

**EAST TENNESSEE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
February 11, 2025
MINUTES**

The East Tennessee Development District's Executive Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at ETHRA, 9111 Cross Park Dr., Ste D-100, Knoxville, TN. The following Executive Committee members were present:

Glenn Jacobs, Knox County Mayor
Rob Mathis, Cocke County Mayor
Mitch Ingram, Monroe County Mayor
Terry Frank, Anderson County Mayor
Mike Byrd, Grainger County Mayor
Joe Brooks, Claiborne County Mayor
Chris Cutshaw, Hamblen County Mayor
Wade Creswell, Roane County Executive
Roland "Trey" Dykes, III. Mayor of Newport
Neal Pucciarelli, Mayor of Cumberland Gap
Ron Williams, Mayor of Farragut

Guests

Emily McCaul, Senator Hagerty's Office
Tim Hendrick, ETDD
Alan Woods, ETDD
Sarah Anderson, ETDD
Gary Holiway, ETHRA
E.L. Morton, ETHRA
Joe Esway, Cocke County EMA Director

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Glenn Jacobs called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

Meeting Recorder did a roll call to collect meeting attendees, and a quorum was reached.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice-Chair Glenn Jacobs asked for any changes to the posted agenda. There were none, so he called for a motion to approve today's Meeting Agenda. Roane County Executive Wade Creswell made the motion, it was seconded by Town of Farragut Mayor Ron Williams and approved by all.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice-Chair Jacobs asked for any changes to the last meeting's Minutes, dated January 14, 2025. No changes were noted, so he called for a motion to approve them. Town of Farragut Mayor Ron Williams made the motion, it was seconded by Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell, and the minutes were approved by all.

SENATE, HOUSE & PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice-Chair Jacobs opened the floor to any public comments and asked if any House or State representatives would like to say anything, no one had any comments.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Treasurer Mitch Ingram presented the financials for December 2024 and halfway six-month year to date. Treasurer Ingram pointed out that during the month of December revenues did exceed expenses by \$21,976 and that year to date the revenues are covering expenses and revenue is coming in roughly 121% higher than budgeted and expenses are about 116% higher. Overall, the balance sheet is still strong and sound and there are some matching expenditures going for some of the grant programs including GoPlaces, ARC Power, and some Solid Waste grant programs.

Vice-Chair Jacobs called for a motion to approve the Financial Report. Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell made the motion, it was seconded by Town of Farragut Mayor Ron Williams and approved by all.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

Vice-Chair Jacobs appointed a Nominating Committee to recommend new officers to the full Board during the annual business meeting that will be held on May 13th, 2025. The following members were appointed:

Anderson County Mayor – Terry Frank as Chair
Town of Farragut Mayor – Ron Williams
Jefferson County Mayor – Mark Potts
Sevier County Mayor – Larry Waters
Blount County Mayor – Ed Mitchell

Vice-Chair Jacobs explained that the Nominating Committee will be provided with historical data regarding past officers by ETDD soon and will meet prior to the April ETDD Executive Committee Meeting and report its recommendation to the full committee.

Rick Yakubic, Executive Director for ETDD, brought up that the term for the three city mayors will end in June and will need to be changed accordingly and voted on during the Annual Business Meeting due to them only being able to serve three years. Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell then asked if the three city mayors could be reappointed, Rick could not remember what the Bylaws stated about asked Gary Holiway, ETHRA Executive Director. Gary explained that according to the Bylaws three years is the max they can serve consecutively, unless they're

holding an officer seat, and it will have to be three new appointments. Claiborne County Mayor Joe Brooks asked if it was possible to amend the Bylaw to allow the city mayors to have another term because they are some of the most engaged members. Gary and Rick then agreed to ask Jessica if it could be amended because she is the one who made sure the Bylaws were the same for both agencies. Roane County Executive Wade Creswell asked if there could be a proposal at the April meeting to consider altering the bylaws, Mayor Mitchell and Mayor Brooks both agreed. Vice-Chair Jacobs then asked Gary to discuss it with Jessica and have her make a recommendation for the Board to consider.

Vice-Chair Jacobs called for a motion to approve the Nominating Committee appointments. Roane County Executive Wade Creswell made the motion, it was seconded by Grainger County Mayor Mike Byrd and approved by all.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Rick Yakubic, ETDD Executive Director, opened his report talking about planning and the fact that ETDD is currently struggling to make ends meet with the way planning advisory services are being handled right now. Mr. Yakubic pointed out that this year we're going to be in the hole approximately \$88,000 of which \$50,000 - \$80,000 ETDD can stomach due to some matching funds. Mr. Yakubic then pointed out that the total deficit would be \$138,000 but the state provides \$50,000 and explained that there will need to be a change in the way ETDD does planning because next year the shortfall is going to \$113,000 after the state funds and that's a little hard to swallow. Mr. Yakubic brought up the suggested ten percent increase on planning contracts for this year to bring the shortfall down to \$72,000 and then reevaluate planning moving forward. The idea is to have different types of contracts to ensure the needs of the different communities are met and ETDD is being compensated accordingly for the work completed. Mayor Ron Williams and County Executive Creswell then asked if anything was in the state budget to increase the amount of funding from the state, Mr. Yakubic explained that it was not included but that TDDA is working to get it in the amendment to increase overall funding to the Development Districts because it has not changed since 2007 despite cost increases. Executive Director Yakubic advised that there was a group going to meet with the legislators the following week to discuss the need for additional funding from the state. Mayor Joe Brooks then asked if the shortfall comes from planning would additional funding be allocated for planning only and Mr. Yakubic explained that the funds would be used district-wide not just for planning.

Mayor Joe Brooks stated that he thought starting the conversation about a contract increase at the retreat and wanting to raise it at the very next meeting was too soon because there are a lot of questions that still need to be answered. Vice-Chair Jacobs then asked the committee what they wanted to do and the decision was made to wait until there was more information. Mr. Yakubic explained that the new planning contracts would need to go out before the next meeting and that waiting meant ETDD would be going in the whole more and contract work might be a little less than what they could do in the past.

The decision was made to postpone making any changes and send the contracts out using the Fund Balance to cover the deficit.

The next item in Mr. Yakubic's Report is the TACIR letter that was intended to be sent out last year but was not. Mr. Yakubic asked for a motion to have Secretary Mathis sign it and send it on to TACIR.

Town of Farragut Mayor Ron Williams made the motion, it was seconded by Roane County Executive Wade Creswell and approved by all.

Mr. Yakubic introduced Sarah Anderson, ETDD Historic Preservationist, to discuss the National Register of Historic Places and the benefits of being listed on it including recognition, property incentives, such as tax credits and several grant opportunities, and provides a layer of protection against federally funded projects. Ms. Anderson explained that most National Register nominations can take a year or more to be written, researched, and then go through the review process, she said that now there are five or six listings that the Tennessee Historical Commission has approved and are eligible for the next step of writing the nomination. Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell asked if it was only public buildings or properties and she clarified that it can be any kind of historic resource such as a courthouse, bridge, house, or cemetery publicly or privately owned. Mayor Mitchell then asked if a property or structure listed on the registry has limitations as to updates or things you can do to the structure, Ms. Anderson explained that the National Register is not regulatory in any way and there are no limitations on what can be done to a property or structure.

OTHER BUSINESS

Vice-Chair Glenn Jacobs called for other business, there was none.

TOPICAL DISCUSSION – Emergency Management

Cocke County Mayor Rob Mathis and Cocke County Emergency Management Agency Director Joe Esway led a discussion on emergency management after hurricane Helene. Mayor Mathis and EMA Director Esway put together a document like a military after action review that contains three things they did well and three things that could have been done better to help as many people as they can in case they are faced with the same situation. The first item Mayor Mathis mentioned is relationship development and maintenance, he and EMA Director Esway had worked together for years before the hurricane to build and maintain meaningful relationships with each other and other leaders. Mayor Mathis pointed out that one thing Director Esway did is establish the Emergency Responders Association that brings the city and county together each month for either a meeting or training getting them used to working together. Mayor Mathis then discussed the political counterpart that he established known as the Key Leaders Roundtable that gets everyone from utilities, school system, law enforcement and similar groups in the county together once a month to discuss what is going on and get them used to working together and communicating.

The second thing Mayor Mathis mentioned that they did well was incident command, control and operations. EMA Director Esway established a fully operational, pre-existing Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with seating, meeting rooms, telephones, radio, dry erase boards and other necessary equipment prior to the disaster making it possible to effectively manage emergency rescue and recovery operations 24 hours a day.

Mayor Mathis pointed out that the third thing they did well is communication not only with those handling the situation, but the public as well. While in the EOC communication has to be clear and concise between all parties because the nature of the situation did not allow for distractions or idle chatter. Mayor Mathis explained within 24 hours of the hurricane Director Esway and Mayor

Mathis along with the emergency responders and key leaders got a press conference put together to share one message, so everyone is on the same page. Then Mayor Mathis discussed what helped them be successful when communicating in Cocke County, staying ahead of it, don't wait too long to address the public, provide accurate and useful information, build credibility, offer encouragement and comfort, and put out a call to action letting people know where to get help or what they can do to help.

Director Esway then discussed the areas of improvement they identified. The first area of improvement discussed was the flow of incoming communication because all channels of communication were jammed and coming in making it impossible to keep up with. Mayor Mathis recommended having a dedicated person to filter communication to make sure no important calls, emails, or messages are missed allowing those in charge to not be tied down to a phone or computer. A second area where Director Esway said he went wrong was having the EOC being designed as a training facility or place for the mayor and his staff to run the government and in this case, both had to happen at the same time due to the annex being destroyed, which was an unrealistic expectation for the EOC and now they are discussing alternatives for the future. Mayor Mathis recognized his staff for stepping up and finding office space in the county for them to lease and get back to conducting business, they took over and packed up everything and got the new office set up taking that stress off him.

The last area for improvement that Director Esway discussed was planning and drills. In Cocke County they have their EOC setup to be a backup 911 center if they are inundated with phone calls with seventh additional phone lines, one for each of the six volunteer fire departments with a firefighter answering calls and the seventh being a secure line for the mayor to use. Before Helene they had conducted drills for various situations, but after the hurricane they realized that they will need to be more imaginative with their drills to identify any additional gaps in planning or procedures they may have.

ADJOURNMENT

Treasurer Mitch Ingram asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was made by Town of Farragut Mayor Ron Williams, it was seconded by Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell.