

Minutes
Finance & Personnel Association (FAPA)
Staff Association Meeting
February 4, 2026

Members Present

1. Amber Murr - ATCOG
2. Brandy Brannon - ETCOG
3. Brigitte Farrell - ETCOG
4. Cherokee Myers - GCRPC
5. Christopher Paul - CBCOG
6. Christina Ordonez-Campos - H-GAC
7. Cindy Chionsini - DETCOG
8. Crystal Balboa - LRGVDC
9. Cyndy Wells - CTCOG
10. David Scott - ETCOG
11. Dennis Wilde - NRPC
12. Diane Terrell - WCTCOG
13. Elsa Paynes - CSEC
14. Eric Bridges - TCOG
15. Edward Mata - MRGDC
16. Felicia Lindsey - CVCOG
17. Gabriel Navarro - LRGVDC
18. Glenda Lacy - SETRPC
19. Ida Rasa - SPAG
20. Jeff King - SETRPC
21. John Minnix - HOTCOG
22. Julissa Cisneros - RGCOG
23. Laura Cowling - ATCOG
24. Lindsey Mikulenska – GCRPC
25. Lindsay Vanderbilt - ETCOG
26. Lorrain Meek - CSEC
27. Mary McDow - HOTCOG
28. Michelle Vasquez - HOTCOG
29. Michael Meek - CVCOG
30. Michael Peters - PRPC
31. Noel Esquivel - CBCOG
32. Pamela Parks - CSEC
33. Raul Diaz - MRGPC
34. Sloane Bodle - ETCOG
35. Tim Schwartz - SPAG
36. Timothy Fuentes - PBRPC
37. Veronica Diaz - RGCOG
38. Wendi Horst - ETCOG

Call to Order & Welcome

The Finance & Personnel Association (FAPA) met on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 9:00 am. Jeff King, with SETRPC, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

9:05 am – 10:00 am

Finance Management Updates for State 9-1-1 Programs

Lorraine Meek - Deputy for Finance Management Commission State Emergency Communication

Ms. Meeks discussed the 9-1-1 Program which included a finance agenda on who's on the CSEC Teams with topics on Resources, Program Income, Funding Requests (FRs), and Quarterly Financial Reports (QFRs).

A link that includes the details of the 9-1-1 Program Finance Presentation is below.

<http://txregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/CSEC-Finance-2026-Read-Only.pptx>

10:00 am – 11:00 am

New + Notable Texas Employers

Laura Ingram – Principal – Lloyd Gosselink Rochelle & Townsend, P.C.

Ms. Ingram discussed the requested topics which included Separation of Employment, Labor Law Posters and Form I-9 & E-Verify Requirements.

A link that includes the details of the New + Notable Employment Law Updates & Refreshers Presentation for 2026 is below.

<http://txregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/New- -Notable-2026-TARC-Finance-and-Personnel-Association.pdf>

11:00 am

Using AI to Optimize COG Human Resources

Brandy Brannon – CPM – Director Executive Director – ETCOG

Ms. Brannon discussed the fact that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is here whether we like it or not. She stated that AI is proving to be a powerful tool that can help create efficiencies and spur creativity in the workplace. She said we can learn to embrace it as a tool (not a crutch) to help improve our output and services we provide. She discussed driving AI, best tip she learned, AI adoption for Human Resources, using AI and examples how to use it, how to enhance your writing, employee engagement, creating fun images, the signs of AI use, and as an AI Partner.

A link that includes Using AI to Optimize COG Human Resources Presentation is below.

<http://txregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Brannon-AI-Full-Presentation.pdf>

David Scott, ETCOG Special Projects Director – Discussed AI Education Opportunities.

A copy of his presentation is included in Brandy Brannon's link above.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the FAPA meeting held on September 10, 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 Christina Ordonez-Campos - H-GAC and seconded by Cindy Chionsini - DETCOG. The motion passed and the minutes were approved. A link to the minutes is below.

http://txregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/TARC-Minutes-Finance-Personnel-Association_FAPA_09.10.2025-Final.pdf

Treasurer's Report

John Minnix with HOTCOG presented the Treasurer's Report as of December 31, 2025, which included the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Activities (Income Statement), and covered the General Ledger Activity. There were no questions. Brandy Brannon - ETCOG - made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report, which was seconded by Christina Ordonez-Campos - H-GAC. The motion was passed and the minutes were approved. A link to the treasurer's report is below.

<http://txregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/TARC-FAPA-SA-12-31-25.pdf>

Old Business

- **Procurement thresholds:** Members reviewed updates to federal and state micro-purchase and simplified acquisition thresholds, including the federal increase from \$10,000 to \$15,000 and possible bidding threshold changes from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

New Business

- **Indirect cost rate negotiations:** Several agencies reported significant delays in federal or state review processes, particularly involving the Department of Interior and Texas HHS. Members discussed whether to elevate timing concerns through TARC if delays continue.
- **Cost allocation methods:** The group discussed different approaches to indirect cost pools, including consolidating multiple allocation pools into one indirect rate for transparency and separating IT, building, or other cost pools to maximize reimbursement under grant limitations.
- **Mid-cycle office hours:** Members expressed interest in holding an informal virtual meeting between regular meetings to discuss emerging issues, with a possible survey or agenda request sent beforehand to identify topics.
- **Broadband program:** The group reviewed the recent broadband program kickoff meeting, noted that program agreements are still being developed, and encouraged members to attend upcoming office hours for additional guidance.
- **Homeland Security funding:** Members discussed pending funding updates, with the understanding that state acceptance of federal funds may trigger the timeline for distribution once outstanding conditions are resolved.
- **Leadership transition:** The chair noted that the current two-year term is ending before the next meeting and asked members to consider nominations or interest in chair, vice chair, and secretary roles.

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Rachael Werner – Principle – MyFedTrainer

Grants Management Intensive – Ms. Werner presentation focused on strengthening federal grant management through effective internal controls, clear written policies, accurate recordkeeping, and audit readiness. She emphasized that compliance requires more than written procedures. It depends on a strong “culture of compliance” with segregation of duties, proper documentation, approvals, asset safeguarding, reconciliations, and ongoing monitoring. The session also highlighted key risks such as changing federal requirements, funding uncertainty, allowable cost issues, weak subrecipient oversight, data privacy concerns, and poor record retention practices. Overall, the presentation stressed that strong internal controls and well-maintained records help organizations reduce risk, avoid disallowed costs, prepare for single audits, and successfully manage federal grant awards.

Below are the links to the various topics discussed.

Internal Controls:

<http://txregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/TX-ARC-Feb-2026-GMBC-Module-2-Internal-Controls-101-with-Exercises.pdf>

Indirect Cost Approaches:

<http://txregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/TX-ARC-Feb-2026-GMBC-Module-5-The-Cost-of-Doing-Federal-Grants-with-Exercises.pdf>

Subrecipient Monitoring:

<http://txregionalcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/TX-ARC-Feb-2026-GMBC-Module-7-Working-With-Partners-with-Exercises.pdf>

Q&A – Members had the opportunity to ask questions of Ms. Werner.

5:00 pm - Adjourn