

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
April Board Meeting
Thursday, 8 April, 2021, 1:30 p.m.
Video Conference**

In Attendance:

David Black – Town of Bayfield
Marsha Porter-Norton – La Plata County
Mike Lavey – City of Cortez
Mark Garcia – Town of Ignacio
Katie Sickles – Town of Bayfield
Shari Pierce – Town of Pagosa Springs
Andrea Phillips – Town of Pagosa Springs
Willy Tookey – San Juan County
John Dougherty – City of Cortez

Staff in Attendance:

Miriam Gillow-Wiles – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
Jessica Laitsch – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
Gloria Kaasch-Buerger - Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

Guests in Attendance:

Elizabeth Salkind – Housing Solutions for the Southwest
Heidi Aggeler – Root Policy Research
Mike Segrest – La Plata County
Helen Katich - Senator Hickenlooper’s Office
John Whitney – Senator Bennet’s Office

Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:34 p.m.

Public Comment

None.

Consent Agenda

- a. March 2021 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. February 2021 Financials

Miriam mentioned correction to draft minutes.

Willy Tookey motioned to approve the consent agenda, John Dougherty seconded, unanimously approved.

Presentation

Presentation by Root Policy Research on Regional Housing Study

Heidi described the housing study by the SWCCOG and Housing Solutions for the Southwest and the type of work done by Root Policy Research. Andrea asked about financing for middle income. Marsha noted that the RHA would be looking at its focus moving into the future, but there is concern about being able to adequately address the needs. Shari expressed concern about the availability of single-family housing. Willy mentioned that businesses are struggling

finding workforce due to lack of workforce housing. There was a discussion about housing needs through the region. Marsha asked about innovative strategies being implemented in similar sized communities. Heidi described various efforts throughout Colorado and mentioned that Colorado has particular challenges that they are taking into consideration.

Discussion Items

a. Planning for ARPA funding – regional priorities and coordination
Miriam suggested local jurisdictions coordinate on spending upcoming funds to maximize the overall impact. Andrea mentioned the necessity to look into the requirements of various funding sources. Marsha suggested that a phased discussion and identification of general priorities would be the first step. John Whitney described efforts the Senators will be undertaking to address stated concerns such as seeking flexibility and allowing collaborative efforts. Helen added that feedback is helpful. Staff will work to develop brief summaries of the various funding sources.

Decision Items

a. Contract with RCAC for Economic Development Funding
Miriam described the history of this project and that she is seeking authorization to sign the contract once it is finalized through legal review.

Willy Tookey motioned to authorize the Executive Director to work with legal and the RCAC to develop and sign a contract, Marsha Porter-Norton seconded, unanimously approved.

b. Contract with SCAPE for DOLA Grant for Economic Diversification
Miriam described the project.

John Dougherty motioned to approve the contract with SCAPE, Willy Tookey seconded, unanimously approved.

c. Selection for One Call/One Click development for CDOT 5310 Grant
Miriam described the purpose of the project. Jessica explained that one proposal was received in response to the RFP, Compass Transit Consulting, and the proposal meets the requirements of the RFP and the cost estimate is within the project budget.

Marsha Porter-Norton motioned to enter into a contract with the selected contractor, Willy Tookey seconded, unanimously approved.

Reports

Director's report:

Miriam summarized administrative updates including the new electronic filing system and new employee. She stated that she is working to identify a time to hold a Broadband 101 session and summarized various considerations for public access to the meeting. There was discussion about evening of June 10.

Broadband report:

Miriam described various funding challenges and suggested the COG go through an RFI process to determine potential partnerships ready to go in the event appropriate funding becomes available. She described concerns related to a broadband funding bill at the State.

She suggested shifting the focus to the next section of middle mile to address Pagosa Springs to Durango. Andrea asked about DOLA's perspective on this project. Miriam explained that they had discussed shifting the project west from Pagosa Springs to Durango to help redundancy for the region and that DOLA was more comfortable with this approach. There was discussion about next steps for securing funding.

Fiscal update:

Jessica mentioned that COG staff is helping the All Hazards Advisory Committee with the transition to a new coordinator.

Grant report:

Miriam summarized status of various grant awards and opportunities.

Community updates

David reported that the Town of Bayfield is finishing their water line project. They are hoping to have a parade and fireworks.

Andrea reported that the Town of Pagosa Springs is planning to have July 4 festivities. They opened their maintenance facility. They are working on housing policies to increase number of workforce housing units.

Marsha reported that La Plata County had their first project under the new land use code. They are looking to do public engagement to identify use of ARPA funds. They are working on affordable housing. The weather radar sites have been a complicated project, David suggested looking into a site in the HD mountains. They are creating a wildfire advisory board. Mark asked about the radar site donated by SUIT. Masha replied they are considering one site on tribal land.

Mark reported that the Town of Ignacio is working on an intersection project at Becker and Goddard. He mentioned that he toured a manufacturing facility for manufactured housing which may be a good project locally.

Willy mentioned that San Juan County is still waiting for winter. Their sales tax collections are good. They are doing restoration work on courthouse. Silverton is looking for an administrator and an attorney. They are preparing to do work on the back roads.

Mike reported that the City of Cortez library director resigned and they have appointed an interim. He added that John will be leaving, and they are preparing to interview the top candidates. The Ride the Rockies event will include Cortez and Durango. They are looking at community garden sites. They are planning to have fireworks.

David mentioned the possibility for an in-person meeting. Miriam mentioned that staff had discussed the possibility of having an outdoor meeting in June. Marsha asked if there has been work done on manufactured housing concept. Mark described the facility he had referenced.

John reported that Congress is looking at the American Jobs Plan, they are working to ensure regional priorities are included. He summarized various priorities identified by Senator Bennet and President Biden. He mentioned there has been discussion about ensuring La Plata

County's weather station connects with the National Weather Service, and suggested they reach out if help is needed.

Helen mentioned the Shuttered Venue and Restaurant Revitalization grant funds. Senator Hickenlooper will be hosting a town hall on April 14.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 p.m.