



AMENDED
MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE
FOOTHILLS REGIONAL COMMISSION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
HELD ON
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3RD,
2023

Board Members Present

- **Chair:** Fred Baisden, Polk County
- **Vice Chair:** Max Hopper, Cleveland County
- Ashley Wooten, McDowell County
- Jack Shytle, Town of Polkville
- Jimmy Dancy, Town of Rutherfordton
- Robert Boyette, City of Marion
- Tommy Greene, Town of Boiling Springs
- Dean Buff, McDowell County
- Doug Bridges, Cleveland County

Foothills Staff Present

- Danna Stansbury
- Charlotte Sullivan
- Annette Staley
- Laura Lynch
- Alan Toney
- Benjamin Bordeaux
- Penny Martinez
- Jack Elliot

Guest Present

- Tyler Teresa, Sen. Budd's Office
- Robin Ramsey, Sen. Tillis's Office
- Brandon Ruppe, Cleveland County Economic Development

Board Members Absent

- **Secretary:** Bryan King, Rutherford County
- Bill Ingham, Town of Tryon
- Carol Pritchett, Town of Lake Lure
- David Moore, Polk County
- Dorris Weaver, Town of Fallston
- Janet Gerald, Town of Kingstown
- Jeff Swink, Town of Bostic
- Jeffery Emory, Town of Grover
- Justin Connor, Town of Forest City
- Larry Dooley, Cleveland County
- Marche' Pittman, Polk County
- Mark Phillips, Town of Columbus
- Peter O'Leary, Village of Chimney Rock
- Ray Padgett, Town of Lawndale
- Rick Howell, City of Shelby
- Scott Neisler, City of Kings Mountain
- Scott Webber, Town of Spindale
- Steve Garrison, Rutherford County
- Tom Helton, Town of Ellenbo



Workforce Board had completed its programmatic monitoring, with some minor findings that would be easily corrected in the future.

Area Agency on Aging Director Laura Lynch presented information on Medicaid expansion recently passed in North Carolina, noting the expansion of eligibility beyond pregnant mothers, children, and the disabled to include up to 600,000 individuals making less than around \$20,000 a year. She also discussed a news article that interviewed individuals who would now be eligible, which included Lisa Franklin, a Rutherford County resident suffering from cirrhosis. She offered the opportunity for Area Agency on Aging staff to present on Medicaid expansion to town councils or county commissioner meetings.

Danna Stansbury initially began to offer a Community and Economic Development update on behalf of Alan Toney, as well as an Executive Director Update. She announced the completion of the region's new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies Plan prepared by the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, which is required for funding from the Economic Development Administration. She also mentioned that farmland preservation was a part of that plan announced FRC's upcoming first Annual Agricultural Convening and requested the board members who could attend to RSVP. Chairman Baisden entertained a position to accept the plan, and a motion was made by Mayor Jimmy Dancy to adopt the plan, which was seconded by Tommy Greene, after which the board voted unanimously to adopt the plan.

She then announced that FRC had won an Excellence Award from the National Association of Development Districts for the Farmland Protection Plan Foothills staff prepared for Rutherford County. She then recognized that the Vice-chair had brought Brandon Ruppe, Associate Director of Cleveland County Economic Development, who was at one time a staff member of Foothills in the Workforce department. She then discussed how Her, Charlotte Sullivan and Alan Toney are serving as interim Town Managers for the Town of Boiling Springs, as well as assisting them with executive search and selection, noting they had 18 applicants for that role. She also brought up two departures from FRC, Office Manager, and Clerk, as well as the Program Manager for the RPO, noting that those two open positions the Commission would soon be seeking to fill, along with a Housing Coordinator for Section 8. She then reported for a training from the UNC School of Government for jurisdictions on the Local Government Commission assistance list, where she and Charlotte Sullivan had discussed with the town of Grover the possibility of providing financial administration assistance and training to get them back under control of their own finances.



The board discussion then turned to the discussion of population decline within the four counties. Alan Toney noted that the last Census was conducted in 2020 and that there were some questions about the accuracy of the numbers it presented. Brandon Ruppe noted that given the level of economic and residential development he sees in his role, at least Cleveland County should expect to see increased growth in the coming years.

Penny Martinez, Housing Planner, gave an update on the HUD HOME Consortium. She noted some difficulty with dealing with HUD staff, as well as some concern from Consortium members about the language of Memoranda of understanding members are required to sign, but also progress with signing agreements to formally recognize Community Housing Development Organizations to allow them to request HUD HOME funds.

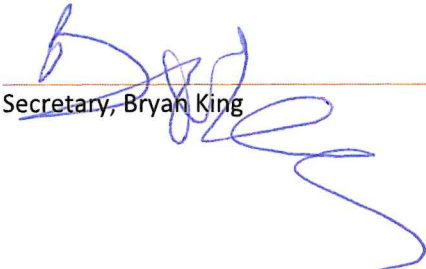
Jack Elliott, a recently hired Program Manager with a background in tech and a new role focused on broadband expansion, technology sector job creation, as well as providing web and mobile app development to member governments, was then introduced.

Max Hopper announced the Cleveland County Fair, as well as a veteran assistance event at The LeGrand Center on November 8th. Jimmy Darcy was invited to attend the Rutherfordton Hilltop Festival the following Saturday. Robert Boyette mentioned the upcoming Mountain Glory Festival in Marion.

Chairman Baisden then declared the meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,


Chairman, Fred Baisden


Secretary, Bryan King