

MINUTES

Triangle J Council of Governments

Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday, February 24, 2021

6:00 PM

Held virtually via Microsoft Teams

Delegates and Alternate Delegates Attending:

Mark B. Wilson, Town of Archer Lodge
Kathleen Ferguson, Town of Hillsborough
Heidi Carter, Durham County
Butch Lawter, Johnston County
Kirk Smith, Lee County
Sally Greene, Orange County

Pamela Baldwin, Town of Pittsboro
Donald Rains, Town of Princeton
Ronnie Currin Town of Rolesville
Rebecca Salmon, City of Sanford
Susan Evans, Wake County (A)

Delegates Absent:

Jim Crawford, Chatham County
DeDreana Freeman, City of Durham
(A) – Alternate Delegate (E) – Excused Absence

Kevin Drum, Village of Pinehurst
Sig Hutchinson, Wake County

TJCOG staff attending:

Lee Worsley, Executive Director
Renée Boyette, Administration Officer

Alana Keegan, Assistant to Executive Director
Lindsay Whitson, Senior Planner

Guests

Hattie Gawande, NC DHHS

Call to Order, Welcome, Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum

Chairperson Rains called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and welcomed all attendees. He reviewed procedures for the virtual meeting and asked Renée Boyette, Administration Officer, to conduct the roll. Ms. Boyette called the roll to verify the attendance of delegates and alternates and declared there was a quorum present.

Approval of Agenda

Chairperson Rains presented the agenda and asked if anyone would like to request changes to the agenda. Hearing none, he declared the agenda approved by consent.

- Chair Rains asked Delegate Wilson to lead a Moment of Silence in honor of the 500,000 Americans who have died because of COVID-19 over the past year. He remarked that the number is greater than the sum of American wars in the past century.

Recognitions and Presentations

- *Recognize new members of the Executive Committee*

Chair Rains introduced members of the Executive Committee and provided delegates an opportunity to share updates with their fellow members.

- *Update on distribution of COVID-19 vaccine*

Chair Rains asked Lee Worsley to introduce the item and presenter Hattie Gawande from the NC Department of Health and Human Services. He stressed the importance of local government engagement and support for the State in sharing information and resources around COVID-19 vaccines. Ms. Gawande provided an overview of the State's goals for vaccine distribution, communication tools to combat misinformation, and scientific background on the creation of the vaccines. She also outlined the core groups for vaccine access, stressing that health care workers, long-term care facility stakeholders, and older adults were currently able to receive a vaccination.

Ms. Gawande discussed key online and print resources available to the public and local governments to share trusted and consistent messages. These included resources in multiple languages and messages from trusted stakeholders from across the state.

She highlighted the State's prioritization of vaccine equity through strategic allocations and the use of data and demographic information to identify groups with limited access.

Chair Rains asked about timeline to reach herd immunity. Ms. Gawande said that this will remain illusive until there is a better understanding of vaccine supply and distribution.

Business

- *Update on the Housing priority area program and opportunities*

Chairperson Rains asked Housing Program Manager Erika Brown to present this topic. Ms. Brown provided an overview of the housing program during the past year at TJCOG. She included a highlight of the core services provided by the housing program to address housing quality, availability, and affordability. Collectively, the program aims to increase staff capacity and implement best practices for all local governments in the region.

Ms. Brown shared data to illustrate what is considered affordable in the region and the current gaps to meet this level of access. She also outlined the percentage of the population and types of residents who are unable to access most housing.

Ms. Brown highlighted long-standing or noteworthy projects including the Chatham County Affordable Housing Task Force, administration of NC Housing Finance Agency funding in six counties, and home repair funding. She also discussed new partnerships with non-profit housing organizations in the region to assess impact and survey quality of life for homeowners.

Ms. Brown concluded with forward looking highlights, including goals for the program to strengthen services and build a regional vision for affordable housing programs.

- *US Department of Energy Grant Award: DRIVE Electric USA*

Chairperson Rains asked Principal Planner Sean Flaherty to present this topic. Mr. Flaherty gave an overview of the Drive Electric USA grant program and TJCOG's new role in the effort as the lead organization for the state of North Carolina. The program will address significant electric vehicle market barriers in a more coordinated way across the state. TJCOG staff will administer and manage all funding, and coordinate with partner Clean Cities Coalitions in the State.

Mr. Flaherty discussed seven priority areas of work for the grant including building new initiatives, educating consumers and utilities, planning for infrastructure, and impacting policy.

- *Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Grant Request for Proposals*

Chairperson Rains asked Principal Planner Sean Flaherty to present this topic. Mr. Flaherty shared that the TDM program had released its new 2021 request for proposals and was open to applications from any interested organizations in the region. He indicated that board members could direct interested parties to the TJCOG website for more details.

Consent Agenda

- Approve Minutes of April 8, 2020 Special Executive Committee meeting
- Approve Minutes of September 23, 2020 Executive Committee meeting

Chairperson Rains presented the Consent Agenda for approval and asked if anyone would like to remove an item.

Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented; Ms. Ferguson seconded the motion. Ms. Boyette conducted the vote via roll call; the motion was passed unanimously.

Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

None.

Executive Director's Report

Chairperson Rains asked Mr. Worsley to present this report.

Mr. Worsley reported that Moore County has requested membership in Triangle J. The Board of Delegates will consider this request at their March meeting.

Mr. Worsley reported that Jennifer Robinson has been elected a Senior Vice-President of the National Association of Regional Councils.

Mr. Worsley highlighted a few assistance efforts underway on behalf of local governments. This included code amendments – Chapter 160D – on behalf of six local governments to ensure compliance, a Pay and Classification Study for the Town of Wilson's Mills, and recruitment for the Town of Rolesville's Planning Director.

Chairman's Report

Chairperson Rains stated appreciation for Moore County's request for membership in TJCOG and looked forward to full membership in the organization.

Other Business

Chairperson Rains asked if members of the Executive Committee had any other business.

Hearing none,

Ms. Salmon made a motion to adjourn; Ms. Carter seconded the motion. Chairperson Rains adjourned the meeting at 7:52 PM.

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Alana Keegan
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Alana Keegan, Recording Officer

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Don Rains
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Donald Rains, Chairperson