

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
June Board Meeting
Thursday, 10 June, 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
Willy Tookey – San Juan County
Katie Sickles – Town of Bayfield
Drew Sanders – City of Cortez
Andrea Phillips – Town of Pagosa Springs
Gloria Kaasch-Buerger – Town of Silverton

Staff in Attendance:

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

Guests in Attendance:

Diane Kruse – NEO Fiber
Rick Smith – City of Cortez

Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m.

Public Comment

None.

Consent Agenda

- a. April 2021 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. March and April 2021 Financials

Willy Tookey motioned to approve the consent agenda, Marsha Porter-Norton seconded, unanimously approved.

Presentation

- a. APRA Funding for Broadband Presentation

Diane presented information regarding various funding opportunities for broadband infrastructure. There was discussion about the federal funding for middle mile to be distributed through DOLA, including challenges small communities face when match is required.

Miriam explained that assistance with grant writing would be necessary. There was discussion about what potential funding sources and associated requirements would apply for various jurisdictions. There was discussion about various labor and supplies shortages.

Discussion Items

- a. 2022 Dues

Miriam explained that the COG tries to get proposed dues out in June to assist the members with budgeting.

b. ARPA Funding Discussion

Miriam explained that there had been discussion about the concept of each of the members applying a portion of their allocated ARPA funds to support building middle-mile. There was discussion about the value to the jurisdictions of this approach and the various other needs this funding could address. Marsha mentioned La Plata County would like to host a forum as they are working through how to identify priorities and determine how to distribute ARPA funds. Miriam described the regional need for middle mile and stated that she will put together estimates for building infrastructure and other supporting documentation.

Decision Items

a. Audit Extension Request

Miriam described the status of the 2020 audit work. Due to delays receiving the draft, staff is recommending postponing acceptance of the audit until August.

Drew Sanders motioned to approve the 2020 audit extension request, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.

b. July Special Meeting

Miriam explained the request to hold a special meeting to select responses to the public-private partnership RFI is due to the timing of an application for funds. There was discussion about scheduling a meeting on July 13 at 1:30 pm.

Andrea Phillips motioned to approve a special meeting on July 13 at 1:30 p.m., Drew Sanders seconded, unanimously approved.

c. Approval to apply for Transit Coordination Grant

Jessica described the current transit coordination implementation plan and the request to seek funding for implementation.

Marsha Porter-Norton motioned to approve an application for a transit coordination grant, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.

d. Approval to apply for DOLA Broadband Grant

Miriam described that she would like to apply for broadband funding through various sources. She described some various funding options. There was discussion about this proposed project and the communications Miriam has had with various partners. Miriam asked how involved the board would like to be moving forward. The consensus was for staff to move forward and keep the board updated.

e. Approval of Contract for CDL Program Development

Miriam described the project and the planned collaboration to establish the CDL program.

Marsha Porter-Norton motioned to approve the contract with Durango Adult Education for CDL program mapping, curriculum development, and education, Willy Tookey seconded, unanimously approved.

f. Approval of Contract for Digital Literacy and Workforce Upskilling

Miriam described the project. Andrea asked what the SWCCOG's role would be. Miriam replied that DOLA does not fund staff time, so the intent is for the work to be done by the partners, some staff support through the contract with RCAC.

Andrea Phillips motioned to approve the contract with Durango Adult Education for digital literacy and workforce upskilling, Mike Lavey seconded, unanimously approved.

g. Approval of Contract for All Hazards Coordinator
Miriam described the All Hazards Advisory Council and the proposal for the new coordinator. **Drew Sanders motioned to approve the contract with the SWAHAC Homeland Security Grant Coordinator, Marsha Porter-Norton seconded, unanimously approved.**

h. Ratification of Letters of Support

- Southwest Colorado Outdoor Recreation Alliance
- Ratification of letter of support for Senator Bennet CDS

Miriam described the requested letters of support.
Andrea Phillips motioned to ratify the two letters of support, Drew Sanders seconded, unanimously approved.

i. Ratification of SWCCOG Broadband CDS Request
Miriam described the request and how it differs from the other middle mile requests. She described the less visible, long-term benefits of broadband development.
Marsha Porter-Norton motioned to approve the CDS request for broadband middle-mile infrastructure between Pagosa Springs and Durango, Willy Tookey seconded, unanimously approved.

Reports

Attendance report:

Miriam mentioned that this was developed as a result of the strategical planning process.

Director's report:

Miriam summarized efforts to identify new staff. She described upcoming strategic planning efforts for the Regional Housing Alliance of La Plata County.

Broadband report:

Miriam provided an update on HB 1289.

Fiscal update:

Jessica summarized the status of various

Grant report:

Miriam summarized status of various grant awards and opportunities.

Transportation report:

Jessica summarized the SWTPR meeting from earlier in the day. She described the transit coordination project.

Community updates

Mike reported that the City of Cortez hired a new city manager. The ballot question to opt-out of SB 152 overwhelmingly passed. There is a new council member. There have been various outdoor activities taking place. City representatives met with Representative Boebert's staff.

Andrea reported that the Town of Pagosa Springs is seeing more tourists. They are planning to hold a July 3 parade. They have applied for grants to replace pump stations and for the Hot Springs Blvd corridor.

Marsha reported that La Plata County is beginning their budget cycle, specifically setting goals including goals related to sustainability. They are working with Ride the Rockies. They are working to identify a radar site. They are working on a wildfire and watershed pilot project. They are working on the regional coalition for opioid issues. They are working on various wildfire preparation and response efforts.

Willy reported that the Town of Silverton hired a new administrator. The Town adopted an ordinance related to off-highway vehicles within the Town. Sales tax collections are good. They are opening backcountry roads. Due to low snowpack and limited moisture, it is already dry.

David reported that Town of Bayfield just finished their water line replacement. They are planning festivities for July 4, including a longer parade route.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:46 p.m.