

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

P. O. Box 1406
Dothan, AL 36302-1406



Phone: 334-794-4093

Fax: 334-794-3288

www.searpdc.org

*“Improving the Quality of Life for the Citizens of
Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry and Houston Counties”*

MINUTES SEARP&DC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING June 13, 2024 3:00 P.M.

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission Board of Directors for **3rd Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024** was convened on **June 13, 2024 at 3:00 PM**. The meeting was held on the 3rd Floor Commission Chambers of the Houston County Administration Building.

The following were present:

Board Officers: Chairperson Lori Wilcoxon (Houston County), First Vice Chairman Mark Blankenship (Dale County), and Second Vice Chairman Rod Morgan (Coffee County).

Executive Committee Members: Thomas Crossley (Barbour County), Leah Harlow (Dale County), Toby Seay (Geneva County), and Matt Parker (Houston County).

Board of Directors: Jason Davis (Barbour County), Marrilu Salmon (Barbour County), Rachel Smith (Barbour County), Gladys Yelverton (Coffee County), Derek Dickens (Dale County), Steve McKinnon (Dale County), Frankie Wilson (Dale County), Paul Rose (Geneva County), Kelli Brannon (Dale County), Jimmy Money (Henry County), Gregory Reynolds (Henry County), Brandon Shoupe (Houston County), David Crutchfield (Houston County), and Michael Smith (Houston County).

Item 1: Call to Order / Invocation / Establish of Quorum – Chairperson Wilcoxon

Chairperson Wilcoxon called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM by establishing a quorum was present and asked Mr. Thomas Crossley to pray. Chairperson Wilcoxon remarked the Executive Committee recommended a Technical Correction to Agenda Item 4(A)(1) for Resolution #448-A to be included as part of the proposed award. The Technical Correction was passed by unanimous vote.

Item 2: Awards, Presentations, and Guest Speakers – Chairperson Wilcoxon

1. Resolution #487 - In Recognition of Ms. Dorothy Kinsey’s Service to the Commission (1974-2024) – Scott Farmer

Mr. Farmer requested the approval of Resolution #487 - In Recognition of Ms. Dorothy Kinsey’s

Service to the Commission (1974-2024). Frankie Wilson made a motion to approve Resolution #487. Rod Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote. Ms. Kinsey spoke thanking the Board and asking them to continue support of Head Start. There was a short break before the next item for pictures.

2. Resolution #488 - In Recognition of Mr. Frank “Al” Britt Service to the Commission (2008-2024) - Scott Farmer

Mr. Farmer requested the approval of Resolution #488 - In Recognition of Mr. Frank “Al” Britt’s Service to the Commission (2008-2024). Matt Parker made a motion to approve Resolution #488. Frankie Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

Item 3: Approval of Minutes from June 13, 2024 – Chairperson Wilcoxon

Board members reviewed the minutes from the prior meeting. Frankie Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Rod Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

Item 4: Reports of Officers, Committees, and Departments

A. Executive Committee Report

1. Award for Banking Services – Judith Tate

Resolution #448-A – Banking Accounts and Signature Certifications

Ms. Tate requested the approval of Resolution #488-A awarding the banking services to River Bank & Trust and approving the account signatories. After a discussion of received proposals, Gregory Reynolds made a motion to approve Resolution #488-A. Frankie Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

2. Employee Handbook Revision – Wendy Cook

- a). Policy 225 Attendance and Punctuality
- b). Policy 335 Pay Increases and Credential Policy
- c). Polices 405, 410, 415, 445, 505 (Technical Revisions)

Ms. Cook requested the approval of the Employee Handbook Revisions (Policies 225, 335, 405, 410, 415, 445, and 505) and presented the proposed changes. After general discussion, Frankie Wilson made a motion to approve the Employee Handbook Revisions. Steve McKinnon seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

3. Wage Scale and Classification Plan Revisions (EHS Coordinator, EHS Teacher and Education Services Manager) – Wendy Cook

Ms. Cook requested the approval of the Wage Scale and Classification Plan Revisions (EHS Coordinator, EHS Teacher, and Education Services Manager) and presented the proposed changes. After general discussion, Matt Parker made a motion to approve the Wage Scale and Classification Plan Revisions. Frankie Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

4. Resolution #489 – Approval of Revised Revolving Loan Fund Administration Plan Guide – Rachel Armstrong

Ms. Armstrong requested the approval of the Resolution #489 – Approval of Revised Revolving Loan Fund Administration Plan Guide. After general discussion, Matt Parker made a motion to approve Resolution #489. Frankie Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

5. Resolution #490 Head Start/Early Head Start Procedures – Jackie Daniels

Ms. Daniels requested the approval of Resolution #490 - Head Start/Early Head Start Procedures.

After general discussion of the proposed procedures, Rachel Smith made a motion to approve Resolution #490. Thomas Crossley seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

6. Resolution #491 – 5311 Authorizing Resolution – Mike Crittenden

Mr. Crittenden requested the approval of Resolution #491 – 5311 Authorizing Resolution as part of the annual Section 5311 application. After general discussion, Thomas Crossley made a motion to approve Resolution #491. Rod Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

7. Resolution #492 – 5311 Resolution Authorizing Local Matching Fund – Mike Crittenden

Mr. Crittenden requested the approval of Resolution #492 – 5311 Resolution Authorizing Local Match Fund as part of the annual Section 5311 application. After general discussion, Rod Morgan made a motion to approve Resolution #492. Frankie Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

8. Resolution #493 – Wiregrass Transit Supplement Certifications & Assurances – Mike Crittenden

Mr. Crittenden requested the approval of Resolution #493 – Wiregrass Transit Supplement Certification & Assurances as part of the annual Section 5311 application. After general discussion, Matt Parker made a motion to approve Resolution #493. Rod Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

9. Nominating Committee for FY 2025 Officers & Executive Committee – Scott Farmer

Mr. Farmer requested the approval of the recommended Nominating Committee for FY 2025 Officers & Executive Committee. The recommended nominations from the Executive Committee were as follows: Thomas Crossley (Barbour County), Rod Morgan (Coffee County), Sammy Glover (Covington County), Leah Harlow (Dale County), Rob Hinson (Geneva County), David Money (Henry County), and Matt Parker (Houston County). After general discussion, Brandon Shoupe made a motion to approve the Nomination Committee. Jimmy Money seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

B. Agency Administration

1. Department Reports

a. Finance Department – Judith Tate

Ms. Tate stated the Agency's Combined Budget report runs from October 2023-April 2024. The year-to-date percentage of the Agency's budget is 53.44%. She stated that the Finance Department continues to assist Agency programs through a variety of tasks such as payroll administration, accounts payable, billing, reporting to funding sources, daily deposits and many other tasks. She also presented a detailed budget report and credit card expenditure for the Agency.

b. Community and Economic Development – Emily VanScyoc

Ms. VanScyoc referenced her written report in the Board packet comprehensively highlighting departmental projects. Ms. VanScyoc informed the Board that the Small Business Loan Programs closed a Revolving Loan Fund to: *Haven Academy, LLC, Rehobeth* (13 new jobs) and a USDA Microloan: *3 Scoops Ice Cream Parlor & Deli, LLC, Ozark* (3 new jobs) and provided pictures and information on recent projects in Samson (Senior Center Renovation), Geneva (Soccer Complex), and Slocomb (Nature Trail).

c. Head Start and Early Childhood Development– Jackie Daniels

Ms. Daniels presented the Board with the current enrollment as noted below.

Center Name	# of Classrooms	Enrollment	Waitlist
Andalusia Head Start	3	53	36
Andalusia Early Head Start	2	16	50
Eufaula Head Start	3	51	1
Florala Head Start	2	36	10
Florala Early Head Start	2*	0	22
Geneva Head Start	4	67	14
Opp Head Start	4	69	23
		292 (92%)	156

Enrollment as of June 13, 2024

Because of the closing of the Headland center in August of 2022, the Office of Head Start (OHS) has issued a Full Enrollment Initiative (FEI) which requires full enrollment (97%) within one year of the notice (October 2024) or the OHS will begin decreasing classrooms and funding. The OHS is encouraging agencies to file for an enrollment reduction to be able to keep the current funding but serve less children and let staff go; the rationale is to have the ability to pay teachers more to be able to compete with the school system.

Ms. Daniels also reported that Florala Early Head Start is almost ready to open pending DHR inspection, showed pictures of End of Year programs at the centers, and provided Office of School Readiness Outcome scores showing improvements made from Fall to Spring. Ms. Daniels informed the Board of resource needs, including personnel, health and safety equipment, and other educational and facility needs.

d. Senior Community Service Employment Program – Gail Clark

Ms. Clark provided Performance Measures for both the Center for Workforce Inclusion and Alabama Department of Senior Services programs. Ms. Clark informed the Board of the current enrollment as of June 13, 2024.

- **28** - Center for Workforce Inclusion (formally SSAI) – **Authorized - 37**
- **11** - Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) – **Authorized - 16**

Ms. Clark discussed attending Older Americans Day on May 1 with Brittany McCree to promote the SCSEP program.

Ms. Clark asked the Board to promote the SCSEP program to area local government and non-profit organizations.

Wiregrass Transit Authority – Demetrus (Mike) Crittenden

Mr. Crittenden informed that Board that Wiregrass Transit Authority (WTA) personnel currently consists of 4 dispatchers, 12 full-time bus drivers, and 3 part-time bus drivers. The Enterprise office is fully staffed. We are recruiting for four part-time drivers in Dothan. The current fleet consists 1 twenty-passenger bus, 1 fourteen-passenger bus, 3 twelve-passenger buses, 4 ten-passenger buses, 4 twenty-four passenger buses, and 13 high roof vans with one still pending delivery. Mr. Crittenden stated WTA attended FY 2024 ALDOT/ALTRANS Spring Conference in Gulf Shores on April 30-May 2, 2024 and completed “Reasonable Suspicion” training in accordance with FTA rule 49 CFR. He stated the Enterprise office participated in the City of Enterprise’s Senior Citizen’s Center “Let’s Luau” event on May 11.

Mr. Crittenden noted that we have begun preparing the annual 5311 Grant Application for FY 2025. The tentative deadline for submission is July 30, 2024. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is conducting a Triennial Review of our agency. This review helps FTA determine whether we are administering FTA-funded programs in accordance with United States Code, Chapter 53 of Title 49 and Federal Transit Law provisions. The initial Recipient Information Request (RIR) was submitted on February 29, 2024. The follow up responses to the RIR was submitted on June 3, 2024. Mr. Crittenden also informed the Board that the Virtual Review is tentatively scheduled between dates of July 31-August 2, 2024.

e. Human Resources – Wendy Cook

Ms. Cook informed the Board that the Agency has hired 18 new employees, while losing 10. All 10 were part-time Transit Drivers or Head Start Substitutes. One employee retired. Ms. Cook stated the turnover rate is 6.45% and retention rate is 93.55%. She stated we currently have 152 employees that run through payroll with 38 of them being through Senior Community Workforce, leaving a total of 114 spread throughout each department. Ms. Cook stated that she has recently attended the annual Alabama Society for Human Resources Conference where she obtained beneficial information from collaborating with other HR professionals. She shared that she also attends monthly WHRMA meetings where she is able to learn, collaborate and share ideas.

f. Information Technology – Jimmy Payne

Mr. Payne informed the Board that the main Firewall has been replaced in the Central Office. Mr. Payne also stated that changes to website information, as reported by the Agency's various departments, have been performed for April - June 2024. He further explained the implementation of security patches released by various vendors, which contribute to the websites as many parts are upgraded as released to maintain site security and data integrity. He informed the Board that he worked with Fiscal and GMS Corporate on April and May 2024 updates and added one admin user to the GMS system. He will continue to review current software and hardware systems for needed upgrades moving forward.

g. Executive Director – Scott Farmer

Mr. Farmer provided a facility update, including reporting the ALDOT Property Disposition request for 227 North Oates Street was approved. A draft Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) was submitted to City of Dothan and the Downtown Dothan Redevelopment Authority (DDRA), which is pending. The Agency is working with the DDRA for a potential alternative property.

Mr. Farmer also provided a legislative update with the current status of the proposed FY 2025 appropriations that affect Agency funding. Mr. Farmer reported there does not appear to be any major impacts unless the appropriations process is not fully completed.

Item 5: Unfinished Businesses

None noted.

Item 6: New Business

Mr. Farmer informed the Board the next Board of Directors Meeting and the associated Annual Meeting will be September 12, 2024 at the Enterprise Civic Center with the Executive Committee beginning at 9:00 a.m., Board of Directors beginning at 10:00 a.m., and Lunch / Program beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Mr. Farmer also noted the Alabama Association of Regional Councils Conference is scheduled for October 6-9 at the Von Braun Center in Huntsville.

1. Executive Director's Evaluation

The Board then conducted the Executive Director's Evaluation. The Executive Committee reported that Mr. Farmer performed Outstanding or Very Good based on the evaluation criteria and the Board accepted the Evaluation.

Item 7: Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairperson Wilcoxon made a motion to adjourn the Board of Directors Meeting at 4:02 PM with unanimous approval.

Lori Wilcoxon, Chairperson

Brittany McCree, Office Manager