

**JOINT MINUTES
NORTHEAST TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT AND
ARK-TEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
August 29, 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, August 29, 2024, at the Love Civic Center, located at 2025 South Collegiate Drive, Paris, Texas, and via videoconference.

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

Item 2. Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb, gave the invocation.

Item 3. Public Comment.

No member of the public made a comment.

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, June 27, 2024.

Motion to approve was made by Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO of TexAmericas, and seconded by Mayor Walker. It was approved.

Item 5. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel presented for review and consideration approval of the NETEDD's portion of ATCOG's Financial Plan for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025.

Ms. Rudel presented the NETEDD Budget/Economic Development budget, Ark Tex Regional Development Company (ATRDC), RLFs, Chapman RLF, East Texas Rural Access Program (ETRAP) RLF, NETEDD RLF CARES ACT, Farm Home Administration (FmHA) RLF, and USDA RLF. The NETEDD Budget also includes the Regional Development portion, which consists of the planning grants that bring economic development into the region.

Motion to approve was made by Chris Brown, Vice President of Hopkins County Hospital District Board, and seconded by Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville. It was approved.

Item 6. This item was presented for information only.

This concluded all NETEDD agenda items.

ATCOG Board of Directors Agenda Items

Item 7. Ms. Mary Beth 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 on Thursday, June 27, 2024.
- Acceptance of the minutes as submitted for the Homeland Security Advisory Committee meeting held on Thursday, February 22, 2024.

Motion to approve was made by Becky Fellers, Board of Trustees, Liberty Eylau Independent

School District, and seconded by Scott Norton. It was approved.

Executive Closed Session

Item 8. Judge Howell called for the Board of Directors to recess from the Open Session into the Executive Closed Session at 10:08 a.m. to discuss personnel matters as allowed in the Texas Open Meetings Act, Section 551.074, Executive Director's Performance Evaluation.

Regular Business

Item 9. Judge Howell reconvened the Board of Directors meeting into an Open Session at 10:40 a.m. No action was taken on Item 8.

Item 10. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel provided the Board with the following updates and reports for information.

- ATCOG FY23 9-1-1 Program Final Compliance Assessment
- Indirect Finance Quarterly Report
- Quarterly Program Reports

Item 11. Ms. Mary Beth Rudel provided for review and consideration approval of ATCOG's Financial Plan for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025.

Ms. Rudel summarized the Line Item Cost Comparison, Direct/Indirect Comparison, Program budgets, goals, objectives, work tasks, and performance measures. She stated that the benefit rate is estimated to be 55.79%, which includes utilizing the FY23 overallocation.

Per Texas Health and Human Services (HHS), ATCOG's State Cognizant Agency that reviews/approves the indirect rate each year, ATCOG will utilize the FY23 audited actual indirect cost rate of 24.7% and adjust the rate to include the underallocation for a final indirect rate of 26.9% for a fixed with carry-forward calculation.

Ms. Rudel reviewed Board membership dues and stated the fee structure is based on 2020 census data. She advised the Board that the 2025 Salary Table will remain the same as the previous year with no COLA recommendations for staff. Visuals were provided to show budget comparisons by programs.

Ms. Rudel reviewed the FY2025 Financial Plan highlights. The Plan anticipates revenues and expenditures of \$25,943,302. This is a combined Work Program and Financial Plan. It is not technically a budget because ATCOG does not have taxing or oversight authority. Within each State or Federal grant that ATCOG administers, the funding agency regulates the categories in which we are allowed to spend funds. The funding source has complete oversight of the individual grant programs.

Ms. Rudel stated that each program area, specific project-by-project tasks, and performance measures are delineated for the year. Each project is assigned an objective, work tasks, performance measures, and human resource requirements.

There are 14 Managed Programs with over 60 Projects/Contracts that make up the revenue sources in the FY 2025 Ark-Tex Council of Governments Strategic Work Program and Financial Plan.

Ms. Rudel stated that the Plan includes various merit step increases for staff. Funding is provided for the Salary Schedule effective October 1, 2024. This Plan does not include a COLA for all staff. The total COLA increases for the past ten (10) years add up to 24.20%, while the SSI COLA

increased by a total of 27.5% prior to FY2025.

ATCOG has 98 full-time and 18 part-time personnel, with a total of 107.93 FTEs.

Ms. Rudel stated that ATCOG's healthcare provider continues to be the Texas Health Benefit (TXHB). Premiums for our basic medical plan remained the same this year. ATCOG's defined contribution amount is \$946.54 per month for each employee's basic medical coverage, which is 100% of the employee premium. Employees have the option to "buy up" to a medical plan with a lower deductible and out-of-pocket costs and to make extra contributions to their HSA. Additional premium costs over the defined employer contribution of \$946.54 per month will be paid by the employee. Employee dental insurance premiums remain \$30.72 per employee per month. Rates for life and AD&D did not change.

Ms. Rudel stated that ATCOG's current retirement plan is under TCDRS. We are currently at a 200% employer-to-employee match with an employee contribution rate of 4%.

Ms. Rudel stated that it was reported that ATCOG program revenues would trend back down last year due to the previous utilization of CARES and ARPA funding. Revenues and Expenses may continue to see some adjustments as the timing of funding and other factors are considered.

Ms. Rudel added that current estimates would utilize about \$1,110,122 of ATCOG Unrestricted Funds for Transportation and Aging match and other needs to support ATCOG programs and personnel. The FY23 Audit reflects an unrestricted balance of \$4,740,183, which increased from the FY22 audit amount of \$3,697,873.

Housing revenues are still seeing some new revenues with additional vouchers being awarded.

Transportation will see a decrease, but staff are aggressively seeking additional revenue sources for FY25 and FY26.

ATCOG recently signed a contract with ModivCare to provide Nonemergency Medical Transportation, which has been shown to provide needed local funds at other agencies across the state.

Ms. Rudel opened the floor for questions. Scott Norton inquired if the benefit rate was consistent with past rates. Ms. Rudel stated that it is within range.

Chris Brown stated that most Transportation funding requires a 50/50 match, placing responsibility for the match or in-kind monies on the agency. He referenced the total amount of dues ATCOG collects annually. Mr. Brown affirmed that agencies nationwide that provide transportation rely on their counties to make up the money by providing the match. Mr. Brown emphasized his confidence in Ms. Rudel's plan and support for the transportation program.

Motion to approve was made by Scott Norton and seconded by Brandon Bell, Judge, Morris County. It was approved.

- Item 12. Ms. Leslie McBride presented for review and consideration approval of a final one-year extension to the agreement with Guaranty Bank & Trust to provide banking services beginning October 1, 2024.

On July 6, 2020, the Ark-Tex Council of Governments (ATCOG) issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for banking services. ATCOG requested proposals for banking services to begin October 1, 2020, and extend through September 30, 2023, with two possible one-year extensions. Guaranty Bank & Trust has provided all the requested services to our satisfaction; therefore, ATCOG would request Board approval to extend the agreement another year.

Motion to approve was made by Lee Newsom, Mayor, City of Hughes Springs, and seconded by Mayor Rushing. It was approved.

- Item 13. Ms. Amber Murr presented for review and consideration, and approval of the annual renewal of the ATCOG Ethics Policy Manual was given without any changes.

Motion to approve was made by David Fordinal, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Como, and seconded by Scott Norton. It was approved.

- Item 14. Ms. Amber Murr presented for review and consideration approval of updates to the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan.

The only updates made in the plan are to update the contact information for Human Resource Director (Amber Murr) and Executive Director (Mary Beth Rudel)

By approving the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan updates, ATCOG affirms its continued commitment to equal employment for all persons, regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, genetic information, sex, or age.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Walker and seconded by Ronald Humphrey, Mayor, City of New Boston. It was approved.

- Item 15. Ms. Amber Murr presented for review and consideration of adopting the ATCOG Flexible Benefits Cafeteria Plan for FY2025.

Upon adoption, the ATCOG Flexible Benefits Cafeteria Plan will allow ATCOG to offer additional benefits to employees on a pre-tax basis, such as cancer, critical illness, and accident insurance. ATCOG remains in compliance with Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 by updating the written plan annually and distributing it to all eligible employees, offering the plan to all eligible employees, and completing nondiscrimination testing on the plan to ensure only those that are eligible are receiving the pre-tax benefit.

Motion to approve was made by Becky Fellers and seconded by Tanner Crutcher, Judge, Delta County. It was approved.

- Item 16. President Bobby Howell presented for review and consideration approval of the appointment of the Ark-Tex Council of Governments Board of Directors Executive Committee members, Officers, and subcommittees.

President Bobby Howell appointed a Nominating Committee to make appointment recommendations for the ATCOG Board of Directors Executive Committee, Officers, and subcommittee members. The Nominating Committee consists of Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County President/Chair; Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center, Vice-President/Vice-Chair; Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville; Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County; Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County; and Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County. The Nominating Committee met on July 29, 2024, and recommends the following members' appointment for a two-year term beginning October 1, 2024.

Executive Committee
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center
Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County
Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County

Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County
Kent Cooper, Judge, Titus County
Tanner Crutcher, Judge, Delta County
Robert Newson, Judge, Hopkins County
Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County
Marc Reiter, Mayor, City of Hooks
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville
Stan Wyatt, NETX Municipal Water District Board of Directors

Board of Directors Officers
President –Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Vice-President – Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas Center
Secretary – Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County
Treasurer – Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County

Audit Committee
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County, President; Chair
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas, Vice-President; Vice-Chair
Travis Ransom, Judge, Cass County
Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County
Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County

Budget/Personnel Committee
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County, President; Chair
Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville
Stan Wyatt, NEX Municipal Water District Board of Directors

Nominating Committee
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County, President; Chair
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas, Vice-President; Vice-Chair
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville
Doug Reeder, Judge, Morris County
Scott Lee, Judge, Franklin County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County

Retirement Plan Trustees Committee
Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County, President; Chair
Scott Norton, Executive Director/CEO, TexAmericas, Vice-President; Vice-Chair
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Stan Wyatt, NEX Municipal Water District/Board of Director
Mary Beth Rudel, ATCOG Executive Director
Leslie McBride, ATCOG Deputy Director
Karon Kahn, ATCOG Staff (elected by ATCOG staff)
Vacant ATCOG Staff (elected by ATCOG staff)

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

Item 17. Ms. Rea Allen presented for review and consideration approval of the Emergency Call Tracking System (ECaTS) contract renewal for the Management Information System (MIS).

The Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) Program requires that each Regional Planning Commission logs via an MIS system all 9-1-1 call records. ECaTS collects, analyzes, and reports all PSAP's raw Call Detail Record (CDR) data in the ATCOG jurisdiction. Every 9-1-1 trunk is profiled and reported in ECaTS. The purpose of the application is to deliver

accurate call volume statistics for all PSAPs in the jurisdiction.

The Management Information System contract renewal with ECaTS costs \$192,087.64 for a 2-year contract term. The costs are based on region-wide MIS service, Text-to-9-1-1 reporting modules, individual PSAP dashboards, and Wireless Routing analysis. ECaTS will be procured through a state contract.

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

Item 18. Bobby Williams presented for review and consideration approval of a grant application to be submitted to the Martha, David, & Bagby Lennox Foundation in the amount of \$15,000.00 for the TRAX Rural Public Transportation.

The Martha, David, & Bagby Lennox Foundation has advocated for TRAX transportation for several years and has been a strong voice for Red River County and TRAX services. ATCOG will request grant funds in the amount of \$15,000.00 for FY2025. As part of the grant agreement, TRAX will continue to support transportation services within Red River County.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Rushing and seconded by Judge Crutcher. It was approved.

Item 19. Ms. Rudel presented for review and consideration approval to combine the November Executive Committee and December Board of Directors meetings into one Board of Directors meeting to be held Thursday, December 5, 2024.

Motion to approve was made by Mayor Walker and seconded by Mihir Pankaj, Mayor, City of Paris. It was approved.

Other Business

Item 20. ATCOG annual meeting presentations.

Special Guest Speaker: Congressman Nathaniel Moran introduced his staff, Robbin Bass, Deputy District Director, and Jalam Lewis, Senior Advisor. He spoke briefly regarding current issues and appropriation processes going forward, following up with remarks and questions from those present. Congressman Moran thanked Judge Howell and Ms. Rudel for allowing him to attend and to speak at the meeting.

Announcements

Ms. Mary Beth Rudel announced that the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Annual Training Conference 2024 will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, October 21-24, 2024. Please get in touch with Mary Beth if you are interested in attending.

Ms. Mary Beth Rudel announced that due to time constraints, the Chamber had to move ahead with the Paris TRAX Ribbon Cutting; however, we are celebrating its Open House today, and she encouraged everyone to stop by and tour the new facility.

Ms. Mary Beth Rudel announced that the next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, September 26, 2024, at the Northeast Texas Small Business Development Center (SBDC), 2nd Floor, 105 North Riddle Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Texas, via videoconference.

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Walker motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mayor Rushing. It was approved.

NETEDD BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County
Tanner Crutcher, Judge, Delta County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Scott Norton, Executive Director/ECO, TexAmericas Center
Marc Reiter, Mayor, City of Hooks
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobby Howell, Judge, Bowie County
Brandon Bell, Judge, Lamar County
Tanner Crutcher, Judge, Delta County
Robert Newsom, Judge, Hopkins County
Scott Norton, Executive Director/ECO, TexAmericas Center
Marc Reiter, Mayor, City of Hooks
Ann Rushing, Mayor, City of Clarksville

ATCOG BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Chris Brown, Board Member, Hopkins County Hospital District
Rosina Duckworth, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Cumby
Ronald Humphrey, Mayor, City of New Boston
Mihir Pankaj, Mayor, City of Paris
Becky Fellers, Board of Trustees, Liberty Eylau, ISD
David Fordinal, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Como
Harold Nash, Sr., Mayor, City of Sulphur Springs
Lee Newsom, Mayor, City of Hughes Springs
Kelly Redfearn, Council Member, City of Mt. Pleasant
Gary Spraggins, Council Member, City of Sulphur Springs
Lowell Walker, Mayor, City of DeKalb

GUESTS PRESENT

Congressman Nathaniel Moran, First District of Texas, U.S. House of Representatives
Robbin Bass, Deputy District Director, Office of Congressman Moran
Jalam Lewis, Senior Advisor, Office of Congressman Moran
Sara Butler, Office of Senator John Cornyn
Reece DeWoody, District Director, Office of Senator Bryan Hughes
Rhonda Rogers, Texas Silver Legislator (AAA Advisory)
Angela Price, Hopkins County Sheriff's Office (CJAC)
Mario Villarino, SWAC Chairman
Robert Vine, City Manager, City of Paris

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Mary Beth Rudel, Executive Director
Leslie McBride, Deputy Director
Rea Allen, 9-1-1 Director
Jenny Butler, Area Agency on Aging Director
Whitney Fezell, Homeland Security Coordinator
Patricia Haley, Criminal Justice 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
Melinda Tickle, Finance Director

Bobby Williams, Transportation Operations Manager
Magen Watters, Area Agency on Aging Specialists

Signature On File

Bobby Howell, President
Board of Directors
Ark-Tex Council of Governments

ATTEST:

Signature on File
