Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

March Board Meeting & Retreat

06 March 2015

Durango Recreation Center

Board in Attendance:

Dick White – City of Durango

Andrea Phillips – Town of Mancos

Michael Whiting – Archuleta County (via phone)

Lee San Miguel – Town of Ignacio

Chris LaMay – Town of Bayfield

Shane Hale – City of Cortez

Julie Westendorff – La Plata County

Joe Kerby – La Plata County

John Egan – Town of Pagosa Springs

Ron LeBlanc – City of Durango

Staff in Attendance:  
Miriam Gillow-Wiles – Executive Director

Sara Trujillo – Assistant/Accountant

Guest in Attendance:  
Ken Charles - DoLA

Rick Smith – City of Cortez IT

James Torres – La Plata County IT Manager

Eric Pearson – City of Durango IT Manager

1. **Call to Order/Introductions**

The COG business meeting was called to order at 9:19am; everyone introduced themselves.

1. **Consent Agenda: February 2015 Minutes**

**Motion to approve minutes as presented: Michael Whiting, Second: Chris LaMay. Passed by a unanimous voice vote.**

1. **Discussion Items:**
2. **Decision Items:**

IT Contractor Approval

The SWCCOG received a grant to help with IT Support from DOLA. There are 7 local governments participating. The grant will help with some managed services

(IT Support) as well as create a database of what equipment, age of equipment, and where it is located. The contractor selected will also put together an IT Plan for each community that outlies needs, updates, and replacement options for hardware and software. All billing for this will go through the SWCCOG and we will track the cost of service per community, to make sure it is equitable and just a few communities are not using the majority of the funds. Each participating entity has about $9000 to spend on managed services. This does not cover the cost of equipment. It is likely that the entities will need to maintain printers and copiers in house. This contract will NOT cover VOIP services.

The RFP was due on Monday, and the COG received two responses, Think Networks, and ImageNet Consulting both based in Durango. Both were close in cost for actual work, Think Networks was a little less expensive for the higher Tiers (such as server work). Miriam did have a few questions as to each proposal which were answered very promptly.

Some of the issues with the idea are the wide variety of equipment and lack of standardization within many communities and generally throughout the region. Because of this, the RFP was a little nebulous, so the responses were as well. Think Networks quoted a price of $25,000, including travel, with some caveats knowing that there will likely be some unknowns that will increase the $25,000. They did also offer to do an assessment of all the Local Governments participating for $8500 (or less depending on information available) so they could produce a better quote based on needs. ImageNet Consulting only quoted a price per Tier and cost per mile, lodging, and other expenses, and followed up with an assessment of $11,000. The total amount for the contractor is $60-63,000.

Based on the quoted price, and the willingness to work with the SWCCOG and communities to find the best solutions, staff recommended Think Networks.

**Motion to accept Think Networks and give contract signing authority to Miriam not to exceed $63,000: Chris LaMay, Second: Joe Kerby. Passed by a unanimous voice vote.**

1. **Reports:**

Transportation Report:

TPR - The next TPR meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2015. The TPR did decide to support legislative change for tribal seats to be voting seats at the STAC.

The CDOT Executive Director Don Hunt retired and new Executive Director Shailen

Bhatt has replaced Don Hunt. Director Bhatt comes with FHWA experience, which will hopefully benefit our region as he has an understanding and being able to communicate the state perspective.

Transit – The next transit meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2015. The current goal is to have increased communication and participation from Human Service Providers. For the April transit meeting, the council is hoping some outreach and invites will get a group of Human Service Providers to the meeting.

John Egan held the Archuleta County Transportation Summit meeting February 26th that was productive in identifying next steps for the Region to better transportation. John reported that the meeting established some great communication between Pagosa Medical and Mercy Hospital. A statistical picture is being built of who those are that really need transit service and how to put a plan together to serve those folks. The meeting gave good indication of what needs are and how they will be met.

**Business Meeting Adjourned at 9:35am and the COG Retreat Began**

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With the IT folks present for the morning portion of this meeting, it was decided to move the Telecommunications section of the agenda from the bottom of the agenda to take place immediately preceding the business meeting.

Telecommunications

The issue with the SCAN network is that there is no operations plan in place. This is essential to utilize this asset, pay for this asset, and ensure the COG members have some back-up funds if necessary for the future. Miriam presented a slide show involving the following:

**Time Line**

* SWCCOG Formed by IGA – 12/2009
* DOLA Grant – 1/2010
* Mid-State Consultants Contracted – 2010
* Arona Enterprises Contracted – 1/2012
* Contract Extension – 1/2014
* Grant Completed – 3/2014

**Technical Terms**

* Redundant – Another physical connection (to the internet)
* Secondary Connection – another connection (to the internet)
* Dark Fiber – Fiber that has not been ‘lit’ and has no data moving through it
* Lit Fiber – Fiber that is used to transmit data
* Regional Transport – Moving data across the region, can be separated from internet connectivity

**Current Status of SCAN**

* Bayfield, Mancos, Dolores purchasing services
* Transport between Cortez and Durango hub at minimum of 10Mbps
  + Changeable as necessary
* Some static IP addresses are being used

**The following questions were posed**

* What is the vision of the SCAN?
* What do we want it to be?
* How do we want to use it?

It was discussed that more planning needs to be complete to gather information about current connections, how we can better utilize those connections, and what connections we are lacking. The COG is looking at applying for a broadband planning grant, which would help determine this information and give an opinion of what the next steps are. This grant will also help us to develop an operations plan that will give us guidance on how to better utilize the SCAN network. Shared services would also be explored. Following planning grant completion would be a construction grant if warranted. Ken Charles did inform that a planning grant is 75/25 match and a construction grant would be 50/50 match. An executive summary was requested determining benefits to the COG and draw backs to a planning grant.

Other issues discussed include:

1) In previous years, the billing for FastTrack and the SCAN network has largely been paid for through COG funding versus being paid for by the communities utilizing the services. This cannot continue to be a budgetary option as in 2014 the COG paid over $16,000 in FastTrack bills, which took up much of the funds balance. For 2015, the COG is currently at a loss by $4,000 if this overage is paid for through COG funds.

The board discussed billing the members for the short fall, which include Town of Mancos, Town of Dolores, Dolores County, City of Cortez, Town of Bayfield, Town of Ignacio, La Plata County, and City of Durango. With these participating communities potentially, the $4,000 loss will not be taken by the COG. Staff will calculate each entity’s billing amount and invoice as necessary if approved in the April meeting.

2) The Fiber Repair Fund (previously known as “RAMP fund”) was supposed to have been invoiced to participating communities in 2014 at $900 per entity resulting in approximately $21,600 collected in total (over two years). This invoicing did not occur in 2014, so staff expected to begin invoicing for this fund in 2015. However, the board feels these funds, collected over the time frame of two years as previously agreed upon, would not create sufficient funds to repair fibers due to the high cost of fiber repair. Instead, it was discussed that these funds would be better put to use for software maintenance, upgrades, and to help pay for future router replacement. However, these funds would still be quite lacking due to the large costs of software updates and equipment replacement. Some communities already have an emergency funds account in place and are not sure a second emergency fund through the COG would be necessary.

It was decided to come back to this conversation with a list of specific quantitative parameters and policy for adequate billing fees for a fund and discussing these fees being incorporated into the 2016 budget to cover a multi-purpose fund versus just a repair fund.

State of the SWCCOG

The state of the SWCCOG covered six areas: accomplishments, funding, staffing, projects and programs, goals, and success.

Some accomplishments included:

* dues increased to sustain SWCCOG
* moved away from Region 9
* had a successful 2013 audit
* policies were written and/or updated
* received 5 grants totaling $330,000
* created a better fiscal management system
* incorporated TPR under SWCCOG umbrella
* established the regional recycling taskforce.

Funding sources for 2015 were identified as the following:

* Dues - $114,712
* Grants
  + All Hazards (M&A) - $12,178
  + Regional Recycling (2015) - $27,779
  + Transit Council - $24,800
  + Western Lands and Communities - $10,000
  + DOLA Technical Assistance - $75,000

Programmatic Funding

* TPR
  + CDOT – $21,100
  + Dues - $8,000
* Telecom
  + Fiber Repair Fund (RAMP fund) - $9,900
  + SCAN Income - $8,280
  + eTics - $8,400
  + Dark Fiber Leases - $3,270

Funding expenses were identified as follows:

* Salaries - $133,266 (includes payroll taxes, fees, and temp p/t assist in charge of WLC grant)
* Shared IT Services - $63,000
* Contracts and Other Consulting - $55,800
* Benefits- $35,146 (includes health insurance and auto allowance)
* SCAN Expenses – $16,000
* AmeriCorps VISTA - $15,030
* TPR STAC Travel - $12,000
* eTics - $8,400
* Audit - $7,000
* Legal Fees - $6,000
* CIRSA - $5,271
* Travel and Trainings - $5,350
* Equipment - $4,500
* Phone - $3,500

Staffing: Currently, the SWCCOG employs two staff, Miriam and Sara, and one temporary part-time employee working on one grant specifically. However, additional staff is needed to assist with administrative functions, project management, transportation coordination, and grant writing endeavors.

Continuous programs and projects include:

* All Hazards
* Transit
* TPR
* SWIMT
* Telecommunications

Time limited activities include:

* RREO
* IT Support
* AmeriCorps VISTA
* Western Lands and Communities

AAA: In regards to continuing attempts to create a relationship with the AAA, the board discussed leaving these relationship attempts alone and not putting staff time into this endeavor at this time. Keeping abreast and providing information to the AAA is supported, but actual pursuit is not something that is seen as needed to be done at this time.

RREO: Regional Recycling Economic Opportunities Grant (RREO)

* $46,000 for FY 2014-2015
* Economic feasibility
* Regional Recycling Taskforce
* Regional recycling equals local jobs

Resiliency

* Western Lands and Communities
* State Resiliency Plan

Housing: There was not a lot of work done in this area although there were a lot of discussions held. The COG feels, at this time, there are a lot of other organizations whose main focus is housing; therefore, this does not need to be a large piece for the COG to focus on.

Transportation:

* Southwest Transportation Planning Region
  + 2014-2015 CDOT contract with SWCCOG
    - Dues - $8000, CDOT Funding - $21,100
  + Meeting moved to same day as SWCCOG
* Regional Transit Coordinating Council
  + CDOT Grant for $24,800
  + Service Providers meet with Transit Providers
  + MURP Intern
  + How to provide regional transit?

Tourism: This area is considered economic development; however, there was never a real definition or agenda put towards this item when originally put on the COG’s agenda.

Goal Setting

A prefilled goal setting matrix was provided and each section reviewed. The matrix was updated in real-time depending on board suggestions pertaining to priority levels of each goal and if additional goals needed to be added.

Updates to note:

Under objective 1.2: Aggregate Demand and Share Costs on Common Service Needs, the board added two items (1) equipment purchasing/brokering/sharing and (2) shared grant writer. Exploring sharing equipment and services may result in substantial cost savings and would be something many communities are interested in exploring further. The difficulty with equipment sharing would be depreciation and damage to equipment that the equipment owner would be responsible for.

Under objective 1.3: Shared Trainings and Services, the board added items (1) CU certified public managers and (2) DoLA finance 101.

Under objective 2.3: Partner with Other Organizations, the board added item Southwest Farm Fresh that is an entity interested in keeping regionally grown food in the region versus exporting.

The board added an objective item dealing with income producing endeavors.

This concluded the board retreat as time ran out.

**The SWCCOG board retreat was adjourned at 3:09pm.**