

**Minutes**  
**Finance & Personnel Association (FAPA)**  
**Staff Association Meeting**  
**September 10, 2025**

**Member's Present**

1. Allison Collier - CAPCOG
2. Alyce Acosta - RGCOG
3. Amber Murr - ATCOG
4. Ariana Gonzalez - MRGDC
5. Arathi Nayak - H-GAC
6. Betsy Prado - MRGDC
7. Brandy Brannon - ETCOG
8. Brittany Wagner - GCRPC
9. Cathe Henderson - PBRPC
10. Cherokee Myers - GCRPC
11. Christopher Paul - CBCOG
12. Christina Ordonez-Campos - H-GAC
13. Cindy Chionsini - DETCOG
14. Crystal Balboa - LRGVDC
15. David Scott - ETCOG
16. Debbie Garlington - SETRPC
17. Deedra Johnson - AACOG
18. Eric Bridges - TCOG
19. Edward Mata - MRGDC
20. Glenda Lacy - SETRPC
21. Gini Blackwell - ETCOG
22. Jafferali Jamal - CCGD
23. Jeff King - SETRPC
24. John Minnix - HOTCOG
25. Judy Cisneros - RGCOG
26. Julio Elizondo - AACOG
27. Julissa Cisneros - RGCOG
28. Jhoan Torres - AACOG
29. Kaitlin Strane - GCRPC
30. Laura Cowling - ATCOG
31. Lindsey Mikulenka - GCRPC
32. Maria Peracha - CCGD
33. Michelle Vasquez - HOTCOG
34. Michael Meek - CVCOG
35. Pam Moreno - CAPCOG
36. Shahala Camp - WCTCOG
37. Shauna Lyke - ETCOG
38. Shaun Downie - H-GAC
39. Silvia Alvarado - CAPCOG
40. Tim Schwartz - SPAG
41. Timothy Fuentes - PBRPC
42. Trenton Taylor - PRPC
43. Yvette Gonzalez - H-GAC
44. Wendi Horst - ETCOG

## **Call to Order & Welcome**

The Finance & Personnel Association (FAPA) met on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 9:00 am. Jeff King, with SETRPC, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

### **9:05 am – 10:00 am**

#### **Elsa Ramos – Legal Counsel to Commissioner Joe Esparza – Commissioner Representing Employers – Texas Workforce Commission**

**Responding to Unemployment Claims** - Ms. Ramos presented information on Unemployment Compensation and the Appeals Process, explaining the fundamentals of how to succeed and how to avoid losing an appeal. She discussed the basics of who can receive unemployment benefits claims and highlighted that the employer's understanding of the process is essential. She highlighted the base period which is measured from the date of the initial claim (IC) and covers a one-year period. She emphasized that employers could improve their chances of winning appeals by understanding the different types of work separations—such as fired (involuntary) or quit (voluntary) and noting that if an action is not documented, it did not happen. Ms. Ramos also explained why employers often lose appeals, citing reasons like lack of evidence, absence of firsthand testimony, late protests or appeals, layoffs due to lack of work, insufficient warnings, or an inability to perform the job.

The key takeaways from the session included several important points to keep in mind: remember the base period, get your ducks in a row, and effectively hand over the keys to the job. It is also crucial to appeal against any adverse findings promptly and to be timely in all actions. Building your strongest case and presetting first-hand witnesses can make a significant difference, as can tipping the scales in your favor through careful preparation and strategic presentation. Ms. Ramos' presentation is available for member's review.

### **10:00 am – 10:30 am**

#### **FAPA Business Meeting**

##### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the FAPA meeting held on February 5, 2025, were presented for approval. The Chair, Jeff King, with SETRPC asked if there were any questions or comments. Jeff entertained a motion to approve the minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by John Minnix with HOTCOG and seconded by Eric Bridges with TCOG. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.

##### **Treasurer's Report**

John Minnix with HOTCOG presented the Treasurer's Report as of July 31, 2025, which included the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities (Income Statement), and covered the General Ledger Activity. There were no questions. Trent Taylor with PRPC made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report, which was seconded by Silvia Alvarado with CAPCOG. The motion was passed and the minutes were approved.

##### **Old Business**

Jeff mentioned the increase in the micro-purchase thresholds from \$3,000 to \$10,000 at both the State and Federal levels. He inquired whether anyone had considered adjusting their procurement levels in response to this change. One member responded that this would be a valuable topic to discuss at the next meeting.

## **New Business**

Jeff informed members that at the next meeting, a speaker would be sought to present information on how AI impacts HR. He mentioned that a policy template is available for members to utilize for AI policies. He also asked members to consider topics for the next meeting and to inform him of their ideas. During this discussion, one member raised a topic about credit issues, specifically lines of credit, highlighting the significant capital costs encountered when moving into new office space. Jeff noted that a financial institution had been introduced to explore ways to establish lines of credit. There was a variety of input from members regarding how lines of credit should be managed. One member shared that they started a 501(c)(3) organization to service the loan and offset the liability for the COG, which is responsible for debt. Jeff recommended that members reach out to HOTCOG or H-GAC for guidance and suggestions on handling lines of credit.

**10:30 am – 11:00 am**

### **Regional Roundtable Discussion by Jeff King**

- **Accounting & Personnel Tools** – Jeff asked members about the accounting and personnel tools they were utilizing. He shared that SETRPC utilizes MIP by Momentive Software, formerly referred to as Abila, and informed the group that an HR module had been integrated at SETRPC, which includes a timesheet feature. The time sheet system employed by SETRPC is referred to as Employee Web Services (EWS). A discussion arose regarding email notifications for staff time-off requests in EWS, with most members indicating that this function either did not work for them or required adjustments to operate correctly. The members engaged in a detailed discussion about how their respective MIP systems functioned, and Debbie Garlington provided valuable explanations about the features and operations of EWS to assist the members.
- **Using Existing Tools for Board Presentations** – One member shared that they were able to utilize their existing system to display funding rankings in real-time for their board members. He mentioned that while there were some glitches, the system overall proved to be useful for their needs.
- **Onboarding Best Practices** – Jeff asked if anyone wanted to share their onboarding best practices and no one commented. He asked if Glenda Lacy with SETRPC would like to share process. Glenda explained that she incorporates a checklist to ensure new hires are set up for success in their role. She also emphasized spending time with new employees to give them an opportunity to ask questions and help them feel connected to the company culture. Other members agreed that dedicating time to new employees is very important and highlighted the need to be prepared for their arrival, ensure the manager is available on the first day, and coordinate the start date with the pay period. Jeff concluded the discussion by emphasizing that successful onboarding is about planning, and he appreciated Glenda's comment about setting up new hires for success.

**11:00 am – 11:30 am**

### **Suzanne Barnard – Director of Community Development Block Grant Programs – Texas Department of Agriculture**

**TxCDBG Updates for Finance Staff** – Ms. Barnard discussed the expectations for the Community Economic and Development Assistance Funds Contract (CEDAF) and outlined what the program is looking for from contractors. She emphasized that they are seeking Evidence of Deliverables rather than just invoices. Ms. Barnard also informed the group that Elliot Crunk would serve as the new point of contact. She stated that contractors should provide TxCDBG-eligible localities within their regional area with technical assistance services related to the TxCDBG

program. The specific Technical Assistance Activities include the dissemination of program information, grant outreach meetings, fair housing initiatives, and other outreach events. She informed us that the Grant agreement had been awarded. Ms. Barnard provided members with a draft detailing information about each of these activities

**1:00 pm – 2:00 pm**

**James Martin – Contract Administration Manager – Office of Area Agencies on Aging – Texas Health and Human Services**

**Fiscal Reporting & Monitoring Updates for Aging Programs** – Mr. Martin informed us that a Request for Reporting (RFR) monitoring has been confirmed and announced for October 2025. He explained that the RFR monitoring would follow a Two Step Process plan. The first step involves a sampling and selection process, where 30% of the service categories would be pulled for RFR. The second step includes sending a notification letter that will specify which RFRs are selected, the categories being surveyed, and the documentation required to complete the monitoring process. He emphasized that this marks the beginning of the process and provided a detailed explanation of how the monitoring would be conducted, including examples to clarify the procedure. This was an overview of Mr. Martin's presentation. He provided information for members to reach out to him if there was a need.

**2:00 pm – 5:00 pm**

**Rachael Werner – Principle – MyFedTrainer**

**Grants Management Bootcamp** – Ms. Werner discussed grant management compliance and emphasized the importance of understanding the core principles of better managing federal funding. She provided members with an overview of several key topics related to grants management. Her training session covered these topics in-depth, offering a comprehensive understanding of effective grant management practices. Her presentation is available for review for those who need detailed information on the training.

- **Internal Controls & Managing the Award** - She reviewed the objectives of strong internal controls in relation to the regulations and terms and conditions of the federal award. She emphasized the importance of preparing policies that comply with 2 CFR 200 requirements and encompass various control functions to ensure effective management. Additionally, she noted that records are generally maintained for three years after the award closeout and highlighted that the federal government retains rights to access records and personnel in a timely and unrestricted manner.
- **Property Management & Disposition** - In this topic, she reviewed that real property includes land and improvements and emphasized that property purchased with federal funds may have ongoing requirements regardless of how it is titled. She stressed the importance of maintaining complete and accurate property records by both recipients and subrecipients. Additionally, she highlighted that construction contracts must comply with all other procurement requirements and noted that the federal agency directs the method for property disposition.
- **Working with Partners – Procurement Best Practices** - This review emphasized the importance of developing a written procurement policy that complies with all federal and award requirements. It also highlighted the need to maintain thorough documentation related to the procurement process. Participants were reminded of the "bear claws" and "bear paw" principles when selecting procurement methods, with the overarching goal of enabling free and open competition to the extent practicable. Additionally, it is essential to ensure adequate oversight of contractors to promote accountability and compliance throughout the procurement process.

- **Single Audit Preparation** – In this topic review, it was highlighted that audits of grant recipients serve to ensure financial integrity, effective internal controls, and compliance with the terms, regulations, and laws governing the awards. It was also noted that the Federal Audit Clearinghouse is the publicly accessible database where Single Audit Act audits are stored and available for review.
- **Costs** – A Deep Dive into Indirect Costs and Allowability – Ms. Werner presented the 2 CFR 200 Allowable and Unallowable Costs flyer, which outlined various cost categories including employees' costs, facilities and equipment costs, and other miscellaneous costs.
- **Q&A** – Members had the opportunity to ask questions of Ms. Werner.

**5:00 pm - Adjourn**