



Foothills Regional Commission  
Executive Committee Meeting  
February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Minutes

**Committee Members Present**

- **Secretary**, Bryan King, Rutherford County
- Jimmy Dancy, Town of Rutherfordton
- Jack Shytle, Town of Polkville
- Ashley Wooten, McDowell County (Virtual)

**Committee Members Absent**

- **Chairman** Fred Baisden, Polk County
- **Vice-Chair**, Max Hopper, Cleveland County
- Dean Buff, McDowell County

**Guest Present**

- David Guy

**FRC Staff Present**

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

**Virtual Attendees**

- Kyle Jones
- Carlos Arredondo

**Call to order**

Foothills Regional Commission's (FRC) Executive Committee meeting was held at Rutherfordton Town Hall in the council room on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Jimmy Dancy called the meeting to order at 12:23 pm and welcomed everyone. Jimmy Dancy gave an invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The board then enjoyed lunch.

**Action Items**

Dancy introduced November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024, meeting minutes for discussion.

- No objections were raised.
- Motion to approve: Ashley Wooten.
- Seconded by: Jack Shytle.
- Motion passed unanimously.



- Budget Amendment #3, totaling \$378,666, was presented and approved. Funding sources and projects included:
  - \$6,500 for financial technical assistance for the Town of Columbus (Amanda and Paloma involved).
  - \$60,000 for CDBG Boiling Springs administration (led by Alan's team).
  - \$42,500 in Rural Center funds obtained by Alan.
  - Adjustment for disaster funds received from the COG Association was less than anticipated.
  - ARC Disaster Grant expected soon: \$276,000.
- Land of Sky Financial Services Partnership:
  - Foothills will temporarily provide a Finance Director to Land of Sky Regional Council (one day/week or more).
  - Fee for service contract.

Dancy introduced Budget Amendment #3 for discussion.

- No objections were raised.
  - Motion to approve: Ashley Wooten.
  - Seconded by: Jack Style.
  - Motion passed unanimously.
- Foothills initiated a procurement process to secure an on-call engineering firm for environmental reviews and grant support.
  - Withers Ravenel was selected as the top-ranked firm.
  - Odom Engineering (local partner) will also support projects.
  - Approval granted to allow Danna Stansbury to sign the agreement.

Dancy introduced the On-Call Engineering Services Contract for discussion.

- No objections were raised.
  - Motion to approve: Ashley Wooten.
  - Seconded by: Bryan King.
  - Motion passed unanimously.
- A new audit contract was signed for \$33,500.
    - Prior findings must be addressed by having auditors prepare financial statements.
    - The cost increased slightly this year due to a recurring finding related to an outside firm preparing financial statements and submitting REAC reports to HUD.
    - Moving forward, the auditors will prepare the financial statements to address and hopefully eliminate the findings.
    - Charlotte and Pam will oversee the REAC submission, with Shannon verifying it.

- The new method is expected to cost less than previous external arrangements.

Dancy introduced the new Audit Contract for discussion.

- No objections were raised.
- Motion to approve: Ashley Wooten.
- Seconded by: Jack Style.
- Motion passed unanimously.

## Audit Presentation

(Shannon Dennison – Anderson, Smith, Wike, PLLC)

### Audit Highlights:

Shannon noted that the delay in issuing the audit until January was not due to the Commission staff but to delays in preparing financial statements. She praised the team's excellent cooperation and timely responses.

#### Fund Balance Overview:

- Just under \$200,000 in unassigned fund balance available for use.
- Approximately \$1.2 million designated for housing-related purposes.
- Around \$1.3 million in receivables were reported, with higher-than-usual receivables due to delayed payments from Aging services for May and June. These payments were received in early July.

#### Delayed Payments from Aging Services:

- Aging services were late with May and June payments across multiple COGs, likely due to staffing shortages.
- The Commission's strong fund balance prevented any negative financial impact.

#### Budget Performance and Capital Fund:

- Increased fund balance by \$961,000.
- Assigned approximately \$94,000 to a capital renovation fund.
- All expenditures remained within the approved budget; no budget violations reported.

#### Other Financial Notes:

- Post-Employment Benefits Trust Fund increased by about \$80,000.
- No issues or concerns were noted.

### Audit Findings:

No Internal Control Findings:

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- Controls are in place to safeguard assets and ensure proper financial procedures.

No State Findings:

- No issues with state-awarded funds.

One Federal Finding (HUD Reporting):

- Repeat findings related to late submission of the HUD report to the REAC system.
- The initial report missed the March 31 deadline; the final report was submitted in June.
- The FY2024 initial report submitted in December is awaiting HUD approval.

## Q&A and Discussion

- Dancy inquired about the state's deadline for audit submission:
  - Dennison explained the effective deadline is November 30 (with a 30-day grace period beyond October 31).
  - For FY2024, submission was on January 22. The deadline will shift to December 31 for FY2025.
  - Dennison's firm will aim to meet the original October 30 target.
- Penalties for Late Submission:
  - No penalties unless submission is delayed beyond March 31. After that, federal funds may be withheld.
- Closing Comments:
  - Dancy appreciated the clean audit and the staff's hard work.
  - Dennison expressed the goal of completing audits earlier in future years.

## Reports & Presentations

### Roston Consulting

(Kyle Jones and Carlos Arredondo)

- Kyle Jones and Carlos Arredondo from Roston presented an update on their work with the Foothills Regional Commission (FRC).
- Three primary objectives of their work include:
  - Promoting regional collaboration between Polk, Rutherford, Cleveland, and McDowell counties.
  - Maximizing federal funding through FEMA and other programs.
  - Ensuring retention of funding through proper audit and closeout procedures.
- Updates were provided on disaster recovery efforts, including:
  - Emergency protective measures.



- Damage assessments and funding opportunities.
- Infrastructure restoration, including water and sewage systems.
- Disaster Recovery Updates
  - Foothills Regional Commission: Working on securing funding for emergency protective measures and facility damage assessments.
  - Chimney Rock Village: Recovery efforts for infrastructure and business support.
  - Polk County: Major focus on dam repairs and securing funding for restoration.
  - Town of Rutherfordton: Damage evaluation for 134 Maple Street (old college building), with discussions on potential replacement.
  - Other municipalities: Ongoing assessments to determine necessary recovery efforts.

## Finance & Budget

**(Charlotte Sullivan, Finance Director)**

- Presented cash flow as of December 31:
  - \$3.5 million in Investment Account (NCCMT)
  - \$719,021 in Section 8 Housing Account
  - \$117,880 in the General Fund Account
  - \$4,721 in the Payroll Account
- No questions were raised.
- Discussion initiated regarding the retiree health insurance benefit policy.
- Currently paying \$1,300/month for a retiree's health insurance, which exceeds what active employees pay (\$800/month).
- Suggest revising the policy to cap the amount paid to retirees at the same level as current employee health insurance.
- Discussion also noted confusion over continued payments after retirees become Medicare-eligible.
- The board agreed to place this item on the next Executive Board agenda for further discussion and possible policy adjustment.

## Area Agency on Aging

**(Laura Lynch, Area Agency on Aging Director)**

- Choosing Home: 12–15 clients served across Rutherford, McDowell, Cleveland, and Polk Counties.
- New funding of approximately \$140,000 received from State Recovery Funds for high-risk seniors' food assistance.
- Strategy:
  - High-risk seniors identified via ARM system reports.
  - Deliver food boxes twice a month via Walmart delivery.
  - Staff will directly manage cases and perform bi-weekly check-in calls with clients.

- Opportunity to use residual Choosing Home funds for emergency needs (e.g., refrigerators, microwaves).
- Program logistics are fully underway.

## Housing

**(Pam Hall, Housing Director)**

- HUD approved five additional Veteran Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers.
- Total vouchers increased from 30 to 35.
- Coordination is ongoing with the local VA to maximize voucher utilization and support veterans with security deposits.

## Workforce Development Update

**(Annette Staley, Workforce Development Director)**

- November unemployment rates:
  - Rutherford: 5.3%
  - McDowell: 4.5%
  - Cleveland: 3.4%
  - Polk: 3.7%
- Disaster impact continues, but the National Dislocated Worker Grant is underway:
  - FRC has a total of five work sites, and employees are enrolled.
  - PSU contracted to handle payroll services.
- Performance Assessment:
  - Passed Department of Labor performance standards for PY23.
  - Exceeded negotiated performance goals in all categories.
- Announced the resignation of Sarah Crank, who is moving to a new role at Isothermal Community College.

## Community & Economic Development Update

**(Alan Toney, Community & Economic Development Director)**

- FEMA bridge grant applications:
  - Two out of three community projects moved to full funding application status.
- CDBG Housing Grants:
  - Over \$3 million awarded regionally.

- \$2.1 million to Spindale, ~ \$1 million split among Boiling Springs, Kingstown, Polkville, Casar, Lawndale, Falston, and others.
- Staff Updates:
  - Jordan Barnes departed; Preston Janco hired as a new planner starting Monday.
- Regional Housing Study:
  - Preliminary data shows severe housing needs across the region.
- Local government contracts with Forest City, Rutherfordton, and Columbus are ongoing.

## Executive Director's Report


**(Danna Stansbury, Executive Director)**


- Nominating Committee Update:
  - Mayor Jimmy Dancy will chair the Nominating Committee to fill vacancies.
- Shared Services with Land of Sky Regional Council is progressing positively.
- Legislative Breakfast Recap:
  - Largest attendance to date.
  - Positive feedback from board members.
- Clerk Certification:
  - Amanda Scott is working toward Clerk to the Board certification, completing coursework in May.
- Executive Director Evaluation:
  - Disaster recovery efforts delayed progress on FY goals such as updating bylaws and personnel policies.
- Meeting Calendar:
  - The June 19th meeting will be rescheduled to avoid conflict with Juneteenth observances.

## Adjournment

Dancy adjourned the meeting at 1:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Chair, Fred Baisden *vc*

  
Secretary, Bryan King