



**Central Pines Regional Council
Executive Committee Meeting**

Meeting Minutes
 Wednesday, February 26, 2025
 6:00 – 8:00 pm | Virtual
 Chair Brett Gantt, Presiding

Delegates & Alternates Attending:

Wilma Laney, Town of Aberdeen
 Brett Gantt, Town of Apex
 Randee Haven O’Donnell, Town of Carrboro
 Michelle Burton, Durham County
 Kirk Smith, Lee County
 Tom Adams, Moore County
 Jean Hamilton, Orange County
 Sally Greene, Orange County (A)
 Pamela Baldwin, Town of Pittsboro
 Byron McAllister, Town of Selma
 Susan Evans, Wake County

Lindsay Whitson, Community & Economic Development Director
 Thomas McCallister, Housing & Community Development Coordinator
 Lee Worsley, Executive Director
 Hope Tally, Chief Finance Officer
 Beth Seidel, Member Engagement Coordinator

Guests:

Michael Prazma, Biogen
 John Pieracci, Biogen
 April Adams, Cherry Bekaert

CPRC Staff Attending:

Jenny Halsey, Assistant Executive Director
 Alana Keegan, Local Government Services Director

A = Alternate

1. Call to Order

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

Chair Brett Gantt called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and went over housekeeping information. He reminded everyone about the virtual meeting guidelines. Beth Seidel, Clerk to the Board, called roll and a quorum was met.

- d. Get to Know CPRC

Chair Brett Gantt shared that during the May 26, 1971, meeting of the Research Triangle Regional Planning Commission, initial discussions took place about forming a larger regional organization. Mr. Lewis Crabtree of the Soil Conservation Service presented a slide-tape from the May 11 Governor's Conference on regionalization and the proposed "Region J." Board member William McLaurin noted interest from Lee and Johnston Counties, while Commission Executive Director Pearson Stewart reported that Governor Scott had announced the state would designate a lead regional organization for each region, with the North Carolina Department of Administration overseeing the process and membership open to all general-purpose local governments.

2. Review of Agenda

- a. Review of Agenda
Official: Brett Gantt

Chair Gantt approved the agenda.

3. Presentations & Recognitions

- a. Welcome New Delegates
Presenter: Brett Gantt, Chair
Potential Action: None – Information Only

Chair Brett Gantt welcomed the new Chatham County Delegate Amanda Robertson and Alternate Delegate Katie Kenlan. Commissioner Kirk Smith was also introduced as the Lee County Delegate. Tom Adams from Moore County introduced himself as their new delegate. Delegate Smith and Delegate Adams gave a brief introduction.

- b. Foreign Trade Zone Sponsorship Request – Biogen
Presenters: Lindsay Whitson, Community & Economic Development Director; Michael Prazma, Biogen, Head of Manufacturing, Gene Therapy Operations; John Pieracci, Biogen, Head of Gene Therapy Development
Potential Action: Place on Consent Agenda

Lindsay Whitson gave a brief overview of Foreign Trade Zone #93 and then turned it over to Michael Prazma to share Biogen's request. Biogen is requesting FTZ designation for their facility located in Durham County. Biogen is a pioneer in neuroscience and is driving innovation to complete the most complex and devastating disease. Biogen plans to utilize the site for labeling and packaging of products that are in clinical phases.

There was a question regarding whether the federal funding pause would affect foreign trade zones. At this point, there have been no indications of any impact.

- c. FY2024 Audit Presentation
Presenter: April Adams, Cherry Bekaert
Potential Action: None – Information Only

Hope Tally introduced April Adams from Cherry Bekaert to present the FY2024 Audit findings. NC General Statutes require that each unit of local government have its accounts audited after the close of the fiscal year by a certified public accountant. Central Pines is under contract with Cherry Bekaert Advisory LLC to audit its financial statements and compliance required by the Uniform Guidance and North Carolina State Single Audit Implementation Act. Cherry Bekaert has issued unmodified opinions on both the financial statements and single audit compliance. Cherry Bekaert partner, April Adams, presented an executive summary of its [FY23-24 audit results](#).

4. Business

- a. Connected Region 2050 Draft Scope of Work and Funding Strategy – Continuation of Discussion from September Executive Committee Meeting
Presenter: Lee Worsley, Executive Director
Potential Action: None – Information Only

During the August 2024 Board of Delegates meeting, the Board heard presentations from the Wasatch Front Regional Council and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission on their regional visioning efforts.

As discussed, a comprehensive regional vision for our region has not been completed and implemented since 1969. Central Pines staff have been working for close to two years, laying the groundwork for beginning a regional visioning process.

As next steps in the process, it is time to begin finalizing the project's scope of work and focusing on a funding plan.

The scope of work has been developed over the last six months and has already received considerable input from several of our partner organizations.

The Executive Committee started providing feedback on the document, but time ran out before the entire document was discussed. The discussion was continued during the November Executive Committee meeting and has been brought up for further discussion.

Funding for this project is not available within the current Central Pines budget. Central Pines staff will aggressively look for funding sources, including grant opportunities. However, many partners have asked about the local government's contributions to the project.

A draft funding strategy was shared, which included funding already committed and some small funding asks from local government members with populations over 20,000.

Additional opportunities for discussion and input will be provided at future Executive Committee and Board of Delegates meetings. The goal for tonight's meeting is to get higher level guidance on whether the scope of work needs major change and if the Funding Plan makes sense.

There were several clarifying questions from members of the Executive Committee. It was recommended that CPRC staff make a presentation to individual member government Boards to get more buy-in from the jurisdictions. There was also some concern about funding due to changes in administration and how that could affect buy-in. There was also concern about various regional entities working on a number of plans that might not necessarily be in sync (MSAs, MPOs, RPOs, etc.). Mr. Worsley mentioned that both of the MPO directors are very supportive of this effort and view it as necessary. Additionally, we would want to involve all those entities in the process.

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: November 2024
- b. DRAFT Minutes: January 2025
- c. FTZ Approval for Biogen, Resolution #2025-02-01
- d. Budget Amendment 4, Resolution #2025-02-02
- e. TDM Grant Application for NCDOT, Resolution #2025-02-03

Action: Adoption of Consent Agenda as presented
Motion: Delegate Susan Evans
Second: Delegate Randee Haven O'Donnell
Vote: Approved unanimously by roll call

6. Items Removed from Consent Agenda

7. Public Hearings

8. Executive Director's Report

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

Mr. Worsley has sent email updates on the impacts from Federal Funding issues. Unfortunately, a reduction in force will result in one CPRC employee being laid off. Aside from that, we anticipate everything operating as planned.

In addition to losing CPRC's auditor, CPRC will also be losing the organization's contract attorney, Kris Gardner, who will be taking a new job. This means CPRC will have a change in legal representation. In addition to those changes, CPRC received notification that the NC League of Municipalities will be ending their Health Benefits Trust program, which is where CPRC receives its health insurance. Mr. Worsley stated that he knows that there are several other local governments which will be affected by this change as well.

9. Chair's Report

- a. Chair's Report
Presenter: Brett Gantt, Chair
Potential Action: None – Receive as Information

Chair Gantt shared that the Officers have been working on a formalized evaluation for the Executive Director. This is in hope of making the evaluation more transparent and easily tracked from year to year. The Officers are hoping to finalize this soon.

10. Around the Region

- a. Around the Region Reports/Updates
Potential Action: None – Receive as Information
Prompt: If you could time travel, what would you tell your Council or Commission from 20 years ago?

Delegate Kirk Smith shared his recommendation about annexation and water and sewer with Sanford and Lee County.

Delegate Tom Adams shared a similar sentiment in Moore County.

Delegate Michelle Burton shared about a food and beverage tax in Durham County.

Chair Gantt mentioned that he wished that Apex had purchased more land for various programs and services.

Delegate Susan Evans would liked for funding for rail projects in metro areas to have come to Wake County.

Delegate Byron McAllister shared that he would like to make some recommendations in regards to fiber in Selma.

Delegate Randee Haven O'Donnell said she would want to commend the Orange County Board of Commissioners from 20+ years ago for reconstituting the Library Task Force in partnership with Carrboro. Because of this partnership, the Carrboro branch will be having their ribbon cutting soon.

11. Closed Session

12. Other Business

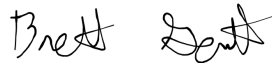
- a. Other Business
Presenter: Brett Gantt

13. Adjournment

- a. Adjourn the Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 pm.

Duly adopted this 26th day of March 2025 while in regular session.



Brett Gantt
Board Chair

ATTEST:



Beth Seidel
Clerk to the Board
Central Pines Regional Council