

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
May Board Meeting  
Thursday, 14 May, 2020, 1:30 p.m.  
295 Girard Street, Durango, CO 81303**

In Attendance:

Mike Lavey – City of Cortez  
Rachel Medina – City of Cortez  
John Dougherty – City of Cortez  
David Black – Town of Bayfield  
Katie Sickles – Town of Bayfield  
Gwen Lachelt – La Plata County  
Willy Tookey – San Juan County  
Andrea Phillips – Town of Pagosa Springs  
Mark Garcia – Town of Ignacio  
Steve Garchar – Dolores County  
Shari Pierce – Town of Pagosa Springs  
Alvin Schaaf – Archuleta County  
Scott Wall – Archuleta County

Staff in Attendance:

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

Guests in Attendance:

Patrick Rondinelli - DOLA  
Ann McCoy-Harold – Senator Gardner’s Office  
John Whitney – Senator Bennet’s Office  
Ken Charles – Town of Dolores

**Introductions**

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

**Public Comment**

None.

**Consent Agenda**

- a. February 2020 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. February 2020 Financials
- c. March 2020 Financials
- d. April 2020 Financials

**Willy Tookey motioned to approve the consent agenda, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.**

**Decision Items**

- a. Remote Meeting Participation Policy

Miriam explained that the by-laws don’t explicitly allow fully remote meetings. She mentioned that a number of entities have implemented similar policies.

**Andrea Phillips motioned to approve the remote participation policy, Willy Tookey seconded, unanimously approved.**

b. Executive Committee Treasurer Selection

Miriam mentioned that John Dougherty had volunteered to be the Treasurer. John accepted the nomination.

**Mark Garcia motioned to approve John Dougherty as Treasurer, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.**

c. Letter of Support for 4CED BUILD Rail Planning Grant

Miriam described the project and the anticipated benefits to the region.

**Willy Tookey motioned the letter of support as submitted, David Black seconded, unanimously approved.**

d. Approval to Apply for Grants

- a. Broadband
- b. Transit
- c. COVID Response

Miriam described the details of each of the requests.

**David Black motioned to authorize staff to apply for the grant opportunities as detailed, Mark Garcia seconded, unanimously approved.**

e. Approval of Request for Extension for 2019 Audit

Miriam explained that the audit was scheduled for April, due to circumstances staff has requested an extension. The request will require a signature by the Chair by September.

**Mark Garcia motioned to approve the audit extension request, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.**

f. Fiscal Administration

Miriam explained that the Colorado Association of Regional Councils and Archuleta County had approached staff about the COG doing fiscal administration.

**Mark Garcia motioned to approve the two requests, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.**

Attendance report:

Miriam reported that the purpose of this report is to maintain accountability.

Directors report:

Miriam reported that she is recovering. She mentioned that five organizations have not paid dues. David asked if Durango is a member. Miriam replied they are not. Gwen mentioned that they have a new mayor and there may be some opportunities. Gwen asked about Rico and Dove Creek. Miriam replied that Dove Creek has not been a member, there is some overlap with Dolores County. She added that there was discussion at the last meeting about smaller jurisdictions appointing community representatives to attend. Mark stated that he would contact Ken at the Town of Dolores. Staff will provide an estimated dues amount. Miriam asked if anyone would be willing to talk to the Town of Mancos, John replied that he will try to contact Mancos. Gwen will contact the City of Durango. Alvin stated that he would contact Montezuma County. Steve will talk to the Town of Dove Creek.

Miriam reported that the Zoom system is being well utilized, staff is working to identify a funding source for the upcoming renewal. David asked what the cost is. Miriam replied that the cost was \$11,000 for multiple years, the COG was denied grant funding for it and the renewal will be due at the end of June. Mark asked how many members are using Zoom. Miriam replied that everyone has access to a license, currently Rico, Bayfield, and Dolores County are not using licenses. Mark and Andrea suggested that the members who are using it split the cost. Miriam mentioned that members had been asked to set aside grant match in their budgets, perhaps that funding would be used. Staff will present options at the June meeting. Katie would like to explore using the system. Miriam summarized the high level of usage, including the increased public participation in meetings.

#### Broadband:

Miriam provided an update on the status of the route between Cortez and Towaoc. She provided an update on FCC rulemakings that reduce local control. She mentioned the Governor's executive order on telecommunications that loosens local permitting requirements.

#### Grant:

Miriam reported that staff is requesting extensions for most the grants.

#### Community updates:

David reported that the Town of Bayfield has a new Town Manager, she is the SWCCOG alternate member. They are working on a water project. Dealing with COVID related challenges, and will need to keep in mind impacts related to TABOR.

Willy reported that it is quiet in San Juan County. They are preparing to open backcountry roads.

Andrea reported that the Town of Pagosa Springs has two new council members. Sales tax is projected to be down 27%. Building permits are still being submitted, tourists are still coming. The Town is looking to request specific variances to the Safer at Home order. They broke ground on the maintenance facility. They formed an Urban Renewal Authority and will hold special election concerning limiting the amount of TIF funding.

John reported that the City of Cortez has a new mayor, and they have four new council members. They opened City Hall a week ago and are allowing some singles sports with distancing rules. They had a death in the community, the individual was COVID positive, but that was not the cause of death. Montezuma County was denied a variance because the number of cases is increasing. There are mixed opinions in the community about whether to open businesses and there is a protest being planned.

Mike reported that he is working to open dialogue between businesses that want to open quickly and those that want to move slowly. He added that firearms will be discouraged at the protest.

Ken reported that the Town of Dolores has two new board members and voters approved marijuana sales. Town Hall is open, staff is back to normal, and they are working on how to manage the farmers market. A major project is the playground, it had to be torn down which upset a lot of people, they were awarded a GOCO grant, it will be built by local contractors, but it may need to be fenced off at first. There are a number of large projects including the land use code and replacing water lines.

Mark reported that the Town of Ignacio held a drive-thru election, there was a very high turnout and all the incumbents were reelected. They are working on a strategic planning session/retreat. Working with CDOT on a lighted intersection. Working to get funding to improve internet connectivity. Working on housing study. The Town has good reserves, they will consider opening Town Hall next week, and are waiting to see the impacts on sales tax.

Steve reported that the Dolores County Courthouse is closed, staffing is being managed at the discretion of department heads. They have an extra security person to let people in. They petitioned the Governor to lift some restrictions, some people want restrictions gone, others want to open more slowly. They held a drive-thru election which went well. They are on track to build a social services building. They just were notified that irrigation will be cut by 25% this year.

David added that Bayfield had an election, they have a new mayor, two new members, and he was reappointed to the Board.

Gwen reported that La Plata County had their first COVID death last weekend, testing is widely available. All County offices are open by appointment and staffed at 50%. They issued a draft land use code. They enacted stage 1 fire restrictions and are expecting to go to stage 2 later in May, conditions are as dry as in 2018. Meals on wheels has been very busy, they are delivering 2 week packs of meals. Applications for benefits are decreasing.

John Whitney reported that Congress passed the CARES Act, the first version didn't include any funding for state and local governments, unfortunately the final version didn't include a distribution formula for local governments, so they are working on legislation to clarify how the funding can be used. He stated that Congress intended that money should go to local governments, but was not mandatory. He described efforts to include funding for various governments in future bills. Gwen mentioned that funding is needed for public health to help with contact tracing.

Ann McCoy-Harold commended local efforts.

Miriam reported that she spoke with CCI regarding the CARES Act once the State legislative session starts up. Legislation has been introduced for distance learning to get connectivity through the E-rate program.

Meeting adjourned 3:08