



Central Pines Regional Council Executive Committee

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

6:00 – 8:00 pm | Virtual

Chair Butch Lawter, Presiding

Delegates & Alternates Attending:

Wilma Laney, Town of Aberdeen
DeDreana Freeman, City of Durham
Heidi Carter, Durham County
Kathleen Ferguson, Town of Hillsborough
Butch Lawter, Johnston County
Bill Carver, Lee County
Frank Quis, Moore County
Jean Hamilton, Orange County
Susan Evans, Wake County

CPRC Staff Attending:

Beth Davis, Member Engagement Coordinator
Jenny Halsey, Assistant Executive Director
Alana Keegan, Local Government Services Director
Lindsay Whitson, Community & Economic Development Director
Lee Worsley, Executive Director
Hope Tally, Chief Finance Officer
Alex Halloway, Economic Development Planner

Mary Jane Lyonnais, Upper Coastal Plain COG Food Systems Regional Planner

1. Call to Order

- a. Call to Order and Welcome
Official: Butch Lawter, Chair
- b. Roll Call
- c. Declaration of Quorum
Official: Butch Lawter

Chair Butch Lawter called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm and went over housekeeping information. He reminded everyone about the virtual meeting guidelines. Beth Davis, Member Engagement Coordinator, called roll and a quorum was met.

2. Review of Agenda

- a. Review of Agenda
Official: Butch Lawter

Chair Lawter approved the agenda as is.

3. Presentations and Recognitions

4. Business

- a. Status Update of Tri-COG Food Ecosystem Economic Development Strategy (Tri-COG FEEDS)
Presenters: Alex Halloway, CPRC Economic Development Planner & Mary Jane Lyonnais, Upper Coastal Plain COG Food Systems Regional Planner

Alex Halloway, CPRC Economic Development Planner presented this item along with Mary Jane Lyonnais from Upper Coastal Plain COG, who is the lead for this project.

Central Pines Regional Council, in partnership with Kerr Tar, and Upper Coastal Plain Councils of Government, have spent the past 18 months working to fulfill and build upon multiple opportunities and recommendations resulting from the many emerging and growing local healthy food efforts in each region. The effort is called the TRI-COG Food Ecosystem Economic Development Strategy (Tri-COG FEEDS): Understanding and Creating Pathways to Build the Local Healthy Food Value Chain. The goal is to support a regional food planning initiative that identifies the infrastructure needed to shorten food supply chains, drives economic development, enhances resilient practices, fosters equity, and increases rural-urban connectivity across the 17-county food system network.

The anticipated deliverable includes a strategy that outlines a unified vision while providing economic impact evidence that decision-makers and community partners can use to support further investment in the food system. Throughout this process, the COGs have developed robust partnerships across the food system and have worked to prioritize the needs of those who are most significantly impacted by such investment. This effort is being funded by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation. The information is being shared so that the Board is aware of the status of our project, but also encourage questions and feedback.

There are four areas where the COGs can help, which include: 1) assistance with securing funds for food system initiatives, 2) facilitating food system conversations with non-government actors along the food-value chain, 3)

education on food system policies and practices around the state and country, and 4) facilitating cross-county or regional collaboration across governments.

Next steps include listening sessions in November to hear from local government representatives on the feasibility and impact of investing in local food system infrastructure. A convening will also be held in Spring 2024 on project findings and to hear from both food system practitioners and local government to inform a regional vision.

The intended long-term impact is 1) increased economic prosperity, 2) resilience and recovery from future economic shocks, 3) enhanced focus on equity in the food system, 4) improved public health outcomes, and 5) better environmental and sustainable practices.

Ms. Lyonnais encouraged the members of the Executive Committee to take the survey. At the time, the survey was mostly completed by Upper Coastal and Kerr-Tar regions.

Chair Lawter mentioned the unique challenge in Johnston County where they are leading the way in agricultural land loss, but in the Central Pines region, they are still leading in value of agricultural crops produced.

Delegate Heidi Carter asked how they were engaging with local government leaders. Mr. Halloway shared that they have an advisory board that includes all 17 counties and working with food groups.

b. Personnel Policy Update

Presenters: Lee Worsley, Executive Director & Jenny Halsey, Assistant Executive Director/HR Officer

Potential Action: Place on Consent Agenda as Resolution 2023-11-01

Mr. Worsley and Ms. Halsey presented this item. Each year, the Personnel Policy is brought to the Strategic Leadership Team to evaluate and improve. Ms. Halsey reviewed the recommended changes with the Executive Committee.

Changes that are recommended include:

- Changing TJCOG/Triangle J Council of Governments to CPRC/Central Pines Regional Council.
- Changing medical leave to federally required FMLA since the organization has gone over 50 employees.
- More clarity around acceptance of gifts and favors.

- Sick Leave – adding mental health as a reason for taking a sick day. This has been interpreted to include mental health, but it is recommended to be included in policy for clarity.
- An internal career ladder has been created, so this needed to be reflected in the policy.

Delegate Kathleen Ferguson asked about a more structured evaluation process for the Executive Director. This had been discussed previously and Ms. Ferguson didn't want that to be forgotten. Mr. Worsley and Ms. Halsey clarified that this is part of the Executive Director's contract.

Delegate Jean Hamilton asked for clarification around the promotion changes, specifically advertising a position internally first. Mr. Worsley gave an example of where this policy would be used and noted that these cases are rare. Commissioner Hamilton's concern was that this would narrow the pool.

Chair Lawter asked if there were any objections to place on consent agenda, there were none.

c. Budget Amendment #4

Presenter: Hope Tally, Chief Finance Officer

Potential Action: Place on Consent Agenda as Resolution 2023-11-02

Hope Tally reviewed the budget amendment which included Southeast Crescent and Connected Region projects.

Delegate Bill Carver asked for clarification on an increase in funding, which was for Triangle Water Supply partnership. These funds are held in reserve from the fund balance. He also asked about a \$3,000 expenditure, which was for the Triangle Sustainability Partnership. These were oversights by staff that have been addressed.

Chair Lawter asked if there were any objections to place on consent agenda, there were none.

5. Consent

Items on the Consent Agenda are considered routine and will be enacted by a single motion unless a member of the Executive Committee requests an item be removed. Any item that is removed from the Consent Agenda will be considered individually after the Consent Agenda.

- a. DRAFT Minutes: March 22, 2023
- b. DRAFT Minutes: September 27, 2023
- c. Adoption of Resolution #2023-11-01 Personnel Policy

- d. Adoption of Budget Amendment #4, Resolution #2023-11-02

Action: Adoption of Consent Agenda
Motion: Delegate Kathleen Ferguson
Second: Delegate DeDreana Freeman
Vote: Approved unanimously by roll call

6. Items Removed from Consent Agenda

7. Executive Director's Report

- a. Executive Director's Report
Presenter: Lee Worsley
Potential Action: None – Receive as Information

Mr. Worsley is excited to invite everyone to the Central Pines Regional Council Open House & Ribbon Cutting prior to the January 24 Board of Delegates meeting. This event will be from 2:00-5:00 pm with the ribbon cutting n around 4:45 pm. There are also plans to have a group Board picture taken, along with individual officer photos. The plan is to make the photo a yearly tradition. The Board of Delegates meeting will also be used to welcome new Board members and recognize Board members who are rolling off.

Mr. Worsley shared that there is quite a bit of transition on the Board of Delegates, with 14 vacancies, including one on the Executive Committee. The Forum delegate position is also vacant. There are 11 sitting delegates/alternates who will be rolling off the Board. Staff has already reached out to the Clerks and Managers with a list of Board vacancies with a deadline of January 15.

Delegate Ferguson asked if she would be rolling up to the Delegate or remain the Alternate for the Forum. Mr. Worsley said he would be checking with the Forum to be sure of what we could do, but he thought that would be up to Chair Lawter.

Mr. Worsley mentioned an email he sent yesterday regarding a legislative issue that had come up between the League of Municipalities (NCLM) and the Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC). A bill has been introduced to reallocate \$15 million from NCLM to PTRC for financial software.

Delegate Ferguson asked if Mr. Worsley had talked with PTRC's Executive Director, to which he responded yes. Mr. Worsley stated that he wasn't very comfortable with what was going on. Many of the NC COG Directors aren't

happy with what's happening as well. Ms. Ferguson also asked if this will be discussed at the NC COG Association Forum meeting.

Delegate Carver brought up diversity issues regarding hiring. He asked if that was noted in the personnel policy. Ms. Halsey shared that while this isn't addressed in the personnel policy, we do have a DEI task force that has participated in the Government Alliance for Race and Equity (GARE) cohort. This task force is addressing recruitment and HR. Mr. Carver was interested in how we are translating those values into practices.

8. Chair's Report

- a. Chair's Report

Presenter: Chair

Potential Action: None - Receive as Information

No report.

9. Around the Region

- a. Around the Region Reports/Updates

No report.

10. Other Business

- a. Other Business

Presenter: Butch Lawter

11. Adjournment

- a. Adjourn the Meeting

With there being nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Action: Motion to adjourn.

Motion: Delegate Kathleen Ferguson, Hillsborough

Second: Delegate Susan Evans, Wake County

Vote: Unanimously approved

Duly adopted this 28th day of February, 2024 while in regular session.

R. S. Lawter, Jr.

R. S. Lawter, Jr.
Board Chair

ATTEST:

Beth Davis

Beth Davis
Clerk to the Board
Central Pines Regional Council