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Owensboro, Kentucky  
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## GRADD BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

TO: Members and Associates of the Green River Area Development District Board of Directors

FROM: Office of the District

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting of May 14, 2025

The Board of Directors of the Green River Area Development District (GRADD) held its monthly meeting May 14, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. The meeting was held at the Green River Area Development District, 300 GRADD Way, Owensboro, KY. A quorum was present with members in attendance listed below.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DAVISS COUNTY:	Judge/Executive Charlie Castlen, Henrietta Harris, Lauren Osowicz, Nate Pagan
HANCOCK COUNTY:	Judge/Executive Johnny Roberts, Mayor Chad Gregory,
HENDERSON COUNTY:	Mayor David Sellers, Mayor Brad Staton, Janeth Nicolas
McLEAN COUNTY:	Judge/Executive Curtis Dame, Mayor Betty Howard, Vicki Hughes
OHIO COUNTY:	Judge/Executive David Johnston
UNION COUNTY:	Judge/Executive Adam O’Nan, Melissa Coker
WEBSTER COUNTY:	Judge/Executive Steve Henry, Mayor Pat Clark, Ryan Hammack

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS PRESENT

Green River Workforce Development Board - Mickey Dunbar  
Green River Economic Development Corporation - Brad Davis  
Green River Area Council on Aging - (Henrietta Harris)  
GRADD Water Management Council - Eric Hickman  
GRADD Hazard Mitigation Council - Jeremy Moore  
Green River Transportation Committee - (Judge/Executive Adam O’Nan)

\*Excused absence



Johnny "Chic" Roberts, Chairman | Adam O’Nan, Vice Chairman | Curtis Dame, Secretary | Charlie Castlen, Treasurer | Joanna Shake, Executive Director

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Serving the Municipal and County Governments of Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, & Webster



BOARD OF DIRECTORS ABSENT

DAVISS COUNTY: \*Mayor Patsy Mayfield, \*Robert Howard  
HANCOCK COUNTY: \*Franklin Powers  
HENDERSON COUNTY: \*Judge/Executive Brad Schneider, \*Bill Markwell  
McLEAN COUNTY: All present  
OHIO COUNTY \*Mayor Paul Sandefur, \*Mayor Jeff Fuqua  
UNION COUNTY: \*Mayor Randy Greenwell  
WEBSTER COUNTY: All present

COMMITTEE CHAIRS ABSENT

GUESTS AND STAFF PRESENT

Commissioner Matt Sawyers, Department for Local Government  
Mayor LaDonna Tapp, City of Uniontown  
Hunter Whitaker, Senator Mitch McConnell's Office  
Katie Marks, Congressman Brett Guthrie's Office  
Mark Lord, Congressman Brett Guthrie's Office  
Alex Caudill, Department for Local Government  
Miranda Funk, Ohio County Fiscal Court  
Candace Thomas, Ohio County Fiscal Court  
Joanna Shake, Executive Director, GRADD  
Mariah Myres, Director of Finance & Human Resources, GRADD  
Blake Edge, Director of Community & Economic Development, GRADD  
Leslie Wilson Director of Social Services, GRADD  
Bryan Kennedy, Communications Officer, GRADD  
Tom Lovett, MPO Coordinator, GRADD  
Tiffany Donahue, Local Government Analyst, GRADD  
Reenee Fogle, Fiscal Manager, GRADD  
Beth Ferguson, Accounting Clerk, GRADD  
Kelsey Smith, Payroll Coordinator, GRADD  
Amber Gebhard, Community Services Manager, GRADD  
Kathryn Gould, ADRC/SHIP Counselor, GRADD  
Kim Wells, Executive Assistant, GRADD

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Johnny "Chic" Roberts called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and led with prayer followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Roberts welcomed guests to the meeting.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Secretary's Report

Secretary Curtis Dame presented the April 9, 2025 minutes of the GRADD Board of Directors meeting.

A motion was made by Curtis Dame and seconded by Charlie Castlin to approve the April 9, 2025 minutes of the GRADD Board of Directors. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Secretary Curtis Dame presented the April 9, 2025 minutes of the GRADD Executive Committee meeting.

A motion was made by Curtis Dame and seconded by Adam O’Nan to approve the April 9, 2025 minutes of the GRADD Executive Committee. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

B. Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Charlie Castlen presented the Treasurer’s Report for the period of July 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025.

A motion was made by Charlie Castlen and seconded by Brad Davis to approve the Treasurer’s Report for the period of July 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025, which is subject to audit. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Treasurer Castlen noted there are no concerns on the revenue side of the budget. On the expense side, GRADD’s legal expense line item is over budget due to issues requiring legal counsel from a Human Resources attorney. That issue has been resolved.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Guest Speaker

Chair Johnny “Chic” Roberts introduced Commissioner Matt Sawyers with the Department for Local Government.

Commissioner Sawyers shared valuable insights on how the Department for Local Government works with organizations to improve the lives of those not only in Green River Region but the lives of all Kentuckians. DLG’s mission is to build stronger, more efficient communities across the Commonwealth. Commissioner Sawyers noted how vital it is for him and his staff to get out into the State to see what is needed by constituents.

Commissioner Sawyers reminded the group the Governors Local Issues Conference will take place August 13 - 15, 2025 at the Galt House in Louisville.

B. Draft Budget - Fiscal Year 2026

Treasurer Charlie Castlen presented the Fiscal Year 2026 Draft Budget for review.

Treasurer Castlen noted changes in revenues include the removal of funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) from Medicaid Waiver and Social Services, as these funds are expended in the current fiscal year. The Medicaid Waiver program is projecting a \$4 million increase in Fiscal Year 2026. GRADD is also projecting a decrease in Workforce Development. Allocations will be revised as they become available in October and April. GRADD is projecting an additional \$25,723 will be needed from the administrative line item.

GRADD is projecting an increase of \$2.8 million in expenses over Fiscal Year 2026. This includes a recommended three percent increase per employee in salary with an additional one percent for merit raises or salary adjustments. Ten percent has been reserved for vacant positions in the Medicaid Waiver, Community and Economic Development and Administration Departments. GRADD is allocating additional funds for staff training in all departments. This contributes to the twenty-three percent increase in Staff Travel & Training. The increase in board and committee meeting expenses stems from the addition of quarterly meals at the GRADD Board of Directors meetings. There is also a twenty-three percent increase in Computer Equipment which is an estimate based on the costs associated with Mains'1, Waiver reporting program and Medicaid Waiver billing. This also includes the addition of various computers and desktop scanners within GRADD departments. The changes in contractual services and direct program expenditures reflect actual costs averaged between prior and current fiscal years. For Contractual Services, ARPA funds are fully expended and have been removed from this expense line. A large portion, nearly \$29 million of the Direct Program Expenditures line is pass-through funds for the Medicaid Waiver program. This will continue to fluctuate as the program grows.

The GRADD Executive Committee reviewed and approved at the meeting earlier today and are submitting for final approval.

A motion was made by Charlie Castlen and seconded by Adam O'Nan to approve the Fiscal Year 2026 Draft Budget. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

C. Scope of Work - Fiscal Year 2026

Joanna Shake presented the GRADD Scope of Work outlining the various projects and programs administered by the GRADD staff. She expressed gratitude to the team for its ongoing support and dedication to improving the GRADD region.

A motion was made by Brad Davis and seconded by Charlie Castlen to approve the Scope of Work. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

D. Ombudsman Conflict of Interest

Leslie Wilson explained the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program requires volunteers and governing board members of organizations to complete an annual individual conflict of interest screening.

This screening is essential to ensure transparency and integrity within the program. She noted each member has a copy of the form and once filled return to GRADD.

E. Rampstop Marine Services Loan Request

Brad Davis reported Jacqueline Shocklee is requesting \$250,000 to purchase property in McLean County to open a grocery store. Rampstop currently serves mariners with groceries and supplies. Funding would create a store in which the public could shop for fresh produce and other groceries, while continuing last-mile delivery to mariners in Louisville, Paducah and Wickliffe. Rampstop has been serving mariners with groceries and supplies for over 20 years.

A motion was made by Brad Davis and seconded by Brad Staton to approve the Rampstop Marine Services loan request in the amount of \$250,000. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

F. Committee Reports

1. Green River Area Council on Aging

Chair Henrietta Harris reported the GRADD Aging Staff have submitted the requested documents to the Department for Aging and Independent Living for annual program monitoring. Aging Case Managers Dawn Tignor and Tiffanye Corsey are attending the Optimal Aging Conference in Louisville. Older Americans Month is in full swing with activities in each county. The next meeting of the Aging Council will be on June 3rd with an orientation session for new members prior to the council meeting. The orientation session is open to anyone interested in learning about the role of the council and the responsibilities of its members. The speaker for this meeting will be from Adult Protective Services providing training on Edler Abuse. After the June meeting, members will be encouraged to attend Bad Guys & Bluegrass, an event focusing on healthcare fraud prevention coordinated by Senior Medicare Patrol. There will be speakers from the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, US Attorney's Office and Senior Medicare Patrol.

2. Green River Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

Chair Brad Davis presented the April 2, 2025 minutes of the Green River Economic Development Corporation.

A motion was made by Brad Davis and seconded by Mickey Dunbar to approve the April 2, 2025 minutes of the Green River Economic Development Corporation. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Chair Brad Davis reported the Green River Economic Development Corporation met on May 7, 2025 and approved the Rampstop loan application in the amount of \$250,000. Alex Kretzer continues to market the Revolving Loan Fund program throughout the region.

3. GRADD Hazard Mitigation Council

Chair Jeremy Moore reported at the upcoming meeting on May 20, 2025 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will give a presentation of available programs for flood mitigation, flood control and streambank restoration and Kentucky Emergency Management officials will discuss the status of the recent disaster declarations and what local officials can do to assist.

4. GRADD Regional Transportation Committee (RTC)

Chair Adam O’Nan reported Jennifer Alvey submitted quarterly reports to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and is conducting sidewalk data collection. The next GRADD Regional Transportation Committee is scheduled for May 19, 2025.

5. GRADD Water Management Council

Chair Eric Hickman reported Dana Garrett has conducted all water and wastewater system visits throughout the GRADD region. The second round of KY WWATERS are anticipated to open within this quarter. Mrs. Garrett will send all relevant information once released. The next GRADD Water Management Council meeting will be held on June 26, 2025 at GRADD.

6. Green River Workforce Development Board

Chair Mickey Dunbar reported the Green River Workforce Development Board met on May 7, 2025. Jamie Link, Secretary of the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet, was the guest speaker. Equus Workforce Solutions was selected to continue as the One-Stop Operator and Direct Service Provider beginning July 1, 2025. The Board was recently notified by the Education and Labor Cabinet that it meets the criteria and standards of the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board and is certified for the two-year period July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027. The Green River Kentucky Career Center was recently reviewed and the Comprehensive Center in Daviess County as well as the six (6) access points in the region have been re-certified. These certifications are critical in maintaining consistent, high-quality customer experience, improving access to workforce services, and ensuring compliance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements. The WIOA requires a local/regional planning effort by combining planning activities to produce a Local/Regional Workforce Plan every four years. The Green River Workforce Development Board and the West Kentucky Workforce Board have updated the Local/Regional Workforce Plan and submitted to the Department of Workforce Development.

G. Executive Director Report

Joanna Shake made the following report:

- Travis Burton has been appointed by President Donald Trump to serve as the USDA Rural Development State Director for Kentucky;

- Sheba Person-Whitley has been named Regional Director of the Economic Development Administration's Atlanta Regional Office;
- Met with Secretary Jim Gray with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. Secretary Gray was hugely complimentary of the Area Development Districts (ADD) work with the Safe Streets for All initiative;
- At the recent SERDI Conference a session on "Embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI)" within the Area Development District sparked many conversations within GRADD. Mrs. Shake and the directors are working to get protocols in place for AI use;
- GRADD has welcomed Ben Duttlinger from Purdue University as an intern for the Community & Economic Development Department;
- Met with Chris Evans, Executive Director of the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission. The Commission will be meeting at GRADD on September 9, 2025;
- The Kentucky Council of ADD's Board meeting will be held on June 11, 2025 in conjunction with the Kentucky County Judge Executive Association/Kentucky Magistrate and Commissioners Joint Summer Conference; and
- The GRADD office will be under construction the week of May 19, 2025 to replace the roof.

#### H. Frankfort and Washington Updates

Hunter Whitaker with Senator Mitch McConnell's office gave insight into the recent requested FEMA assistance to those affected by the inclement weather Kentucky has endured. National Police Week is May 10 - May 16, 2025 and offers honor, remembrance and peer support, while allowing law enforcement, survivors and citizens to gather and pay homage to those who gave their lives in the line of duty.

Mark Lord spoke on the recent budget presented by President Donald Trump. Congressman Brett Guthrie is advocating for no cuts in Medicare and Mr. Lord noted that at this time community base services cuts have not been proposed.

#### I. GRADD on the Move

Bryan Kennedy, Communications Director explained new to the agenda this month is GRADD on the Move, where activities, events or happenings from across the district will be spotlighted.

- May is Older Americans Month. The 2025 theme is Flip the Script on Aging, focusing on transforming how society perceives, talks about and approaches aging. Senior Centers across the district have special events planned throughout the month and individuals are encouraged to attend;

- The Green River Area Community Collaboration for Children (CCC) Regional Network hosted a free workshop titled "Authors and Advocates. Three amazing local authors shared their stories and the impactful messages their books convey to children;
- The Kentucky League of Cities held a Planning & Zoning seminar at GRADD. City and County officials from across the district attended the event, gaining valuable knowledge and information on zoning procedures;
- The Senior Community Center of Owensboro-Daviess County officially unveiled plans for the new senior center, set to be built on eight acres of land next to the Western Kentucky Botanical Garden;
- Days Garden Center, located in Henderson, received funding through GRADD's Revolving Loan Program. Funds will be used for equipment purchases and working capital to grow the business;
- The Kentucky Office of Homeland Security held a Cybersecurity Training at GRADD giving insightful information on online safety and security;
- The Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce held an inaugural Small Business Resource Fair at the Owensboro Convention Center after May's Rooster Booster. GRADD's Local Government Advisor Alex Kretzer was on hand to share helpful information on how GRADD can help small businesses.

#### IV. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

Tiffany Donahue, Public Administration Specialist, presented the following regional Executive Order:

**PL-Agreement Between Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization - Urban Transportation Planning Fiscal Year 2026**

Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization KY2025040263

A motion was made by Nate Pagan and seconded by Charlie Castlen to endorse the above-stated Regional Executive Order. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

#### V. CHAIRMAN COMMENTS

Chair Johnny "Chic" Roberts reported the June 11, 2025 GRADD Board of Directors meeting has been cancelled due to several members attending conferences. Also, Chair Roberts announced the GRADD Annual Meeting would be held on September 10, 2025 at Reid's Orchard.


VI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

  
Curtis Dame, Secretary

  
Johnny "Chic" Roberts, Chair

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