are housing, childcare, and transportation.
- Briefed the board of the reentry simulation event that is scheduled for September 13, 2024, to understand the challenges faced by individuals re-entering society post-incarceration.
- Stated that the challenges being faced right now are job losses; highlighted Roses in McDowell County, which is closing and laying off 11 employees.
- Informed the board that in Cleveland County, STI provides housing and support services for former offenders, including assistance with driver's licenses and identification.
- Informed the board that Sandra Jenkins will be the guest speaker for the upcoming partnership conference.
- Announced that Roses is closing in Marion to make way for a Hobby Lobby and there is no indication yet if Hobby Lobby will hire the displaced Roses employees, which are mostly retirees.
- Informed the board that NC Works offers rapid response services for job search, resume building, and training.

- Informed the board that a resource fair will be held in Polk County to connect individuals with various services and distribute food boxes through nonprofit organizations for those in need, and the Title V Program provides work experience for older individuals, but with minimum wage pay.

6. Executive Director's Report

Danna Stansbury:

- Briefed of the By-Laws and membership changes to the board and that discussions are ongoing to simplify the By-Laws.
- Informed the board that the Commission plans to have the final By-Laws ready for review at our December Full Board meeting.
- Stated the By-Laws are outdated, listing 22 board members while there are 32 local governments in the region.
- Informed the board the Commission is reaching out to smaller local governments that are not currently members to understand their needs and potential membership.
- Informed the board that Waco is not interested in participating, but they will reach out as needed.
- Inform the board that the Commission is considering the possibility of associate members who do not have voting rights but can still support the organization financially.
- Announced to the board that the Commission is transitioning to a new email domain. - .gov
- Informed that she will be developing a board orientation to educate new board members about the Commission's programs, funding, and budget structure. The Commission plans to have each department present during the orientation to reaffirm their roles and responsibilities.
- Announced that Charlotte will lead the next board meeting in September, as she will be out of town.
- Informed the board that the Commission is aware of the potential conflict with the June 2025 meeting falling on Juneteenth and plans to reschedule.
- Informed the board that the Commission is exploring the possibility of applying for grants through the FRC nonprofit to fund a new building; a similar approach is being used by a COG in middle Tennessee.

Comments:

- The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for November 14.

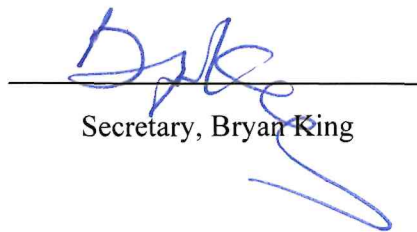
Adjournment

Chairman Fred Baisden adjourned the meeting at 1:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman, Fred Baisden



Secretary, Bryan King