

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
September Board Meeting
Thursday, 24 October, 1:30 p.m.
295 Girard Street, Durango, CO 81303**

In Attendance:

Karen Sheek – City of Cortez
David Black – Town of Bayfield
Steve Garchar – Dolores County
Gwen Lachelt – La Plata County
Ronnie Maez – Archuleta County (by phone)
Andrea Phillips – Town of Pagosa Springs (by phone)

Staff in Attendance:

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

Guests in Attendance:

Ed Mills – Colorado Broadband Office (by phone)
John Whitney – Senator Bennet’s Office
Ann McCoy-Herald – Senator Gardner’s Office

Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:37 p.m.

Public Comment

None.

Presentation from Colorado Office Information Technology about Regional Broadband:

Ed Mills gave an overview of the Colorado Broadband Office and presented information about progress made on connectivity in Colorado and potential funding options. David asked if Project THOR is already in the ground. Miriam replied yes, they were utilizing CDOT fiber along I-70, and connecting into the communities. She added that SCAN was a leading broadband project, now the region is being surpassed by other regions. Karen asked about the status of attaching fiber to electric poles. Miriam described the nature of the partnership between FastTrack, LPEA and Empire Electric. Miriam described some of the challenges with building broadband in southwest Colorado. There was discussion about funding inequities related to broadband. There was discussion about challenges and cost of building infrastructure.

Consent Agenda

September 2019 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes and September 2019 Financials

David Black motioned to approve the consent agenda, Steve Garchar seconded, unanimously approved.

Discussion Items

Retreat Follow-Up: Update on Board Structure and Bylaws:

Andrea summarized the information she had collected regarding the funding and board structure of other COGs. She found that having a combined COG and economic development district was most common. Additionally counties tend to be the primary members, with possibly one municipality from each county represented. Most include services such as AAA, elevator inspection and Head Start. Many require elected officials to serve on the board. Most base dues

upon population, with some include factors such as highway miles. No COGs that she spoke with had associate members, but some allowed members from outside the region. Karen asked if any of them had jurisdictions in the region that are not members. Andrea replied that this was not uncommon. Miriam mentioned that she could ask the national organization how COGs outside of Colorado handle associate memberships and memberships across state lines.

Retreat Follow-Up: 2020 Proposed Meeting Dates:

Miriam described the various proposed changes to the meeting schedule. There was discussion about the benefit of a reduced number of meetings. The item was moved to the decision agenda.

Retreat Follow-Up: Committee Structure:

Miriam explained that one item for follow-up was the structure of committees. David mentioned that it would be useful to have the legislative committee meet before the session begins to have an idea of what to do during the session. There was discussion about having a legislative/TABOR/Gallagher committee, executive/engagement committee, and other committees as needed.

Decision Items

2020 Proposed Meeting Dates:

Gwen Lachelt motioned to approve Option B as the meeting dates for 2020, David Black seconded, unanimously approved.

Grant Writer Contract:

Miriam explained that this would be an open contract to support staff and the communities with grant writing as needed.

David Black motioned to approve the contract for grant writing services between the SWCCOG and Martina LLC, Steve Garchar seconded, unanimously approved.

Office365 and IT Support Implementation Contract:

Miriam explained that this entails moving to cloud storage rather than local data storage. This would include five licenses and serve as a pilot project. Karen asked if this would be more secure from a ransomware standpoint, and if so, if all the jurisdictions should use it. Miriam replied yes to both questions, and that it will be easier to manage if a computer is hacked. She added that the intent is to test it out with the COG and later add more licenses. Gwen asked about the annual cost. Miriam replied that the five licenses are approximately \$1100 per year, but there are different types of licenses that are lower cost.

David Black motioned to approve a contract for Office 365 implementation with Element Consulting LLC, Ronnie Maez seconded, unanimously approved.

Employee ROTH IRA Approval:

Miriam explained that this would be at no cost and would add a benefit to employees, it would allow retirement benefits for part time employees and an additional option for all employees. There is no match by the COG and contributions are post tax, so is not taxed when used.

David Black motioned to approve the creation of an ICMA sponsored ROTH IRA for SWCCOG employees, Steve Garchar seconded, unanimously approved.

USDA Solid Waste Management Grant:

Miriam explained this could provide funding for recycling initiatives. Karen asked if food could be considered solid waste. Ronnie mentioned that the cost of separating food waste is significant and it does decompose more quickly than other items. Steve mentioned that they just signed a

new waste management contract and have saved a significant amount of money. Miriam asked about including a presentation on trash and recycling at a meeting in 2020.

David Black motioned to allow staff to apply for the USDA Solid Waste Management Grant, Steve Garchar seconded, unanimously approved.

DOLA Broadband Grant:

Miriam explained that this is for match to the USAC Rural Healthcare funding and would be used for administration of the grant. Gwen asked when the COG would be notified about the funding. Miriam replied they should make announcements early next year.

David Black motioned to direct staff to apply for DOLA Broadband funding for up to \$1 million, Ronnie Maez seconded, unanimously approved.

Reports

Director's Report:

Miriam reported that housing had been a major topic during the retreat. The best way to move forward will be to work together with Housing Solutions, a major need will be land. There was discussion about finding locations for building affordable units. Miriam will be attending a couple conferences.

Broadband Report:

Miriam reported there is a new FCC ruling related to placing antennas. The Cable Franchise Fee issue is going through the court system. A Small-Cell Rulemaking is estimated next spring. Miriam and Karen discussed the value of a public education session about broadband.

Grant Updates:

Written report only.

Transportation Report:

Gwen asked highlights. Jessica mentioned the review of priority corridors at the last TPR meeting and that prioritizations of projects would be at the December meeting. Steve asked if the multimodal funding program has changed. Jessica replied that the planning process changed to include all aspects of transportation, but this should not change funding.

Community Updates:

Ronnie reported that Archuleta County received funding for a human services building. They are on schedule and budget for building the jail and are looking to house the Sheriff's Department and dispatch next to the jail. They adopted a model traffic code. They are looking at revising the land use code. They are hoping to get glass crusher in 2020.

Steve reported that Dolores County had land donated to build a social services center. They redid the transfer station. They are working on issues related to the Gunnison Sage Grouse and several fish species.

David reported that the Town of Bayfield adopted an ordinance to use bear resistant containers, the cost increase should be approximately \$1.50. They are dealing with a spring in an intersection. The contracted finance model has been working well.

Gwen reported that La Plata County is wrapping up the 2020 budget, had public service agencies attend a public hearing to provide an overview of their services. They recently opened

a homeless camp on La Posta Road, so far it has been working well. They are working with landowners on debris flows from the 419 fire.

Karen reported that the City of Cortez is working on fixing medians. They are working through issues with finance department, and are preparing serious work on the budget.

The meeting ended at 4:11 p.m.