

PANHANDLE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Minutes

June 23, 2022

The meeting of the Board of Directors Executive Committee of the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission was held at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 23, 2022. Due to the current COVID-19 crisis this meeting was held in hybrid format by videoconference pursuant Texas Government Code Section 551.127. Board members and individuals from the public who desired to attend in person, accessed the meeting at 415 SW 8th Avenue, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- Don Allred, Oldham County Judge
- Cleo Castro, City of Cactus
- Steven Cortez, City of Hereford
- Buster Davis, Mayor, City of Gruver
- Christy Dyer, Randall County Judge
- Ronnie Gordon, Hartley County Judge
- Dr. Bill L. Hallerberg, Canadian River Municipal Water Authority
- Dr. John Howard, Donley County Judge
- Kimberly Jones, Childress County Judge
- Harold Keeter, Swisher County Judge
- Dan Looten, Carson County Judge
- Wayne Nance, Briscoe County Judge
- Ginger Nelson, Mayor, City of Amarillo
- Sal Rivera, Sheriff, Castro County
- Yolanda Robledo, Alderwoman, City of Bovina
- Winston P. Sauls, City of Borger
- Tobe Shields, Mayor, City of Spearman
- Nancy Tanner, Potter County Judge
- Ricky White, Mayor, City of Friona

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

- Juan Cantu, Lipscomb County Commissioner
- John James, Collingsworth County Judge
- Oscar Ostos, Amarillo
- Karen Price, Pampa
- Walter "Four" Price, Texas State Representative, District 87
- Phillip Self, Greenbelt Municipal & Industrial Water Authority
- Pat Sims, Commissioner, City of Dumas
- Kerry Symons, Mayor, City of Perryton

**STAFF PRESENT:** Mr. Trent Taylor, Director of Finance; Mr. Alex Guerrero, Local Government Services Director; Mr. Christopher Jackson, Economic Disaster Recovery Program Specialist; Ms. Daphne Morcom, Regional Services Program Specialist; Ms. Paige Witthar, Community and Economic Development Program Specialist; Ms. Lori Gunn, Regional Services Director; Ms. Sundee Rossi, Area Agency on Aging Director; Ms. Delaney Pruett, Regional Emergency Management Planning; Mr. Michael Peters, Regional 9-1-1 Network Director, Ms. DeShayne Hall, Executive Assistant; Mr. Dustin Meyer, Executive Director

**OTHERS PRESENT: NONE**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Judge Dan Looten called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. and noted that a quorum was present.

**2. INVOCATION**

Judge Don Allred gave the invocation.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments were made.

4. **MINUTES**

Judge Don Allred moved to accept the minutes from May 26, 2022. Judge Harold Keeter seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

5. **VOUCHERS**

Former Mayor Ricky White moved to approve the vouchers for the month of May 2022. Judge Wayne Nance seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

6. **PRPC EMPLOYEE GROUP HEALTH RENEWAL**

Mr. Trent Taylor informed the board PRPC provided group health care coverage to its employees through TML as part of an overall benefits package. Regular full-time employees and regular part-time employees who work more than 20 hours or more participated in the plan with PRPC paying 100% of the premium cost. Employees may add dependent coverage to the plan at the employee's expense. Currently, PRPC has 44 employees on the employee plan, 11 dependent coverage. For PRPC's 2022-2023 fiscal year, TML has quoted PRPC a 16% increase to continue with the current medial plan. TML has quoted optional plans for consideration with various increases in comparison to our current plan. Due to the large increase and continued increases over the past several years it is the recommendation to select ABA, TBA as the new healthcare insurance provider effective October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023.

Dr. Bill Hallerberg made a motion to authorize the selection of ABA, TBA as the health insurance provider. Judge Nancy Tanner seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

7. **PANHANDLE REGIONAL 9-1-1 NETWORK FY24-28 BUDGET ESTIMATES**

Mr. Michael Peters informed the board the Stage One funding request is the initial portion of the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) budgeting process. This document creates estimates based on current costs, expected increases, and equipment needs for fiscal years 2024 through 2028. The most significant portion of these estimates are fiscal years 2024 and 2025. These estimates provide guidance to Texas Legislators by giving realistic cost estimates for the upcoming budgeting process. These funding estimates will allow the PRPC to continue to provide service at the current level and replace or upgrade, items of equipment according to our replacement schedule that currently covers until 2032. The yearly fluctuations of the 9-1-1 budget are caused by the specific equipment replacement costs planned for each year.

Judge Ronnie Gordon moved to approve the Stage One Funding Request, as prepared, for submission to the Commission on State Emergency Communications for a preliminary funding request for FY2024 through FY2028 for the Panhandle 9-1-1 Program. Mayor Ginger Nelson seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

8. **PANHANDLE REGIONAL 9-1-1 NETWORK QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Mr. Michael Peters informed the board as stipulated in the agreement between PRPC and the Commission on State Emergency (CSEC), the Panhandle 9-1-1 Network must establish and accomplish certain goals and objectives. In order to check progress throughout the year, we are required to submit to CSEC a quarterly performance report that includes 9-1-1 volumes, monitoring results, network outage reports, system testing and the status of equipment replacement. The FY22 Q3 performance report was presented.

Judge Don Allred moved to approve the Performance Report as submitted for the third quarter of FY22 covering March, April and May. Mr. Winston Sauls seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

**9. PANHANDLE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION-EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Ms. Lori Gunn informed the board the actions taken in the initial minutes of an emergency are critical. A prompt warning to employees can save lives. A call for help to public emergency services that provides full and accurate information will help the dispatcher send the right responders and equipment. Action by employees with knowledge of building and process systems can help control a leak and minimize damage to the facility and the environment. As such Regional Services has developed an Emergency Management Plan for PRPC to implement should the need arise. Upon approval of the emergency plan, Regional Services will disseminate the plan to each department and provide the necessary training.

Former Mayor Ricky White moved to approve the Emergency Management Plan. Mr. Winston Sauls seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

**10. 2022 CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLAN APPROVAL**

Ms. Daphne Morcom informed the board that each year the PRPC enters into a contract with the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office (CJD) to administer the Panhandle Regional Criminal Justice Program. Part of that process is the development of a strategic plan that will outline the PRPC's vision related to criminal justice issues within the region. In the past, CJD required each jurisdiction to complete a community plan to identify local priorities and foster relationships between agencies. CJD rescinded the jurisdictional community plans in 2014 and began asking the regional Council of Governments (COGs) to develop strategic plans at the regional level. CJD continued the strategic planning requirement and placed weight at the state level by adding the results to the new CJD score sheet for prioritizing grants. The Executive Summary from each region's strategic plans will be compiled into a state-wide report for Texas. The Strategic Plan is an administrative document summarizing the priorities in the region as well as the services currently available to help identify program gaps. The plan will be utilized as a guide for agencies applying under the four funding opportunities administered by the COGs (VOCA, VAWA, JAG, JJ & TP). It will also assist CJD in developing strategies for other funding streams administered through their office. PRPC has conducted planning sessions and worked with local jurisdictions to develop our regional plan. The 2022 Strategic Plan will be uploaded to the PRPC website for use around the region.

Judge Ronnie Gordon moved to approve the Panhandle Regional Planning Commission Regional Criminal Justice 2022 Strategic Plan. Judge Harold Keeter seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

**11. FIRE, AMBULANCE AND SERVICE TRUCK (FAST) FUND APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT AND MANGAGEMENT SERVICES INTERLOCAL CONTRACTS**

Mr. Chris Jackson informed the board that PRPC staff has worked with the Panhandle communities to write applications and implement various projects through the Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) Program since 1983. Through the CDBG program Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) offers many different funding opportunities including the Fire, Ambulance, and Service Truck (FAST) Fund. The FAST fund was created in 2019 and has the stated objective of funding eligible vehicles and equipment in order to provide emergency response and special services to rural communities. Hall County has recently indicated interest for Local Government Services staff to develop and prepare an application to the FAST Fund program. An interlocal agreement has been developed for PRPC to assist communities in

developing applications to TDA programs particularly under the TxCDBG umbrella. In order to comply with the TDA programmatic requirements and conducting application preparation at no charge to communities in the region, a non-cost interlocal agreement has been developed for application development activities. The interlocal agreement will allow for an optional amendment to be considered upon notice of award that will allow PRPC to provide the project management services if so desired by each applicant. The agenda item is to allow for the authorization of Part 1 being an interlocal agreement that will allow PRPC staff to begin work on application development for Hall County.

Judge Don Allred moved to authorize the Executive Director of the PRPC to execute Interlocal Cooperation Contracts between Hall County and PRPC to provide TxCDGB Fast Funds application services at no cost with the contingency for administrative services to be amended at the localities' discretion if the projects are funded. Mr. Cleo Castro seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

## **12. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EDAC) APPOINTMENTS**

Ms. Paige Witthar informed the board PRPC was named as the Economic Development District for the Texas Panhandle by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 1978. Every three years PRPC seeks funding from EDA to facilitate the planning and implementation of economic development related to strategies in the Texas Panhandle. Currently, the EDA is in the first year of its three-year planning grant. The EDAC was established to provide general guidance and policy direction to the Economic Development District. Each county designated as distressed under EDA guidelines has a representative on the Committee. Because there is fluctuation in counties deemed to be economically distressed from year-to-year, it has been determined that those counties not listed as economically distressed will have ex-officio members to maintain continuity in the membership. Members serve three-year staggered terms and this year our committee will consist of eighteen active members and seven ex-officio members. All counties are eligible for funding through EDA distressed criteria (unemployment or per capita income) at the time of the project grant application. The eighteen counties designated this year as distressed at the renewal of the PRPC Planning Grant are Briscoe, Castro, Childress, Collingsworth, Deaf Smith, Donley, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hutchinson, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Swisher and Wheeler.

Mr. Winston Sauls moved to accept the nominees for the Economic Development Advisory Committee. Judge Harold Keeter seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

## **13. 2022 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) APPROVAL**

Ms. Paige Witthar informed the board PRPC was named as the Economic Development District for the Texas Panhandle by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 1978. Every three years PRPC seeks funding from EDA to facilitate the planning and implementation of economic development related to strategies in the Texas Panhandle. Currently, the EDA is in the first year of its three-year planning grant. One of the special award conditions of PRPC's planning grant is to provide a comprehensive rewrite of the Texas Panhandle Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) every five years and an update the CEDS annually. PRPC Staff works with the membership of the EDAC to draft and update the region's CEDS. This document analyzes the population and economic trends of the region and its communities while identifying the needs and strategies appropriate to help sustain and expand local economies. The CEDS is rich in information with regard to economic development in the Panhandle Region and includes a SWOT analysis on economic trends in the region. The CEDS also identifies economic development resources and strategies available to local communities, entrepreneurs, and businesses in the region. Each EDAC member and/or representative from distressed

counties provide insight into the specific issues facing their respective counties. This year, PRPC Staff conducted an annual update to highlight the activities of the Economic Development District, update regional data for economic distress, and track the Action Plan progress. The EDA requires that the advisory committee review and approve the CEDS annually prior to submission. Additionally, because the economic development efforts of the region continue to become more intertwined with local government, PRPC Staff feels that it is appropriate for the annual updated CEDS to be reviewed by the PRPC governing body. The full draft of the CEDS with the 2022 update is available on the PRPC website.

Judge Christy Dyer moved to authorize the Executive Director to sign the 2022 update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) document. Judge Nancy Tanner seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

#### **14. LOCAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT SERVICES INTERLOCAL CONTRACT- AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING**

Mr. Alex Guerrero informed the board as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (H.R. 1319) the Department of Treasury is responsible for the disbursement of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CLFRF). These funds are direct federal aid to cities and counties throughout the United States to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency or its negative economic impacts. Funding allocation is based on their overall population. Within the last few months cities and counties throughout the Texas Panhandle have begun receiving the payment of the CLFRF funding. Currently, the use and eligibility of funding for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds are determined through 31 CFR Part 35 which has just recently been finalized and the Final Rule becomes effective April 1, 2022. Similar to the Interim Final Rule eligible uses of funding are fairly broad. PRPC staff has been approached by several entities to provide administrative assistance with regards to the use and documentation of CLFRF funds. PRPC has developed an Interlocal Agreement to provide administrative assistance to assist the cities and counties to provide advice, financial and records management, provide procurement and construction administration and assist with all reporting requirements. The CLFRF funding has identified 2 CFR 200 as the authority for procurement and the interlocal cooperation process is identified as an allowable form of procurement for professional services provided by one political subdivision to another. The City of Clarendon has indicated that they would like to utilize PRPC for the administration of CLFRF funds.

Dr. Bill Hallerberg moved to authorize the Executive Director to execute the interlocal contract with the City of Clarendon for the Planning Commission to provide project management services for the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Mayor Tobe Shields seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

#### **15. STATE FUNDED MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY SUPPORT RESOLUTION**

Mr. Dustin Meyer informed the board Regional Councils of Government are created under Chapter 391 of the Texas Local Government Code. The purpose of Regional Councils is to "Join and cooperate to improve the health, safety and general welfare of their residents and plan for the future development of communities, areas and regions". There is a real and significant need to address mental health, substance abuse and the homelessness throughout the Texas Panhandle. There are initial discussions on the State level to provide the funding and development of a State funded Regional Mental Health Hospital. This agenda item is to allow the PRPC Board of Directors to consider and support the pursuit and development of a state regional mental health facility. Regionally there is a pervasive and consistent shortage of local openings and significant time lag of several days in placing commitments who often need treatment. According to the National Alliance on Mental Health, approximately 1 in 25 adults in the U.S., or 4% experience a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities. Further compounding the issue is that the closest adult state mental health hospital is 224 miles away from Amarillo.

The closest adolescent state mental health hospital is 231 miles away from Amarillo. The state hospital in Big Spring is often full. Many deemed in need of intensive long-term care are left with no choice to wait until a bed opens up which can last on average for months. The Pavilion of Northwest Texas Hospital has cut back admissions due to lack of staff. Longer commitments to the nearest state hospital in Vernon for the criminally insane and in Wichita Falls for all others, have wait times of three to four weeks. Most of the county jails have a significant number of mentally ill housed in their local jails. The situation is untenable for the region's county judges, law enforcement, mental health professionals and the patients who need immediate care. The Texas Panhandle region would strongly benefit from additional services that could provide a continuum of care for people in need of mental health and substance abuse services that would be less costly than jails, emergency rooms or traveling outside of the region for these services.

Judge Don Allred moved to consider the resolution to support the efforts to bring a needed state funded mental health facility to the Texas Panhandle. Dr. Bill Hallerberg seconded the motion; the motion carried by unanimous vote.

**16. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:44 pm.



---

Judge Dan Looten, Chairman  
Panhandle Regional Planning Commission  
Board of Directors

ATTEST:



---

Sheriff Sal Rivera, Secretary/Treasurer  
Panhandle Regional Planning Commission  
Board of Director