



300 GRADD Way
Owensboro, Kentucky
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GRADD.COM

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 February 11, 2026

The Board of Directors of the Green River Area Development District (GRADD) held its monthly meeting February 11, 2026 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, Lauren Osowicz, Nate Pagan, Henrietta Harris, Mayor Patsy Mayfield (Rep. by Monique Brooks)

HANCOCK COUNTY: Judge/Executive Johnny Roberts, Mayor Chad Gregory, Franklin Powers

HENDERSON COUNTY: Judge/Executive Brad Schneider, Mayor Ronda Moore Smith, Bill Markwell, Mayor Brad Staton

McLEAN COUNTY: Judge/Executive Curtis Dame, Vicki Hughes

OHIO COUNTY: Judge/Executive David Johnston

UNION COUNTY: Melissa Coker

WEBSTER COUNTY: 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

*Excused absence

Johnny "Chic" Roberts, Chairman | Adam O'Nan, Vice Chairman | Curtis Dame, Secretary | Charlie Castlen, Treasurer | Kenneth J. Williams, Executive Director



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS ABSENT

DAVISS COUNTY: *Robert Howard
HANCOCK COUNTY: All present
HENDERSON COUNTY: *Janeth Nicolas
McLEAN COUNTY: *Mayor Betty Howard
OHIO COUNTY *Mayor Paul Sandefur, *Mayor Jeff Fuqua
UNION COUNTY: *Judge/Executive Adam O’Nan, *Mayor Randy Greenwell
WEBSTER COUNTY: *Judge/Executive Steve Henry

COMMITTEE CHAIRS ABSENT

Green River Transportation Committee - (*Judge/Executive Adam O’Nan)
GRADD Hazard Mitigation Council - *Jeremy Moore

GUESTS AND STAFF PRESENT

Hunter Whitaker, Senator Mitch McConnell’s Office
Katie Marks, Congressman Brett Guthrie’s Office
Austin Wetherington, Congressman James Comer’s Office
Alex Caudill, Department for Local Government
Kenny Williams, Executive Director, GRADD
Kemp Morgan, Deputy Director, GRADD
Mariah Myres, Director of Finance & Human Resources, GRADD
Michelle Drake, Director of Workforce Development, GRADD
Sarah Duncan, Director of Waiver Services, GRADD
Leslie Wilson Director of Social Services, GRADD
Skyler Stewart, Director of Community & Economic Development, GRADD
Bryan Kennedy, Communications Officer, GRADD
Andrew Rudkosky, IT Director, GRADD
Jill Gray, Assistant Director of Workforce Development, GRADD
Paula Payne, Workforce Development Coordinator, GRADD
Hunter Phillips, Associate Director of Community & Economic Development, GRADD
Monte Davenport, Local Government Advisor, GRADD
Janet Johnston Crowe, Planning & Zoning Advisor, GRADD
Reenee Fogle, Fiscal Manager, GRADD
Beth Ferguson, Accounting Clerk, GRADD
Marissa Haight, Fiscal Contracts Coordinator, GRADD
Amber Gebhard, Community Partners Manager, GRADD
Lisa Daughtery, Waiver Program Assistant, GRADD
Bethanne McPherson, Program Assistant, GRADD
Kim Wells, Executive Assistant, GRADD

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Johnny "Chic" Roberts called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Mickey Dunbar opened the meeting with prayer. Chair Johnny "Chic" Roberts led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed guests.

II. OLD BUSINESS

A. Secretary's Report

Secretary Curtis Dame presented the January 14, 2026 minutes of the GRADD Board of Directors meeting.

A motion was made by Curtis Dame and seconded by Brad Schneider to approve the January 14, 2026 minutes of the GRADD Board of Directors. 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, 2025 - December 31, 2025.

A motion was made by Charlie Castlen and seconded by David Johnston to approve the Treasurer's Report for the period of July 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025, which is subject to audit. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Treasurer Castlen noted the Finance Committee will meet on February 24, 2026 to discuss budget revisions and recommendations for lawn care and janitorial services.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Executive Director Introduction & Opening Remarks

Kenny Williams expressed gratitude and humility in being allowed to move into the leadership role at GRADD, honoring past leaders and emphasizing the organization's mission of regional cooperation and service. He spoke on GRADD's core purpose is to unite citizens and officials to address challenges, create opportunities and improve lives. Through personal stories, Mr. Williams highlighted the real-world impact of GRADD's programs, reinforcing values of servanthood, integrity and passion. He described the position of Executive Director as the "greatest job in the world" and shared excitement about the organization's future.

Mr. Williams noted in the coming months, GRADD plans to update staff job descriptions, review policies and procedures and develop strategic plans tailored to each of its 27 communities by working closely with local leaders and others in those communities to give vision and a focus to the great work being completed.

GRADD staff will advocate for regional projects in Frankfort and establish clear goals for the next six months, one year and the future through alignment and goal setting.

B. Executive Director and Deputy Director Salary Approval

Secretary Curtis Dame reported that the Executive Director/Deputy Director Search Committee is recommending an annual salary of \$125,000 for the Executive Director position and \$107,500 for the Deputy Director position.

A motion was made by Curtis Dame and seconded by Mickey Dunbar to approve the annual salaries for Executive Director and Deputy Director. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

C. Aetna Contract Dissolution

Kenny Williams explained that the Aetna contract, approved by the GRADD Board of Directors in July 2024, is an excellent program when properly implemented. Its purpose is to follow up with clients after hospitalization to assist with medications, physician appointments and other needs in order to prevent readmission.

However, GRADD has faced challenges due to leadership changes in Aetna as well as since November 1, 2025, Aetna has "locked" GRADD out of its referral system. Despite multiple attempts to resolve the issue, access has not been restored. As a result, GRADD staff have requested dissolution of the contract with Aetna. Mr. Williams noted that revenue to date totals \$6,841.68, while expenses have reached \$9,515.63, resulting in a loss of \$2,673.95 since the program began in February 2025. GRADD contacted 85 clients who either declined services or could not be reached and 57 referrals were determined to be ineligible.

A motion was made by Brad Schneider and seconded by Charlie Castlen to terminate the Aetna Contract. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

D. Green River Regional Aging Plan - Fiscal Years 2027 - 2029

Leslie Wilson presented the Green River Regional Aging Plan for Fiscal Years 2027 - 2029 for Aging and Social Services, which must be approved each year and submitted to the Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL). The plan is developed over the course of a year and is based on results from a regional needs survey that helps guide priorities and service delivery. This year includes updates to statewide goals established by DAIL and the Kentucky Association of Area Agencies on Aging (K4A).

Statewide Goals:

1. **Transportation Access:** Increase transportation services for older adults. GRADD is well-positioned to meet this goal, as transportation is already incorporated into senior center contracts across the district.
2. **Outreach and Awareness:** Expand outreach efforts through the Aging and Disability Resource Center to increase awareness of available services, addressing the long-standing concern that GRADD programs are often unknown until needed.
3. **Volunteer Recruitment:** Increase volunteers for the Ombudsman Program (which advocates for residents in long-term care facilities) and the SHIP Program (State Health Insurance Assistance Program). Recruitment efforts will include partnerships with schools, colleges, and community organizations to help support these high-demand programs operating on limited budgets.

GRADD-Specific Goals:

1. **Address Food Insecurity:** Continue strengthening the Meals on Wheels program, maintaining the hot, home-delivered meal model that provides both nutrition and daily in-person contact for homebound clients. Staff also remain in close communication with providers during severe weather to ensure client safety.
5. **Expand SHIP Outreach:** Increase Medicare education and counseling through trained SHIP counselors, providing one-on-one assistance to help beneficiaries understand Medicare options, enrollment requirements and supplemental coverage.

Ms. Wilson concluded by offering to answer questions and noted that the full Plan is available for review.

E. Maternity Care-Sick Leave Transfer Policy Amendment

Kenny Williams proposed a revision to the current Sick Leave Transfer Policy to allow donated sick leave to be used for maternity-related absences. Under the existing policy, employees may donate sick leave to a coworker experiencing a long-term or catastrophic medical condition, but maternity leave is specifically excluded. The proposed change would allow employees to voluntarily donate sick leave for maternity purposes, following the same guidelines already in place for other medical situations. The employee receiving donated leave must first exhaust all accrued sick and vacation time. Donations would be capped at 225 hours to limit organizational liability and prevent extended absences beyond approximately six weeks.

A motion was made by Charlie Castlen and seconded by Curtis Dame to approve amending the sick leave transfer policy to include maternity leave. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

F. Committee Reports

1. Green River Area Council on Aging

Chair Henrietta Harris presented the October 7, 2025 minutes of the Green River Area Council on Aging.

A motion was made by Henrietta Harris and seconded by Franklin Powers to approve the October 7, 2025 minutes of the Green River Area Council on Aging. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Chair Henrietta Harris reported the Green River Area Council on Aging met on February 3, 2026. Updates were provided regarding Silver Bells and Medicare Open Enrollment. Amber Gebhard provided an update on efforts to support homebound clients during the recent winter storm. The County Senior Service Directors have maintained contact with clients even as meal delivery was halted. An additional round of shelf stable meals will soon be delivered to clients in preparation for any further disruptions. The Council will meet again on April 7, 2026.

2. Green River Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

Chair Brad Davis reported the Green River Economic Development Corporation met on February 4, 2026, which included speaker Jody Hulsey, Business Coach with Kentucky Small Business Development Center. Monte Davenport is currently working with two potential loan clients and has sent out six applications. Mr. Davenport will continue to visit banks and chamber meetings in February to promote business loans. The next meeting of the Green River EDC will be held on March 4, 2026.

3. GRADD Hazard Mitigation Council

Hunter Phillips reported Skyler Stewart and Amy Matheny will be setting up meetings with emergency managers soon. A special called meeting is in the works and will be announced at a later date.

4. GRADD Regional Transportation Committee (RTC)

Treasurer Curtis Dame reported Jennifer Alvey attended the Kentuckians for Better Transportation Conference in January in Louisville. Ms. Alvey has also submitted updates of the List of Contacts and Resources and RTC membership to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. The next meeting of the GRADD RTC is February 23, 2026.

5. GRADD Water Management Council

Ryan Hammack reported a call for projects for the State Revolving Funds were submitted on December 15, 2025, with all rankings approved at the December Water Management Council meeting. There are 28 projects submitted for Fiscal Year 2027. Invitations to apply will be announced later in 2026.

Infrastructure Planner, Jacob Matson, has begun conducting system visits throughout the region. The next GRADD Water Management Council will be held on March 19, 2026.

6. Green River Workforce Development Board

Chair Mickey Dunbar reported the Green River Workforce Development Board met on February 4, 2026. Charles Aull, Vice-President of Policy for the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce presented details regarding "A Foundation for Action - Shared Solutions to Child Care Challenges in Kentucky." Job Fairs continue at the Kentucky Career Center with three being held in February. On February 25, 2026 from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. a hiring event will be held at the Hancock County Career Center for TeraWulf, an AI Data Center. There have been recent announcements regarding layoffs at Swedish Match and Cargill. Workforce staff are collaborating with those employers to schedule Rapid Response meetings. The 2026 Green River Youth Summit will be held March 12, 2026 at Owensboro Community & Technical College.

D. Executive Director Report

Kenny Willsima welcomed new staff Kemp Morgan, Deputy Director and Brandon Wirthwein, Finance & Administration Intern.

Mr. Williams also wished Beth Ferguson congratulations on her upcoming retirement on February 28, 2026. Ms. Furgeson has been with GRADD for 28 years.

Mr. Williams stated staff will travel to Frankfort on February 12, 2026 to advocate for legislative priorities, including securing a \$5.5 million investment in the joint funding agreement, supporting SB 32, advocating for \$10 million for aging services and seeking to maintain the "Putting Young Kentuckians to Work" program. He also made a final call for board members who may want to attend the NADO Washington Conference from March 8-11, 2026.

E. Frankfort and Washington Updates

Hunter Whitaker with Senator Mitch McConnell's office reported 11 of 12 funding packages have passed. Kentucky received \$117 million for transportation and housing, \$1.7 billion for defense and \$10 million for the I-69 bridge.

Katie Marks with Congressman Brett Guthrie's office announced Congressman Guthrie secured \$76.65 million in community project funding and is focusing on healthcare legislation.

Austin Wetherington with Congressman James Comer's office announced Congressman Comer secured \$1 million for Henderson Water Utility and added language to the Abandoned Mine Lands Economic Revitalization (AMLER) Program to make Western Kentucky counties eligible for grants.

Alex Caudill with the Department of Local Government (DLG) reported county and municipal road aid funds were lower than anticipated.

Mr. Caudill announced he would be adding another role as the new DRA Program Manager.

IV. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW

Monte Davenport, Local Government Advisor, presented the following regional Executive Orders:

**Community Ventures 2026 Community Housing Development
Organization Applications**

Community Ventures Corporation KY202601150201

Providence Cast Iron Pipe Rehab

City of Providence KY202601230220

A motion was made by Brad Staton and seconded by Brad Davis to endorse the above-stated Regional Executive Orders. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

V. CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Johnny "Chic" Roberts made the following comments:

- Congratulations to Sturgis Water Treatment Plant on receiving \$2,383,723 from the Government Resources Accelerating Needed Transformation Program (GRANT) to assist in leveraging federal funds from the Economic Development Administration for the construction of a potential new water treatment plant; and
- Congratulations to Beech Grove Water Storage Tank Addition received \$250,00 from the GRANT Program to cover the local matching requirements from an awarded Community Development Block Grant to construct a new water tower.

Chairman Roberts also thanked the Social Services Department staff for their extra work during a recent snowstorm to assist seniors in getting meals.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

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



Curtis Dame, Secretary



Johnny "Chic" Roberts, Chair

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