



Foothills Regional Commission
Full Board Meeting
December 12th, 2024
Minutes

Board Members Present

- **Vice-Chair:** Max Hopper, Cleveland County
- **Secretary:** Bryan King, Rutherford County
- David Guy, Town of Ruth
- Jack Shytle, Town of Polkville
- Scott Webber, Town of Spindale
- Jimmy Dancy, Town of Rutherfordton
- Bob Boyette, City of Marion
- Steve Garrison, Rutherford County
- Larry Dooley, Cleveland County
- Peter O'Leary, Chimney Rock Village
- Tommy Greene, Town of Boiling Springs

FRC Staff Present

- Danna Stansbury
- Charlotte Sullivan
- Amanda Scott
- Annette Staley
- Pam Hall
- Laura Lynch
- Jack Elliot

FRC Staff Absent

- Alan Toney

Board Members Absent

- **Chair:** Fred Baisden, Polk County
- Doug Bridges, Cleveland County
- Janet Gerald, Town of Kingstown
- Jeffery Emory, Town of Grover
- Rodney Willis, Town of Bellwood
- Ashley Wooten, McDowell County
- Tom Helton, Town of Ellenboro
- Rick Howell, City of Shelby
- Mike Lugo, Rutherford County
- Scott Neisler, City of Kings Mountain
- Ray Padgett, Town of Lawndale
- Mark Phillips, Town of Columbus
- Jeff Swink, Town of Bostic
- Dorris Weaver, Town of Fallston
- Carol Pritchett, Town of Lake Lure
- Justin Conner, Town of Forest City
- David Moore, Polk County
- Marche Pittman, Polk County
- Dean Buff, McDowell County

Guest Present

- Nathan Ramsey, Land of Sky
- Mark Constantine, Dogwood Health Trust
- Drew Christy, Governor Roy Cooper Rep



Call to order

Foothills Regional Commission's (FRC) Full Board meeting was held at Isothermal Community College in the Walter Dalton Engineering Technology Building, room 215B on December 12, 2024. Vice Chair Max Hopper called the meeting to order at 12:09 pm and welcomed everyone. Vice Chair Hopper gave an invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and State Salute to the North Carolina Flag. The board then enjoyed lunch together.

Approval of minutes

Vice Chair Hopper introduced June 13th, 2024, meeting minutes for discussion.

- No objections were raised.
- Motion to approve: Jimmy Dancy.
- Seconded by: Larry Dooley.
- Motion passed unanimously.

Reports and Presentations

A. Rebuilding Western North Carolina (Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, Land of Sky Regional Council)

- Hurricane caused over 100 deaths and \$53 billion in damages, making it the second deadliest U.S. hurricane since Katrina.
- Challenges: Infrastructure damage, communication breakdowns, slow federal response.
- Funding Needs:
 - \$25 billion requested from the federal government.
 - \$30 billion in uncompensated losses require state, federal, and philanthropic aid.
 - FEMA has allocated \$500 million, but more is needed.
- Emphasized the importance of regional collaboration and the role of councils of government in disaster recovery.

B. Dogwood Health Trust (Mark Constantine, VP, Dogwood Health Trust)

- \$205 million invested in the region, including \$80M in historical investments.
- Priorities: Affordable housing, small business grants (\$10M), broadband expansion, mental health support.
- New funding for local governments and nonprofits is expected in early 2025.

C. Governor's Office Update (Drew Christy, Rep. for Governor Cooper)

- \$25.6 billion requested from the federal government for disaster recovery.
- 90% of the federal cost share has been approved (up from 75%) to ease local financial burdens.
- FEMA rental assistance and disaster unemployment extended into early 2025.
- Efforts are ongoing to raise the private road and bridge reimbursement caps beyond \$42,500.

Finance & Budget

(Charlotte Sullivan, Finance Director)

Cash Flow Report (as of September 30, 2024)

- Investment Account: \$2.2 million
- General Operating Account: \$31,430 (funds transferred as needed from investments)
- Section 8 Account: \$754,674 (restricted funding)
- Payroll Account: \$4,649 (monthly transfers for payroll)

Budget Amendment #2 – \$635,250

- Community & Economic Development - \$362,000:
 - Dogwood Digital Funding: \$35,000
 - Safe Streets for All Federal Grant: \$256,000
 - Local Match for Safe Streets (Dogwood Health Trust): \$64,000
 - Town of Rutherfordton Action Plan: \$2,000
 - Town of Tryon Parking Study: \$5,000
- Workforce Development - \$173,250:
 - Federal grant for disaster relief.
 - Additional amendment for program participant funding.
- General Operations - \$100,000:
 - The first-year portion of a five-year, \$500,000 EDA grant.

Vice Chair Hopper introduced Budget Amendment #2 Resolution for discussion.

- No objections were raised.
- Motion to approve: Jimmy Dancy
- Seconded by: David Guy
- Motion passed unanimously.

Audit Update

- Audit is 95% complete, pending final HUD documentation.
- Expected completion by January 31, 2025.
- Auditors will present the audit at the next Executive Committee meeting in February.

Housing

(Pam Hall, Housing Director)

- Veterans Assistance:
 - \$9,500 awarded through VASH administrative funds to assist veterans.
 - Funds can be used for security deposits, landlord incentives, and application fees.
 - Collaborating with the local VA to assist veterans in securing housing.
- Housing Waiting List Update:
 - Within three days of the October 1 opening, 1,000 applications were received online.
 - Additional applications were accepted by mail for the elderly and individuals with disabilities.
 - HUD budget concerns:
 - HUD has advised on the need for careful monitoring of funding due to federal budget uncertainty.
 - Monthly financial reviews will be conducted with Charlotte Sullivan and HUD analysts.
 - Potential risk of limited or no new voucher issuances depending on funding levels.

Area Agency on Aging

(Laura Lynch, Area Agency on Aging Director)

- Announced that her department has received \$144,000 in senior housing and home repair funding, which can be used through December 2026.
- Stated that she has already assisted seven individuals: four in Cleveland County and three in Rutherford County
- Informed the board that outreach has been initiated by emailing all service providers across the four-county region to maximize awareness and referrals.
- Stated that housing and home repair for seniors will be a primary focus area for the department moving forward.
- Mentioned that she plans to actively pursue funding opportunities to support seniors in housing-related needs, especially in light of increased demand following the recent hurricane.
- Encouraged board members and stakeholders to share information about housing needs or potential opportunities
- Informed the board that they have several different funding streams specifically earmarked for senior services, housing, and recovery efforts.

Workforce Development

(Annette Staley, Workforce Development Director)

- 1,669 disaster unemployment claims have been filed; a mobile NC Works unit has been deployed for assistance.
- Received a \$250K Disaster Recovery Grant as part of a \$35M national fund for cleanup and employment.
- Seeking local project sites for cleanup and rebuilding jobs.
- Dogwood Health Trust Grant applied for:
 - \$3K for personnel funding (2 years).
 - \$175K for workforce development (2 years).
- The Cleveland County Workforce Office is relocating to a county-owned property for cost savings.

Economic Development & CEDS Update

(Alan Toney, Economic Development Director – Absent; Jack Elliot presented on his behalf)

- CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) Update:
 - Annual update required to maintain EDA funding and regional Economic Development District designation.
 - Focus areas include economic growth, workforce development, infrastructure, and housing.
 - Center on Rural Innovation collaboration to create and repurpose shell buildings for new businesses.
 - Safe Streets for All initiative promoting multi-modal transportation and pedestrian infrastructure.
 - Ongoing housing studies covering Polk, Rutherford, McDowell, and Cleveland Counties (funded by Dogwood Health Trust).
 - Hiring a new regional planner; selection process concludes December 20.
 - CDBG grant applications are currently underway, with two additional projects also underway.
- Vice Chair Hopper introduced the CEDS update approval, as required by EDA, for discussion.
 - No objections were raised.
 - Motion to approve: Bob Boyette
 - Seconded by: Jimmy Dancy
 - Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Report

(Danna Stansbury, Executive Director)

- The commission requires five ARPA policies to be approved to ensure compliance and successfully close out ARPA grants in the coming years; these approvals must be formally documented.
- FRC won a national award for "Building Vibrant Places" photo contest.

- Building relocation may be necessary due to hurricane damage, and support from the state and FEMA will be sought.
- The February 20 Executive Committee meeting was moved to February 13.

Vice Chair Hopper introduced the 5 ARPA policies for discussion.

- No objections were raised.
- Motion to approve: Larry Dooley.
- Seconded by: Tommy Greene.
- Motion passed unanimously.

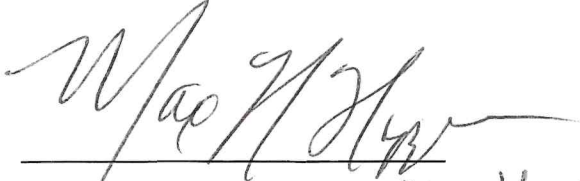
Action Items

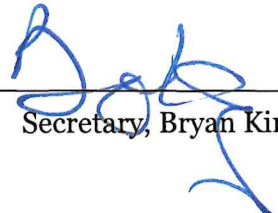
- Approval of the minutes from June 13, 2024. The motion was by Jimmy Dancy, seconded by Larry Dooley.
- Budget Amendment #2 approved. The motion was by Jimmy Dancy, seconded by David Guy.
- CEDS Update approved. The motion was made by Bob Boyette and seconded by Jimmy Dancy.
- Policy updates (allowable costs, conflict of interest, records retention, etc.) approved. The motion was made by Larry Dooley and seconded by Tommy Greene.

Announcements & Adjournment

- Next meeting: February 13, 2025.
- Meeting adjourned at 2:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


 Vice Chairman, Fred Baisden Max Hopper


 Secretary, Bryan King