JOINT MINUTES
NORTHEAST TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AND
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
June 27, 2024

The Northeast Texas Economic Development District, Inc. (NETEDD) and the Board of Directors of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) met at 10:00 a.m., Thursday, June 27, 2024, at the Mount Pleasant Civic Center, located at 1800 North Jefferson Avenue, Mount Pleasant, Texas, and via videoconference.

Item 1. Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County, called the meeting to order.

Item 2. Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County, gave the invocation.

Item 3. Public Comment.

No member of the public made a comment.

Judge Howell recognized and welcomed the following new Board member(s):

- Dr. John Booth, Ed.D., Board of Trustee, Texarkana College, Bowie County

NETEDD Agenda Items

Item 4. The first order of business was to review and consider approval of the minutes as submitted for the NETEDD meeting held on Thursday, February 29, 2024.

Motion to approve was made by Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb, and seconded by Judge Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County. It was approved.

Item 5. Ms. Toni Lindsey presented for review and consideration approval of the 2023-2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – 2024 Update.

The CEDS 2024 update will modify the name North East Texas Economic Development District to include "Inc." at the end of the title and all references to such throughout the document. This will provide consistency and comply with federal requirements after the SAM.gov update

Motion to approve was made by Kent Cooper, Judge, Titus County, and seconded by Judge Newsom. It was approved.

Item 6. This item was not presented for review or approval.

Item 7. Ms. Melody Harmon presented for review and consideration approval to modify the NETEDD Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program Plan.

The Development Department, while reviewing policies, identified an area to expedite funding for micro-loans for small businesses. It was determined that the current maximum lending approval by the Executive Director, set at $25,000, should be increased to serve current economic needs.

The amount determined by such discussions was to increase the maximum loan in NETEDD RLF Special Considerations sections of the NETEDD RLF Plan Item 1. (*Short-Term Personal Guarantee*)

from $25,000 to $50,000. The Executive Director approval level will be increased from $25,000 to $50,000 for all NETEDD RLF loans, including Special Conditions. In addition, to align with other federal lending programs, the job creation goal will be modified from one (1) job per $75,000 to one (1) job per $95,000 (*NETEDD RLF Plan page 6*).

This will allow for funding requests between $25,000 to $50,000 to be approved internally. This will avoid additional costs for more detailed loan packaging and convening loan committees for smaller requests. This applies to all NETEDD RLF loans, including the Special Conditions section in the NETEDD RLF plan.

Economic Development recommends approval of the modification to the NETEDD RLF Program Plan to include a maximum loan approval amount of up to $50,000 for the Special Consideration section, approval of all NETEDD loans by the Executive Director, and alignment of the job creation goal with other federally funded programs.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Walker and seconded by Dr. John Booth, Ed.D., Board of Directors, Texarkana College. It was approved.

This concluded all NETEDD agenda items.

ATCOG Executive Committee Agenda Items

Item 8. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the consent agenda items.

- Approval of the minutes as submitted for the ATCOG Board of Directors Meeting held Thursday, April 25, 2024.
- Acceptance of the minutes as submitted for the Solid Waste Advisory Committee held on Tuesday, June 18, 2024.

Motion to approve was made by Brad Johnson, Board Member, NETEX Rail, and seconded by Gary Spraggins, Council Member, City of Sulphur Springs. It was approved.

Regular Business

Item 9. Ms. Melinda Tickle presented for review and consideration approval of the Investment Policy that establishes procedures to be followed in investing funds for ATCOG.

In December 2002, the ATCOG Board approved a new Investment Policy. ATCOG normally operates on a reimbursable basis, whereby we receive approval for grant funds, provide services, and then are reimbursed our money from that particular grant. In the event ATCOG should receive funds in advance, the Investment Policy stipulates how the funds are invested.

Ms. Tickle stated that the ATCOG Investment Policy has no new updates. The Budget and Personnel Committee met on June 24, 2024, reviewed, approved, and recommended for full Board approval.

Motion to approve was made by Dr. John Booth and seconded by Judge Newsom. It was approved.

Item 10. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the proposed Salary Schedule for ATCOG for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025.

Ms. Rudel presented the proposed recommendation for the FY2025 Salary Schedule, which included a maximum of a 3.3% COLA for ATCOG employees. All ATCOG employees are paid lower or at the low end of the State salary scale. No positions at ATCOG exceed the pay of State employees in equivalent positions.

Ms. Rudel stated that a new position, Public Relations & Media Coordinator, has been added to the Salary Schedule. The purpose of the position is to focus on informing the public of who ATCOG is and the services ATCOG provides to our region. The Budget and Personnel Committee met on June 24, 2024, reviewed, approved, and recommended for full Board approval.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Cooper and seconded by Dr. John Booth. It was approved.

Item 11. Review and consider approval authorizing the Executive Director to sign the Rerate and Benefit Verification Form with Texas Health Benefits (TxHB) Health to continue to provide health, dental, and life insurance benefits to staff for Plan Year 2024-2025.

Ms. Murr stated that the Rerate Notice for FY 2025 includes no increase for health premiums, dental, and life insurance rates. ATCOG will remain at the previous year's defined contribution of $946.54 to each employee per month, a 0% increase. The rate of $946.54 will pay for the basic PPO health plan. The Budget and Personnel Committee met on June 24, 2024, reviewed, approved, and recommended for full Board approval.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Walker and seconded by Chris Brown, Board Member, Hopkins County Hospital District. It was approved.

Item 12. Ms. Melinda Tickle presented for review and consideration approval of the Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual that establishes procedures to be followed in the ATCOG Finance Department.

In December 2023, ATCOG added Microix to be used with the Abila MIP software. We updated ATCOG credit card procedures by issuing cards to the different departments. As processes changed, an update of the Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual became necessary. The manual reflects the changes in procedures to accommodate the use of departmental credit cards and Microix with Abila MIP.

ATCOG policy requires that the ATCOG Board review and approve any policy and procedure changes. The Accounting Policy and Procedures Manual is attached for review. The Budget and Personnel Committee met on June 24, 2024, reviewed, approved, and recommended for full Board approval.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Brad Johnson. It was approved.

Item 13. Ms. Debbie Purifoy presented for review and consideration approval of revisions to the ATCOG Procurement Policy and Procedures Manual.

The following revisions to the procurement policy and procedures manual are being proposed:

11.2 Resolution of Protested Solicitations and Awards

- Department Head is being deleted
- Operations Officer is being changed to Deputy Director
- Executive Director is being added

Upon Board approval, the policy revisions will be updated in our Procurement Policy and Procedures Manual.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Cooper and seconded by Brad Johnson. It was approved.

Item 14. Ms. Debbie Purifoy presented for review and consideration approval authorizing the Executive Director to renew a contract with Windstream to provide phone and internet services.\

The proposed amendments seek to renew our existing agreements for VoIP phone and internet services as well as the associated Office Suite services with Windstream for an additional five years. This renewal is facilitated through the Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS) contract, which ensures that we continue to benefit from competitively negotiated rates and terms.

The primary objective of these amendments is to prevent potential rate increases over the next five years. By locking in the current rates, we can achieve significant cost savings and budget stability. The amendments maintain all other terms and conditions of the original agreements, ensuring no disruptions or changes to the services provided.

The total monthly cost of the phone, internet, and office suite package is $2,969.89, which is $178,193.40 for the 5-year contract.

Motion to approve was made by Chris Brown and seconded by Dr. John Booth. It was approved.

Item 15. Mr. Paul Prange presented for review and consideration approval authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a contract with ALL4 LLC to conduct Air Quality Modeling and Emission Inventory in Bowie County, Texas, beginning 2024 through 2025.

In 2024, the ATCOG Environmental Program secured funding through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Rider 7 PM2.5 Air Quality Grant to conduct emission inventories and air quality modeling in Bowie County, Texas.

ATCOG Environmental Program staff issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to solicit bids for air quality modeling and emission inventories in Bowie County, Texas.

ATCOG representatives reviewed and scored the proposals received on June 12, 2024. Based on the highest total score, ALL4 LLC was selected as the vendor to conduct this project. The total cost of the project is $118,750.00. The grant will pay the consultant approximately $106,000.00, and ATCOG will utilize the remaining funds to administer the grant program.

The Board requested ATCOG provide the TCEQ Air Quality rating for each of their perspective counties.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Walker and seconded by Judge Cooper. It was approved.

Item 16. Mr. Paul Prange presented for review and consideration approval of membership changes on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC).

The following member has resigned from the SWAC:

- Jon Dalzell – Former Vice-Chairman of the SWAC and former representative of the Hopkins County, Texas Beautification Committee.

The following member has been appointed by the SWAC to serve as Vice-Chairman:

- Robert (Bob) Murray – Current member of the SWAC and representative for Bowie County, Texas.

Motion to approve was made by Judge Newsom and seconded by Chris Brown. It was approved.

Item 17. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of a grant application to be submitted to the Farmers Electric Charitable Foundation in the amount of $7,500 for the TRAX Rural Transportation System.

The Farmers Electric Charitable Foundation has not yet contributed grant funds for the TRAX Transportation program. ATCOG requests approval to apply for a $7,500 Farmers Electric Charitable Foundation grant for FY2025.

Motion to approve was made by Brad Johnson and seconded by Judge Newsom. It was approved.

Item 18. Review and consider authorizing the Executive Director to enter into a contract with Airwaves Communications, Inc., to purchase a communications tower and equipment for Lamar County.

ATCOG Homeland Security Program, in conjunction with Lamar County, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit bids for the installation of a 318 FT Self-supporting tower with antennas and accessories to be installed in Lamar County.

ATCOG and Lamar County representatives met on June 17, 2024, to review and score the proposals received. Based on the highest total score, Airwaves Communications, Inc. was selected as the vendor to complete this project. The total estimated cost of the project is $541,195. The grant will cover approximately $246,393 of the expenses, and the remaining costs will be the responsibility of Lamar County. The start and completion of this project are contingent upon Lamar County Commissioner's Court approving and agreeing that Lamar County will pay any and all costs over the grant allocated amount.

Motion to approve was made by Gary Spraggins and seconded by Dr. John Booth. It was approved.

Item 19. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval to cancel the July ATCOG Executive Committee meeting and to move the annual meeting from September to August.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Walker and seconded by Judge Cooper. It was approved.

Item 20. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented the Computerized Criminal History System (CCH) Update for information only.

Item 21. The Board did not discuss this at this time.

Item 22. Judge Howell announced the following nominating committee member appointments for the purpose of appointing Executive Committee members, Executive Committee Officers, and subcommittee members.

The Nominating Committee appointments made are as follows:

- Judge Bobby Howell, President; Chair, Bowie County
- Mr. Scott Norton, Vice President; Vice-Chair
- Judge Scott Lee, Franklin County

- Judge Robert Newsom, Hopkins County
- Judge Doug Reeder, Morris County
- Mayor Ann Rushing, City of Clarksville

Judge Howell stated that the appointed Committee will make recommendations to the full Board for the Executive Committee members, Executive Committee Officers, and subcommittees for 2025.

Announcements

The next ATCOG Annual Board of Directors will meet on Thursday, August 29, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., at the Love Civic Center, 2025 S. Collegiate Drive, Paris, Texas, and via videoconference.

With no further business to discuss a motion to adjourn was made by Judge Cooper and seconded by Gary Spraggins. It was approved.

NETEDD BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
Kent Cooper, Judge, Titus County
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT
Kent Cooper, Judge, Titus County
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center

ATCOG BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT
Chris Brown, Board Member, Hopkins County Hospital District
John Booth, Ed.D., Board Member, Texarkana College
Juan Duenez, Board Member, Mt. Pleasant Independent School District
David Fordinal, Commissioner, City of Como
Laney Harris, Councilmember, City of Texarkana-AR
Jean Matlock, City Council, Texarkana, Texas
Shannon McGuire, Board Member, Paris Junior College
Gary Spraggins, Council Member, City of Sulphur Springs
Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb

GUESTS PRESENT
Kyle Hunt, ALL4 LLC

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT
Mary Beth Rudel, Executive Director
Leslie McBride, Deputy Director
Rea Allen, 9-1-1 Director
Whitney Fezell, Homeland Security Coordinator
Melody Harmon, Economic Development Director
Toni Lindsey, Regional Development Director
Marla Matthews, Executive Assistant
Amber Murr, Human Resources Director
Paul Prange, Environmental Resources Coordinator

Debbie Purifoy, Compliance and Purchasing Officer
Sheena Record, Transportation Coordinator
Melinda Tickle, Finance Director

[redacted]

Bobby Howell, President
North East Texas Economic Development District, Inc.
Board of Directors

ATTEST:

[redacted]