

**SOUTHEAST TEXAS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
2210 EASTEX FREEWAY, BEAUMONT, TX 77703
MAYOR HOMER E. NAGEL ROOM
MAY 20, 2026, 12:00 PM**

The South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC) Executive Committee met on Wednesday, May 20, 2026. SETRPC President, Jasper County Judge Mark Allen, called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm. A roll call of Executive Committee members to establish a quorum was conducted by Ms. Suzanne Carver, Executive Assistant, SETRPC. SETRPC 4th Vice-President, Mayor Randy Branch, City of West Orange, gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by SETRPC 5th Vice-President, Commissioner Cary Erickson, Jefferson County.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT

County Judge Wayne McDaniel, Hardin County
Commissioner Ernie Koch, Hardin County
County Judge Mark Allen, Jasper County
Commissioner Dennis Marks, Jasper County
Commissioner Cary Erickson, Jefferson County
Councilmember Chris Durio, City of Beaumont
Councilmember Jim Wright, City of Bevil Oaks
Councilmember Amanda Gates, City of Kirbyville
Mayor Jeff Darby, City of Nederland
Mr. Kelvin Knauf, Planning Director, City of Orange
Mayor Robert Arnold, City of Port Neches
Mayor Pro Tem Sheila Faske, City of Rose City
Mayor Danny Reneau, City of Silsbee
Mayor Michael Hendrix, City of Sour Lake
Mayor Randy Branch, City of West Orange
Mr. Joshua Allen, Sr., President, Jefferson County Drainage District #6 (DD6)
Mr. Brad Haeggquist, General Manager, Mauriceville Municipal Utility District (MUD)
Ms. Risa King, Information Specialist, Lower Neches Valley Authority (LNVA)
Ms. Rachel Harrah, Deputy Superintendent, Beaumont Independent School District (BISD)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES NOT PRESENT

Commissioner L.W. Cooper, Jr., Hardin County
Commissioner Chris Kirkendall, Hardin County
Commissioner Amanda Young, Hardin County
Commissioner Kevin Holloway, Jasper County
Commissioner Seth Martindale, Jasper County
Commissioner Willie Stark, Jasper County
County Judge Jeff Branick, Jefferson County
Mr. Fred Jackson, County Assistant (Representative for Judge Jeff Branick), Jefferson County
Commissioner Everette “Bo” Alfred, Jefferson County
Commissioner Michael Shane Sinegal, Jefferson County
Commissioner Brandon Willis, Jefferson County
County Judge John Gothia, Orange County
Commissioner Kirk Roccaforte, Orange County
Commissioner Chris Sowell, Orange County
Commissioner Johnny Trahan, Orange County
Commissioner Robert Viator, Orange County
Mayor Roy West, City of Beaumont
Mayor Cheri Mitchell, City of Bevil Oaks
Councilmember Jim Wright, City of Bevil Oaks
Mayor David Rutledge, City of Bridge City
Councilmember Aaron Roccaforte, City of Bridge City
Mayor Matt Lopez, City of China
Councilmember (Vacant), City of China
Mayor Chris Borne, City of Groves
Councilmember (Vacant), City of Groves
Mayor Clark McLane, City of Jasper
Councilmember (Vacant), City of Jasper
Mayor Frank George, City of Kirbyville
Mayor Fred Williams, City of Kountze
Councilmember Johnnie Mae Daigle, City of Kountze
Mayor Don Surratt, City of Lumberton
Mr. Randy Hicks, (Representative for Mayor Don Surratt), Lumberton IDC Board Director
Councilmember (Vacant), City of Lumberton

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES NOT PRESENT, Continued

Mayor Kerry Abney, City of Nome
Councilmember (Vacant), City of Nome
Mayor Larry Spears, Jr., City of Orange
Councilmember Brad Childs, City of Orange
Mayor Pauline Brown, City of Pine Forest
Councilmember Deanna Smith, City of Pine Forest
Mayor Lee Hayes, City of Pinehurst
Councilmember Michael Shahan, City of Pinehurst
Mayor Charlotte Moses, City of Port Arthur
Councilmember (Vacant), City of Port Arthur
Councilmember Jeff Ortiz, City of Port Neches
Mayor Tony Wilcoxson, City of Rose City
Mayor David Lang, City of Rose Hill Acres
Mayor Pro Tem Cindy Mason, City of Rose Hill Acres
Mayor Pro Tem William Bass, City of Silsbee
Councilmember (Vacant), City of Sour Lake
Mayor Phil Owens, City of Taylor Landing
Commissioner Tim Romero, City of Taylor Landing
Mayor Misty Songe Hart, City of Vidor
Councilmember (Vacant), City of Vidor
Councilmember Jay Odom, City of West Orange
Mr. Nicholas Carter, President, Lumberton Municipal Utility District (MUD)
Mr. Jeremy Walton, Assistant General Mgr., Representative for Mr. Brad Haeggquist, Mauriceville Utility District
Vacant, Jefferson County WCID #10
Mr. Frank Inzer, Director, Orange County WCID #1 (Vidor)
Mr. Tom Woolley, President, Orange County WCID #2 (West Orange)
Ms. Laura Moore, Director, Jasper Hospital District
Mr. Leroy McCall, Jr., Commissioner, Jefferson County Drainage District #3 (DD3)
Mr. Allen Sims, General Manager, Jefferson County Drainage District #7 (DD7)
Mr. Richard Beaumont, Commissioner, Jefferson County Drainage District #7 (DD7)
Mr. Don Carona, General Manager, Orange County Drainage District
Mr. Billy Ted Smith, Commissioner, Jasper County Emergency Services District #1 (ESD #1)
Mr. Sam Job, Commissioner, Jasper County Emergency Services District #4 (ESD #4)
Chief Chris Gonzales, Jefferson County Emergency Services District #1 (ESD #1)
Mr. Jim Philp, Commissioner, Hardin County Emergency Services District #2 (ESD #2)
Mr. Daniel J. Diaz, Administrator, Jefferson County Emergency Services District #3 (ESD #3)
Vacant, Orange County Emergency Services District #3 (ESD #3)
Ms. Lorrie Taylor, Port Director & CEO, Orange County Navigation & Port District
Ms. Georgine Guillory, Commissioner, Port of Beaumont
Mr. John Comeaux, Commissioner, Port of Port Arthur
Ms. Sheri Arnold, Commissioner, Sabine-Neches Navigation District
Mr. Rob Starr, Board Member, Southeast Texas Ground Water Conservation District
Dr. Mike Kelly, Superintendent, Bridge City ISD
Dr. Dwaine K. Augustine, Superintendent, Hamshire-Fannett ISD
Dr. Mark Porterie, Superintendent, Port Arthur ISD
Ms. Julie Gauthier, Deputy Superintendent, Port Neches-Groves ISD

STATE DELEGATION EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVES (Non-Voting) PRESENT

Ms. Jennifer Harris, Texas State Representative Robert Nichols

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Shanna Burke, Executive Director, SETRPC
Ms. Suzanne Carver, Executive Assistant, SETRPC
Mr. Jeff King, Finance Director, SETRPC
Ms. Tyronna McKenzie, Director, Foster Grandparent Program, (FGP)
Mr. Jeremy Robison, Information Technology (IT) Director, SETRPC
Mr. Pete De La Cruz, Director, 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Ms. Sara Torres-Garcia, Director, Community Services Division (CSD)
Ms. Kaylan Arendale, Director, Criminal Justice & Homeland Security Division (CJHSD)
Ms. Cherika Gathers, Quality Assurance Lead Specialist, Disaster Recovery Division (DRD)
Ms. Halie Smith, Director, Area Agency on Aging/211 (AAA)
Ms. Hannah Klauss, Director, Golden Triangle RSVP (RSVP)
Ms. Debbie Garlington, Controller, Finance (SETRPC)

Ms. Madison Appling, 9-1-1 Finance Analyst, 9-1-1 Emergency Network
Ms. Stephanie Robertson, Fiscal Contract Manager, Community Service Division (CSD)
Ms. Shantell Ikerd, Lamar University Intern, Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

GUESTS PRESENT

Mr. Kelly Waterman, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz
Ms. Janet Brown, U.S. Representative Randy Weber
Police Chief Joseph Malbrough, Beaumont ISD Police Department (BISD)
Mr. R.B. Maxwell, Beaumont ISD Senior Director Operation (BISD)
Ms. Kaitlyn Addington, Resilience Fellow, SBP

26-035 APPROVAL OF APRIL 15, 2026, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

➤ Mayor Jeff Darby, City of Nederland, made a motion to approve the April 15, 2026, Executive Committee Minutes. Commissioner Dennis Marks, Jasper County, seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

26-036 APPROVAL OF INVESTMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER ENDED MARCH 2026 APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT FOR MARCH 2026

➤ Commissioner Cary Erickson, Jefferson County, made a motion to approve the Investment Report for Quarter Ended March 2026, and the Treasurer's Report for March 2026. Mayor Randy Branch, City of West Orange, seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

26-037 CRIMINAL JUSTICE & HOMELAND SECURITY DIVISION (CJHSD)

➤ First, Ms. Kaylan Arendale, Director, Criminal Justice & Homeland Security Division (CJHSD), on behalf of the CJHSD, presented the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC) Regional Criminal Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031 for approval. Criminal Justice stakeholders from across the region collaborated extensively to identify and address local and regional needs related to law enforcement, juvenile justice, victim services, mental health, and substance abuse initiatives. Approval of the SETRPC Criminal Justice Strategic Plan will satisfy the requirements outlined by the Office of the Governor's Public Safety Office and the SETRPC Interlocal Agreement CJ4.3. *(A copy of the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission Regional Criminal Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031 may be obtained by contacting Ms. Arendale at karendale@setrpc.org.)*

Mayor Jeff Darby, City of Nederland, made a motion to approve adoption of the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission Regional Criminal Justice Strategic Plan 2026-2031. Mayor Randy Branch, City of West Orange, seconded the motion.

A brief discussion regarding the stakeholder list followed, to which Ms. Arendale responded that she would add anyone to the stakeholder distribution list who requested so. The motion then carried unanimously.

➤ Second, Ms. Arendale presented information on the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETRPC) Digital Opportunity and Broadband Planning Regional Goals Survey. The SETRPC and the Texas Broadband Development Office, in partnership with the Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC), is working to advance regional broadband planning initiatives and enhance digital opportunities throughout southeast Texas. A survey was sent out the previous day, and the information collected will serve as a foundation for establishing regional goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that the SETRPC will utilize to strengthen broadband access, connectivity, and digital capabilities across the region. Ms. Arendale encouraged all to complete the survey and share this information with relevant stakeholders and community partners. She emphasized that the more data that is gathered and captured, the better the broadband needs or lack of broadband within the region can be addressed.

This was followed by a brief discussion on technical aspects of completing the form. It was noted that the form is available on the SETRPC website at www.setrpc.org, and Ms. Arendale will also email it to anyone who requests it.

26-038 9-1-1 EMERGENCY NETWORK (9-1-1)

➤ Mr. Pete De La Cruz, Director, 9-1-1 Emergency Network, provided an update on the Jasper County Tower Project. The SETRPC 9-1-1 Emergency Network is planning the installation of a microwave dish system to support the Jasper County Sheriff's Office 9-1-1 PSAP. This project will provide a microwave back-up connection to the existing 9-1-1 fiber network, improving system reliability and redundancy.

In December of 2025 the plan was laid out before Executive Committee as a two-faced project to construct a microwave tower at the Jasper County Sheriff's Office. Approval was received at that time: however, there have been some

delays, part of which was related to the government shutdown. The cost of the project went up from approximately \$1.1 million to \$1,237,165. Therefore Mr. De La Cruz, on behalf of the 9-1-1 Emergency Network, requested approval to submit a budget amendment to the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) for the installation of microwave technology at the Jasper County Sheriff's Office 9-1-1 dispatch center. Mr. De La Cruz provided more technical information on why the project is so important in having this upgrade in Jasper County. He stated that this will put Jasper County "on par" with the other three counties in the SETRPC Region: Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange Counties. He acknowledged and thanked County Judge Mark Allen and Jasper County Emergency Management Coordinator Billy Ted Smith for their involvement and activeness in completing the project.

Mayor Randy Branch, City of West Orange, made a motion to approve the budget amendment to the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) for the installation of microwave technology at the Jasper County Sheriff's Office 9-1-1 dispatch center. Mr. Josh Allen, Sr., President, Jefferson County Drainage District #6 (DD6) seconded the motion.

This was followed by positive discussion on the microwave technology and how it will bring connectivity within the region. The motion then carried unanimously.

26-039 TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES DIVISION (T&ER)

➤ Mr. Bob Dickinson, Director, Transportation & Environmental Resources Division (T&ER), reviewed and requested approval of a Resolution Supporting the Submission of an Application for Action Plan Funding under the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program. If awarded, this grant would support the development of a Regional Safety Action Plan with the goal of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries in the southeast Texas region. (*See Attachment A.*) Mr. Dickinson listed a number of roads and highways which have had accidents over the years.

Mr. Dickinson explained that the program is an 80% federal match and 20% local. The process will include in-kind. He then explained and gave examples of how in-kind can work. This is a comprehensive safety action plan for the region which would address safety concerns and proposed projects that would help reduce deaths and serious injuries on the streets and highways in the four-county region. There will be public involvement outreach with cities and counties to identify "hot spots" for safety concerns and identify projects.

When asked about a maximum allotment, Mr. Dickinson explained that there is not a maximum allotment per year for the grant cycle. It's a five-year plan and, if the resolution is approved, the amount applied for will be \$500,000.

Mayor Jeff Darby, City of Nederland, made a motion to approve the Resolution Supporting the Submission of an Application for Action Plan Funding under the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant Program. Mayor Randy Branch, City of West Orange, seconded the motion.

This was followed by a lengthy discussion regarding specific project examples that are identified as safety concerns in the counties and in the cities. Mr. Dickinson provided some examples for projects which could include widening a road that has many accidents, adding a left turning lane, adding bike lanes, or perhaps working with the sheriff's department or city police department to work on a special traffic safety concern. He emphasized working together through an advisory committee to come up with a proposed project to solve that problem. Mr. Dickinson concluded by providing further information regarding in-kind. County Judge Mark Allen reminded everyone of how the Hazard Mitigation funding had worked several years ago, which is similar to what this project would be, and how in-kind match was made at that time.

After the discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

➤ Next, Mr. Dickinson provided an update on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan. The South East Texas Economic Development District (SETEDD) is in the process of updating the CEDS for the southeast Texas region, which must be done every five (5) years. The CEDS is developed to set the SETEDD's vision for economic development and maintain the region's federal designation as an Economic Development District (EDD), which allows communities in the region to be eligible for funding opportunities through the Economic Development Administration (EDA), an agency of the United States Department of Commerce.

The SETEDD, in conjunction with the South East Texas Economic Development Foundation - Regional Economic Development Initiative (SETEDF/REDI), will have four focus group meetings as follows:

- Tuesday, June 2, Lamar University, College of Business, Dean's Conference Room – Room 232;
- Wednesday, June 3rd, and Thursday, June 4th, SETRPC; and,
- Wednesday, June 10th, Jasper County Courthouse Annex Building.

Mr. Dickinson then provided more information regarding the CEDS focus group meetings, which will be facilitated by Mr. Craig Escamilla of CAE Solutions, LLC. Mr. Dickinson urged all to review the existing CEDS plan located on the SETRPC website: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy | SETRPC.

26-040 AREA AGENCY ON AGING (AAA)/2-1-1

➤ Ms. Halie Smith, Director, Area Agency on Aging/2-1-1 Texas, presented the Area Agency on Aging Emergency Operations Manual Updates for approval. In reviewing agency data, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA)/2-1-1 Division determined that updates were needed to the Emergency Operation Manual. The necessary updates include:

1. The addition of Jasper County Committee on Aging (JCCOA) data under the Sub-Contractor Emergency Contact Information section,
2. The update of the Orange Community Action Association Data – Director Name,
3. CSD changed to AAA in Section V,
4. Jasper added to Section IX,
5. Font and spacing changes throughout,
6. HHS OAAA and 2-1-1 TIRN Emergency Contact data added,
7. AAA/2-1-1 Staff Emergency Contact Information added,
8. SETRPC Administration and Directors Contact List Updated, and
9. Revision Date Updated.

A copy of the updated AAA Operations Manual may be obtained by contacting Ms. Halie Smith, Director, AAA/2-1-1 Texas, at hsmith@setrpc.org.

Mayor Jeff Darby, City of Nederland, made a motion to approve the Area Agency on Aging Emergency Operations Manual Updates. Mayor Randy Branch, City of West Orange, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

➤ Next, Ms. Smith presented the Area Agency on Aging/2-1-1 Emergency Operations Manual for approval. On December 11, 2025, the Health and Human Services Commission, Office of the Area Agencies on Aging (OAAA) provided written notification to the network that the Administration for Community Living (ACL) approved the 2026–2028 State Plan on Aging. OAAA shared compiled population data for individuals age 70 and over living in poverty by county to be utilized in the preparation of the Federal Fiscal Year 2027–2029 Area Plan on Aging which, much like the State Plan on Aging, is to identify each Area Agency on Aging’s priorities and strategies for improving the lives of older Texans and their family caregivers.

The Area Agency on Aging of Southeast Texas (AAASETX) secured a private contractor (previous SETRPC AAA Director, Ms. Colleen Halliburton) with whom we worked closely in preparing the required document. There were five (5) top needs identified as follows:

1. In-Home Supports and Caregiver Assistance,
2. Food Security and Nutrition Services,
3. Economic Security and Utilities Assistance,
4. Safe, Affordable Housing and Home Maintenance, and
5. Transportation and Access to Essential Services.

Ms. Smith added that these top five identified needs are all things that are already provided for, so drastic changes were not needed to focus on them. She pointed out that the document verifies detailed items that were found, and the way that the funds are intended to be utilized is also included.

On Monday, March 2, 2026, in accordance with the timeline provided by OAAA, a draft of the Area Plan document was posted on the SETRPC website and copies were provided to area partners for the required 30-day period of public comment. The draft was brought before the Regional Council on Aging and Disabilities (RCoAD), the AAASETX advisory board, at the March 19, 2026, meeting. The document was reviewed and discussed in detail prior to being voted on and approved.

Ms. Smith, on behalf of AAA, respectfully requested the SETRPC Executive Committee approval of the Area Agency on Aging of Southeast Texas FY 2027-2029 Area Plan on Aging.

Councilmember Chris Durio, City of Beaumont, made a motion to approve the Area Agency on Aging of Southeast Texas FFY 2027-2029 Area Plan on Aging. Commissioner Dennis Marks, Jasper County, seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

➤ Ms. Smith concluded by introducing the Lamar University Social Work Senior who is currently working as an intern in AAA, Ms. Shantell Ikerd.

26-041 FUTURE CALENDAR

➤ Ms. Suzanne Carver, Executive Assistant, SETRPC, noted the next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 17, 2026, 12:00 pm, in the SETRPC Mayor Homer E. Nagel Room. Also, the Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event will be held on Saturday, May 30th, at the Buna High School parking lot. Ms. Carver noted several flyers in the Executive Committee packets regarding community events, including the Southeast Texas Stand Down that is scheduled in Jasper on August 7, 2026.

26-042 OTHER, OLD, & UNEFINISHED BUSINESS

➤ Tell Me Something Good:

Ms. Shanna Burke, Executive Director, SETRPC, shared that Mr. Pete De La Cruz, Director, 9-1-1 Emergency Network, and staff recently met with Port Arthur Police Department officials and their Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) vendor. The city had reached out because they needed help cleaning up the city's GIS database. Mr. De Le Cruz and staff helped with this project and will also help with the city's addressing (as is done in Beaumont). Chief Duriso was happy with 9-1-1's help. Ms. Burke thanked Mr. De La Cruz and staff for their assistance.

Next, Ms. Burke announced that direct outreach has begun with Texas General Land Office's (GLO's) 2024 Homeowner Assistance Program (HAP) and Homeowner Reimbursement Program (HRP). Eligible areas are Hardin County & Jasper County only. There was an outreach event in Lumberton in June, and the application window began in July of 2025. Ms. Burke urged everyone needing assistance to apply as soon as possible. Ms. Burke had flyers available for both programs.

Finally, Ms. Burke shared that the new executive director and the finance director of the West Central Texas Council of Governments (WTCOG) will be meeting with Ms. Burke and Mr. Jeff King, Finance Director, to share best practices tomorrow, May 21st, at the SETRPC.

➤ Announcements and/or Articles

First, Ms. Burke pointed out articles in the *The Beaumont Enterprise*, *12News*, and *The Examiner* regarding funds from fines that the SETRPC Lighthouse Program will be receiving. The SETRPC Lighthouse Program is a program whereby if local industry is fined, they can choose to put that money back into local communities for which they operate through funding home energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades for low-income homeowners in Jefferson County.

Second, Ms. Burke noted an article in *The Examiner* regarding the Texas Silver-Haired Legislators (TSHL). Two of the participants are in our region, Mr. Ira Wilsker, as well as Ms. Ida Duplechin.

➤ There being no other, old, and unfinished business, the meeting adjourned at 12:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Commissioner Kirk Roccaforte, Orange County
SETRPC
Secretary

Attachment A

Resolution

APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE SUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION FOR ACTION PLAN FUNDING UNDER THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT) SAFE STREETS AND ROADS FOR ALL GRANT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Governor of Texas has designated the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission areas as State Planning Region #15; and

WHEREAS, the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission is organized in accordance with Section 391 of the Local Government Code and encompasses the region of Jasper, Jefferson, Orange and Hardin counties; and

WHEREAS, two major transportation corridors pass through the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission region; and

WHEREAS, the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission Department of Transportation's "Road to Zero" goal to cut traffic fatalities on Texas roadways to zero by the year 2050; and

WHEREAS, recipients of a Safe Streets and Roads for All grant are required to contribute a local matching share of no less than 20 percent of eligible activity costs; and

WHEREAS, the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission and all participating local governments will cooperate to fund the 20 percent local, in-kind matching requirement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission supports an application for Action Plan funding under the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 20th day of May 2026, at a regularly scheduled meeting of the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission.

APPROVED:



Mark Allen, SETRPC President
South East Texas Regional Planning Commission
County Judge, Jasper County

ATTEST:



Ernie Koch, SETRPC Treasurer
South East Texas Regional Planning Commission
Commissioner, Hardin County