

AGENDA
BUDGET/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
4808 ELIZABETH STREET, TEXARKANA, TEXAS
August 24, 2026
1:30 PM

Videoconference Meeting

Use the following information to register for the meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/nwWFwrs3SUeFb0pa9VTdWA>

If you experience issues while registering or do not have access to a computer, please contact Marla Matthews, no less than two (2) workdays prior to the meeting at 903.255.3555 or mmatthews@atcoq.org.

1. Call to Order
2. Review and consider approval of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Budget/Personnel Committee meeting held on Wednesday, June 24, 2026. (See page 2)
3. Review and consider the recommendation for ATCOG's Financial Plan for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2027, to be adopted by the ATCOG Board of Directors. (Budget documents will be displayed during the meeting; to be presented by Mary Beth Rudel, Executive Director)
4. Adjourn

Pursuant to the Texas Open Meeting Act, Government Code Chapter 551, one or more of the above items may be considered in an executive session closed to the public, including but not limited to consultation with an attorney pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 and Section 551.074 arising out of the attorney's ethical duty to advise ATCOG concerning legal issues arising from an agenda item. Any decision held on such a matter will be taken or conducted in an open session following the conclusion of the executive session.

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact the Administration at 903-832-8636, two (2) workdays prior to the meeting, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

All agendas are sent electronically and are available on the ATCOG website at www.atcoq.org. Should any Board Member need a copy printed and available at the meeting, please call 903.255.3555 or email mmatthews@atcoq.org.

**MINUTES
BUDGET/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
June 24, 2026, 1:00 p.m.**

The Budget/Personnel Committee of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) met at 1:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 24, 2026, via videoconference.

1. Scott Norton, Executive Director and CEO of TexAmericas Center, called the meeting to order.
2. The next order of business was to approve the Budget/Personnel Committee meeting minutes held on August 25, 2025.

Motion to approve was made by Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County, and seconded by Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County. It was approved.

3. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel, Executive Director, presented for review and recommendation approval of the Investment Policy that establishes procedures to be followed in investing funds for the Ark-Tex Council of Governments.

ATCOG normally operates on a reimbursable basis, whereby we receive approval for grant funds, provide services, and then are reimbursed for our money from the grant. In the event that ATCOG receives funds in advance, the Investment Policy stipulates how the funds are to be invested.

The Public Funds Investment Act requires that the ATCOG Board of Directors review and approve the Investment Policy annually.

Motion to recommend approval to the ATCOG Board of Directors was made by Judge Reeder and seconded by Judge Newsom. It was approved.

4. Ms. Laura Cowling, Finance Director, presented for review and recommendation approval of the revision to the Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual that establishes procedures to be followed in the Finance Department for the Ark-Tex Council of Governments.

The following administrative updates are needed to reflect current practices and improve operational efficiency. The proposed revisions include:

- **Separation of Duties: Journal Vouchers** – Updating the journal voucher approval authority to the Finance Director or designated staff.
- **Bank Reconciliation** – Revising bank reconciliation responsibilities from the Payroll Specialist to the Accounting Coordinator.
- **Travel: Travel Vouchers** – Establishing a three-day deadline for submission of finalized overnight travel paperwork.

ATCOG policy requires that the ATCOG Board review and approve any policy and procedure changes.

Judge Reeder inquired if the three-day deadline was business days. Ms. Cowling confirmed that

they refer to business days and that she would revise the travel submission to state “three business days.”

Motion to recommend approval to the ATCOG Board of Directors was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Judge Reeder. It was approved.

5. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel, Executive Director, presented for review and recommendation approval of the proposed Salary Schedule for ATCOG for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2027.

Ms. Rudel presented the proposed recommendation for the FY2027 Salary Schedule, which included a 3% COLA for ATCOG employees. All ATCOG employees are paid at the lower end of the State salary scale. No positions at ATCOG exceed the pay of State employees in equivalent positions.

Motion to recommend approval of the proposed FY2027 Salary Schedule to the ATCOG Board of Directors was made by Judge Reeder and seconded by Judge Newsom. It was approved.

6. Ms. Amber Murr, Human Resources Director, presented for review and recommendation approval authorizing the Executive Director to sign the Rerate and Benefit Verification Form with Texas Health Benefits Pool (TxHB) to continue to provide health, dental, and life insurance benefits to staff for Plan Year 2026-2027.

Ms. Murr advised the Committee that the Rerate Notice for FY 2027 includes a 6% increase in health premiums, no increase in dental, and a decrease in life insurance rates.

ATCOG will be offering four plan options to staff. We are proposing to make a defined contribution of \$1,003.34 per employee per month. This will cover the basic PPO health plan rate of \$1,003.34. Staff who wish to “buy up” to a more expensive plan may do so at their own expense. There is also a high deductible plan at a rate of \$884.22 per month that would allow staff to contribute the remaining defined contribution to a health savings account.

Motion to recommend approval to the ATCOG Board of Directors was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Judge Reeder. It was approved

7. Ms. Leslie McBride, Deputy Director, presented for review and recommendation approval of the revision to the Ark-Tex Council of Governments Policies and Procedures Manual.

The following revisions to the policy and procedures manual are being proposed to adjust leave accruals:

- **6.03 Annual Leave Accrual** – adding a level of accrual at fifteen (15)+ years
- **6.08 Sick Leave Accrual** – increasing from seventy-two (72) hours to ninety-six (96) hours per year
- Additionally, the policy revision will remove the term “days” and replace it with “hours.”

Upon Board approval, the policy revisions will be distributed to all employees and added to our Policies and Procedures Manual, effective October 1, 2026.

Motion to recommend approval to the ATCOG Board of Directors was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Judge Reeder. It was approved

8. With no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Judge Reeder. It was approved. Meeting adjourned.

BUDGET/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center

Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County

Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Mary Beth Rudel, Executive Director

Leslie McBride, Deputy Director

Laura Cowling, Finance Director

Amber Murr, Human Resources Director

Marla Matthews, Executive Assistant

Scott Norton, Vice President
Ark-Tex Council of Governments

ATTEST:

(Signature/Date)