

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
February Board Meeting
Thursday, 11 February, 2021, 1:30 p.m.
Video Conference**

In Attendance:

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

Staff in Attendance:

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

Guests in Attendance:

Ken Charles – Town of Dolores
Rachel Medina – City of Cortez
Patrick Rondinelli – Colorado Department of Local Affairs
John Whitney – Senator Bennet’s Office

Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m.

Public Comment

None.

Consent Agenda

- a. December 2020 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. November and December 2020 Financials

Willy Tookey motioned to approve the consent agenda, Alvin Schaaf seconded, unanimously approved.

Update from Senator Bennet’s Office:

John reported that Congress is moving forward with the COVID package, preliminary votes have been taken and this package is projected to include funding for local governments. David asked if the local funding would be for general operating funds. John replied that there will be some restrictions, it will need to be tied to COVID impacts.

John explained that after the COVID bill, the next big issue is expected to be infrastructure. Senator Bennet would like to focus on public lands and has put together the Outdoor Restoration Fund Act to provide funding to support local efforts with respect to forests, watersheds, and invasive species. He asked if the SWCCOG would be willing to issue a statement in support. Marsha asked how the funds would work with existing funds. John replied they have received positive feedback and expect it to be beneficial to supplement existing

funds. Miriam asked if the Board would like to take any action. David expressed support for a letter. Marsha expressed support. Willy expressed support for the legislation, keeping in mind that often small communities are often left out of competitive grants due to match requirements. Miriam asked if this would be an opportunity for the COG to apply on behalf of the region. The COG will prepare a letter of support.

Decision Items

a. Grant approvals

Miriam described the Recycling Resources Economic Opportunity (RREO) grant request. There was discussion about current recycling efforts and challenges in the region.

Marsha Porter-Norton motioned to authorize the Executive Director seek an RREO grant, Willy Tookey seconded, unanimously approved.

Miriam explained that the Board had previously authorized the COG to apply for up to \$800,000 for fiber over Wolf Creek, and that the current estimate is higher. David expressed support for increasing the request.

Willy Tookey motioned to approve the increase for the DOLA grant to \$963,960, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.

b. Letters of Support Ratification

Miriam explained the SWCCOG letter of support process.

Willy Tookey motioned for ratification of the letters sent in support of the projects for Ignacio and Rockwood Estates, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.

Community updates

Mark reported that the letter for the Town of Ignacio was for a DORA grant for a fiber to the premise project. They are working with CDOT on the Becker and Goddard intersection project which is currently out to bid. They are nearing completion on a housing study. They have a community vaccination clinic; registration is open if eligible.

Andrea reported that the Town of Pagosa Springs has a trail project out to bid. They are nearing completion of the maintenance facility.

Mike reported that the City of Cortez has hired a finance director and a new airport manager, and have opened a search for a city manager. City Council is planning to meet in person for the first time. They have a meeting scheduled with the Montezuma County Commissioners, and are working in partnership to expand broadband south of the City. The Council has decided to do hybrid meetings with some members in person. The 2016 audit is complete and they will begin working on subsequent years. They approved a site plan for an affordable housing development.

Marsha reported that La Plata County is looking for location for a regional weather station. They have put together an emergency watershed protection program for the 416 Fire burn area. They are working with the city to identify a permanent homeless camp. She suggested a future discussion about opioid treatment. Miriam mentioned that the COG had previously received a presentation from the Attorney General's office, she will follow-up.

Ken reported that the Town of Dolores has received a license application for marijuana. They received a DOLA grant for installing solar in Town. They received a Charge Ahead grant to install an EV system. They are starting the process to undertake an energy audit.

Katie reported that the Town of Bayfield is beginning the process on a trail around Bayfield center. They will be working on intersection improvements at the stoplight. They are looking into a drought management plan; with the lack of snow, they are concerned about fire.

Alvin reported that Archuleta County is working on broadband. They have started work on the justice center and courthouse. Their jail is again housing all their inmates. They are looking at workforce housing which may include working with Habitat for Humanity.

Willy reported that San Juan County's sales tax collections have been strong. Their vaccination program has been going well and they were able to share supply with neighboring counties. They are hoping for more snow. The County and the Town of Silverton are working with Community Builders to do a community visioning project. The Silverton town administrator has resigned, so they are looking for a replacement. There was discussion about some recent avalanche recoveries.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.