

**ETDD South Rural Planning Organization Committee Minutes**  
**TDOT Region 1 Headquarters Auditorium**  
**May 29, 2025, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Knoxville, TN**  
**MINUTES**

**Voting Members Present**

Executive Board: Mayor Mark Potts, , Mayor Rob Mathis, County Executive Wade Creswell (by proxy Kaley Hill), Mayor Timothy Neal (by proxy Tony Brown), Mayor Ed Mitchell (by proxy Don Walker), Mayor Doyle Lowe (by proxy Jon Campbell), Mayor Trey Dykes, Mayor Mike Chambers (by proxy Donald Whaley), Mayor Mike Werner (by proxy Rogers Sims), State Representative Lowell Russell, Senator Randy McNally (by proxy David Bradshaw)

Technical Committee: Becky Ruppe, Mike Patterson, Dennis Ferguson (by proxy Mary Gray) Rick Yakubic, Billy Pickel (by proxy Brian Brown), Dustin Smith (by proxy Doug Tarwater), Jon Campbell, Becky Headrick, Donnie Adams, Glen Cofer, Tina Whitaker, and Brooke Mayes

**TDOT and Support Agencies Present**

Steve Borden (TDOT), Dexter Justis (TDOT), Stacy Morrison (TDOT), Mark Nagi (TDOT), Drew Rutherford (TDOT), Tracy Widner (TDOT), Christie Brown (TDOT), Nick Barnard (TDOT), Leah Everett (TDOT), Laura Smith (ETDD), Ekem Amonoo-Lartson and Miranda Cummings (ETDD), Ryan Traverse (TDOT), Jake Bennett (TDOT), Tim Hendrick (ETDD),

**Others Present**

Tammy Watts (Town of Pittman Center) Donnie Adams (Sevier County Hwy), Kaley Hill (Roane County), Alexa Vonns (Blount Partnership)

**Welcome / Call to Order**

The meeting began at approximately 10:00 a.m. Executive Board Chairman Mark Potts called the joint meeting of the Executive Board and Technical Committee to order.

**Determination of Quorum / Roll Call**

Quorums were present for both the Technical Committee and Executive Board and the roll call was waived.

**Approval of November 19, 2024, Technical Committee Meeting Minutes**

Technical Committee, Vice Chair. Becky Ruppe for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2024, Technical Committee Meeting. Glen Cofer made a motion to approve the minutes, it was seconded by Mike Patterson and members of the Technical Committee approved the minutes.

**Approval of November 19, 2024, Executive Board Meeting Minutes**

Executive Board Chairman Mark Potts asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2024, Executive Board Meeting. Don Walker made a motion to approve the minutes, it was seconded by David Bradshaw and members of the Executive Board approved the minutes.

### **Election of Chair and Vice Chair per New Bylaws**

With the adoption of the new bylaws and combining of the Executive Board and Technical Committee into one committee, a new chair chosen from the mayors and new vice chair chosen from the road superintendents need to be elected for 2 year terms. At the end of the term, the chair will be chosen from the road superintendents and the vice chair from the mayors. Glen Cofer made a motion to elect Mark Potts as the chair which was seconded by Mike Patterson and approved unanimously. As there were no road superintendents present to elect a vice chair, Rep. Russell suggested postponing until later in the meeting.

### **Update of 10 Year Plan and TDOT Project Updates and State Aid Projects**

The TDOT's Dexter Justis showed the video of the 10 Year Plan update and went through projects and funding. Of the total, 55% of the funds go to the projects with the other 45% going to road paving, maintenance, and others. He discussed the Statewide Partnership Plan and that Blount County in Region 1 had been moved up with improvements to Pellissippi Parkway and right-of-way widening. The only new project in Region 1 was the widening of Hwy. 62 in Wartburg in Morgan County. The 449 Project in Sevier County should be completed this year. The Governor requested another \$1.1 billion in recovery.

### **Drones & Advances Air Mobility for Rural Tennessee**

Ryan Traversa, from the TDOT, Aeronautics Division gave a presentation on what the division could provide. He gave a slide presentation and discussed the advances in drones and the impacts on Rural Tennessee. As growth occurs, more entities are using drones and eventually will use them as taxis. There is a company in Knoxville, Whisper Aero developing quieter propulsion systems. Mr. Traversa also gave information on airspace and what to do if you see a drone overheard. Several questions were asked at the end of the presentation and Ryan can share the slides at the conclusion of the presentation.

At this time, Representative Russell stated that he had spoken with Loudon County Road Superintendent, Billy Pickel, who was willing to be Vice Chair. Rep. Russell moved to elect Billy Pickel as Vice Chair which was seconded by Jon Campbell and approved unanimously.

### **Update on the Transportation Plan for Cocke County**

Ekem Amonoo-Lartson gave a presentation on the Transportation Plan for Cocke County and how the plan would differ from some previous plans in that it would incorporate requested corridors and areas impacted by Hurricane Helene. Working with TDOT Planning Division/Forecasting Office, data will be incorporated as it affects Gatlinburg, Sevier County and parts of North Carolina.

### **Coordinators Report**

Ekem Amonoo-Lartson, ETDD, presented the Coordinators Report covering tasks completed during the previous year, including the previous RPO meetings in the Fall, Local Officials

Meetings, assistance with transportation grants, attendance at the NADO Transportation Conference in July, and RPO Conference in March. At the conclusion of the Cocke County Transportation Plan, work will begin on the Roane County Transportation Plan. It was noted that the Transportation Planning Grant application will open in late summer and the Statewide Partnership Plan in late summer too.

**TDOT/FHWA Updates**

No other updates.

**Questions / Discussion / Other Business**

None

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjourn**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.

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