

Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission

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



Phone: 334-794-4093

Fax: 334-794-3288

www.searpc.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 September 12, 2024 10:30AM

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission Board of Directors for **4th Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024** was convened on **September 12, 2024 at 10:30 AM**. The meeting was held at the Enterprise Civic Center, Enterprise, Alabama.

The following were present:

Board Officers: Chairperson Lori Wilcoxon (Houston County), First Vice Chairman Mark Blankenship (Dale County), Second Vice Chairman Rod Morgan (Coffee County), and Secretary/Treasurer Rob Hinson (Geneva County).

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

Board of Directors: Jason Davis (Barbour County), Rachel Smith (Barbour County), Tom Maddox (Coffee County), Greg White (Covington County), Joe Richburg (Covington County), Zollie Hudson (Covington County), Derek Dickens (Dale County), David Hayes (Geneva County), Gregory Reynolds (Henry County), Emmanuel Bankston (Henry County), David Crutchfield (Houston County), and Kimberly Trotter (Houston County).

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

Chairperson Wilcoxon called the meeting to order at 10:35AM by establishing a quorum was present and asked Mr. Rob Hinson to pray. She welcomed everyone and introduced new board member Zollie Hudson (Covington County).

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

None

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

Board members reviewed the minutes from the prior meeting. Leah Harlow made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Gregory Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion was

passed by a unanimous vote.

Item 4: Reports of Officers, Committees, and Departments

A. Executive Committee Report

1. FY 2025 Budget - Judith Tate

Ms. Tate informed the Board that she was requesting the approval of FY2025 Budget, which includes a 2% Cost of Living increase for non-Head Start Department employees and a 2.35% Cost of Living increase for all Head Start employees. Matt Parker made a motion to approve the Budget. Rob Hinson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote. Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of the FY2025 Budget.

2. Resolution #494 – RPO FY 2025 Work Program – Emily VanScyoc

Ms. VanScyoc informed the Board that she was requesting the approval of Resolution #494 RPO FY 2025 Work Program. After general discussion, Greg White made a motion to approve Resolution #494. Joe Richburg seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

3. Head Start/Early Head Start CACFP Annual Civil Rights Training (Video) – Robiann Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert informed the Board that this was the yearly Head Start/Early Head Start CACFP Annual Civil Rights Training and explained the requirement for the Board's involvement. A link to the video was sent out to the Board. After general discussion, Joe Richburg made a motion to approve Head Start/Early Head Start CACFP Annual Civil Rights Training (Video). Gregory Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

4. Resolution #495 – Participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – Robiann Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert informed the Board that she was requesting approval of Resolution #495 Participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. After general discussion, Joe Richburg made a motion to approve Resolution #495. Gregory Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

5. Resolution #496 – Approval to Submit FY 2025 Head Start/ Early Head Start Non-Competing Continuation Funding Application – Robiann Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert informed the Board that she was requesting approval of Resolution #496 Approval to Submit FY 2025 Head Start/Early Head Start Non-Competing Continuation Funding Application. After review of the application and general discussion, Matt Parker made a motion to approve Resolution #496. Toby Seay seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote. Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of the FY2025 Head Start/Early Head Start Non-Competing Continuation Funding application.

6. Resolution #497 – Program Information Report (PIR) for 2023-2024 – Robiann Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert informed the Board that she was requesting approval of Resolution #497 Program Information Report (PIR) 2023-2024. After review of the PIR and general discussion, Rob Hinson made a motion to approve Resolution #497. Gregory Reynolds seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

7. Resolution #498 – Head Start/Early Head Start Self-Assessment – Robiann Gilbert

Ms. Gilbert informed the Board that she was requesting approval of Resolution #498 Head Start/Early Head Start Self-Assessment. After review of the Self-Assessment and general discussion, Leah Harlow made a motion to approve Resolution #498. Matt Parker seconded the

motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

8. Employee Handbook Revision – Wendy Cook

- a) Policy 610 Motor Vehicle Operations
- b) Policy 660 Telework Policy

Ms. Cook informed the Board that she was requesting approval of the Employee Handbook Revisions (Policy 610 and 660) and presented the proposed changes. After general discussion, Rob Hinson made a motion to approve the Employee Handbook Revisions. Leah Harlow seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

9. Resolution #499 – Adopting the Wiregrass Archives as the SEARP&DC Repository of Record – Scott Farmer

Mr. Farmer informed the Board that he was requesting approval of Resolution #499 Adopting the Wiregrass Archives as the SEARP&DC Repository of Record. After general discussion, Greg White made a motion to approve Resolution #499. Rob Hinson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

10. Nominating Committee Report – FY 2025 Executive Committee & Officers – Scott Farmer

Mr. Farmer informed the Board he was requesting approval of the Nominating Committee Report for FY 2025 Executive Committee and Officers. The Nominating Committee met in August to discuss nominations to be recommended to the Board. The Nominating Committee recommendations for FY 2025 officers included: Mark Blankenship (Dale County), Chairman; Rod Morgan (Coffee County) First Vice-Chairman; Rob Hinson (Geneva County), Second Vice-Chairman; and Matt Parker (Houston County), Secretary/Treasurer. The recommendations for additional FY 2025 Executive Committee members included: Earl Gilmore (Barbour County), Thomas Crossley (Barbour County), Sammy Glover (Covington County), Leah Harlow (Dale County), Toby Seay (Geneva County), David Money (Henry County), and Lori Wilcoxon (Houston County), Immediate Past Chairperson. Chairperson Wilcoxon asked for any additional motions from the floor, of which none occurred. After general discussion, Leah Harlow made a motion to approve the Nominating Committee Report for FY 2025 Executive Committee and Officers. Toby Seay seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous vote.

11. Tentative FY 2025 Board Meeting Dates – Scott Farmer

Mr. Farmer informed the Board of Tentative FY 2025 Board Meeting Dates, which included the normal second Thursday of each quarter. After general discussion, Gregory Reynolds made motion to approve Tentative FY 2025 Board Meeting Dates. Rob Hinson 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-July 2024. The year-to-date percentage of the Agency’s budget is 71.48%. 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 report for the Agency.

b. Head Start and Early Childhood Development – Robiann Gilbert

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

Center Name	# of Classrooms	Enrollment	Waitlist
Andalusia Head Start	3	52	17
Andalusia Early Head Start	2	16	35
Eufaula Head Start	3	51	15
Floralda Head Start	2	31	6
Floralda Early Head Start	2	16	23
Geneva Head Start	4	69	24
Opp Head Start	4	70	22
		305 (97%)	142

Enrollment as of September 12, 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) for six months straight, or the OHS will begin decreasing funding. Ms. Gilbert also stated 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, which will be required within a few years.

Ms. Gilbert also reported that Floralda Early Head Start is open and is at 100% enrollment for the first month. Ms. Gilbert informed the Board of resource needs, including personnel, health and safety equipment, and other educational and facility needs.

c. 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 tentatively scheduled for September 30, 2024. 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 to federal programs at this time.

Item 5: Unfinished Businesses

None noted.

Item 6: New Business

1. FY 2025 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Assessment Grant – Emily VanScyoc

Ms. VanScyoc informed the Board she has previously applied for an EPA Assessment Grant and is currently working with a consultant to help with a new application process. She explained the application currently has three potential brownfield sites (Elba, Ozark and Eufaula) and asked that if Board Members had additional sites of interest to let her know. Application are due in November.

Item 7: Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairperson Wilcoxon invited all to stay for the Annual Regional Meeting and made a motion to adjourn the Board of Directors Meeting at 11:18AM with unanimous approval.

Mark Blankenship, Chairman

Brittany McCree, Office Manager