Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

April Board Meeting

03 April 2015

La Plata County Court House

Board in Attendance:

Dick White – City of Durango

William Tookey – San Juan County

Chris Tookey – Town of Silverton

Lee San Miguel – Town of Ignacio

Greg Schulte – Town of Pagosa Springs

Julie Westendorff – La Plata County

Joe Kerby – La Plata County

John Egan – Town of Pagosa Springs

Michelle Nelson - Town of Bayfield

Staff in Attendance:  
Miriam Gillow-Wiles – Executive Director

Sara Trujillo – Assistant/Accountant

Guest in Attendance:  
Randy Harrison – CU Denver, School of Public Affairs

Ty Churchwell – Trout Unlimited

Amanda Saunders - DoLA

1. **Call to Order/Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 1:40pm; everyone introduced themselves.

Randy Harrison with CU Denver presented information regarding CU Denver School of Public Affairs Certified Public Management program. The certificate program available through CU Denver’s School of Public Affairs is in its fourth year and is the only certified public affairs program in the state of Colorado. This is a certificate program, not a degree program. This program is beneficial to city manager, elected officials, police chiefs, and many others for a skills update. Classes will begin April at Fort Lewis College taking place on Friday and Saturdays every other month. There is a capstone required and registration can be completed online.

1. **Recycling Presentation**

Laurie Batchelder Adams with LBA Associates, consultant with the RREO grant, compiled information with the help of Miriam and Fort Lewis College interns to explore waste in our area and create a plan for recycling. The study region included all of the public/private/tribal programs and services in Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan Counties including the tribes. The study covers municipal solid waste (MSW) generated by homeowner, business, institutional and tourism sectors.

Statistics are as follows:

* 99,000 people in areas of study (includes Montezuma county)
* We produce almost 6 lbs of trash per person per day
* Recycle approximately 13%
* Landfill approximately 86%
  + 37.5% organics (food, yard waste, rubber, fabrics)
  + 24.2% paper
  + 8.8% glass
  + 12.7% plastics
  + 6.5% metal.
  + Lots of commercial cardboard.

Important points brought up several times during meetings included:

* + - People are confused by inconsistency with different recycling efforts between communities. There may need to be consistency across the board with the cooperation of communities throughout the region. In addition, outreach and education play a large role.
    - It is important to include the private sector in recycling efforts so as not to compete with them.
    - Recycling helps to extend landfill life

A recycling presentation power point can be found on swccog.org for more information and statistical findings of this study. In addition, a written report will presented at the end of the grant June 2015.

1. **Consent Agenda: March 2015 Minutes & February 2015 Financials**

**Motion to approve minutes and financials as presented: Julie Westendorff, Second: John Egan. Passed by a unanimous voice vote.**

1. **Discussion Items:**

Recap of Retreat:

The retreat covered much information pertaining to goal structure and accomplishments. It was recognized that the COG will need more staffing to grow. A large benefit from the retreat was identifying what endeavors are worth the time invested in order to focus more specifically on attainable goals for the year 2015. This focus created from the retreat will help with planning for the 2016 budget.

1. **Decision Items:**

DoLA Broadband Planning Grant:

Miriam created an executive summary that was provided for board review discussing the pros and cons of the broadband planning grant. The pros and cons were listed as follows:

**Pros:**

* Regional planning grant will give us a roadmap for costs and strategies to meet regional goals
* Better broadband means better support for home based workers (key portion of our local economies), rural businesses, health care, education, technology, financial services
* Helps distinguish our region in the Rocky Mountains
* Increases available funding for broadband expansion
* La Plata County Economic Development Alliance willing to fund a significant portion of local match which lowers costs for the rest of Southwest Colorado.

**Cons:**

* Lots of changes going on in broadband at state and federal level, will plan be relevant in a year?
* If this plan is not pursued internet will likely develop unevenly across the region, hurting many of our residents, businesses, and educational institutions.

Miriam also presented a proposed match funding breakdown per community by population.

Staff is seeking approval to write and submit the grant with assurance that we will have match for this grant. Essentially, staff needs both authorization and a schematic of funding formula to proceed. The grant should be written within one month and is the key to receiving additional infrastructure funding from DoLA.

The board requested to see a funding formula using a base fee in addition to population calculations. Staff is to revamp numbers and present to the board members via email for feedback prior to the May meeting.

**Motion to direct staff to compose the grant application and present to the board at the May meeting a funding formula that is consistent with the discussion today in regards to a base amount combined with an amount based on population for board consideration: John Egan, Second: William Tookey.**

Letters of Support Policy:

At the February meeting it was suggested that staff put together some policy and procedures for letters of support as there has been a significant uptick in the request for letters of support in the last few months. Miriam created a policy document entailing the following steps:

**1) Is it a project from one or more members?**

If yes, the Board should consider a letter of support if the fits within questions two and three.

**2) Does the project have a regional impact?**

If yes, proceed to question three.

If no, the SWCCOG may not be the appropriate organization to be writing a letter of support.

**3) Is it a project that involves the SWCCOG, the SWCCOG’s established goals, existing SWCCOG**

**projects, and/or existing or previous advocacy?**

If yes, the Board should consider a letter of support.

If no, staff should ask why the requestor is approaching the SWCCOG and determine if the ideas are

sound and reasoning behind requesting a letter of support from the SWCCOG.

**4) Other questions to consider, and potentially include in Board communication.**

What is the impact on the region if the project occurs? Does not occur?

In what areas of the region will the project take place?

Is there a fiscal impact for the SWCCOG and or SWCCOG members?

Does the project fit within the mission and vision of the SWCCOG?

Is one or more SWCCOG member working on a similar project or goal?

If so, does this letter of support potentially support or undermine the Member project/goal?

The board feels support letters need to be relevant to the jurisdiction, guidelines should be generally applicable, and that instead of saying projects we talk about proposals. It was not felt at this time that the board was ready for a final vote. This item will be tabled until the May meeting.

Public Land Renewable Energy Development Act Letter of Support:

Ty Churchwell from Trout Unlimited was present to request a letter of support for public land renewable energy development. This endeavor entails the development of geo thermal, wind, and solar on federal lands. The letter of support is to encourage this initiative to get introduced to the region.

The board supported the idea of the letter; however, there was no mention of local governments benefiting from the royalties, which should be treated like mineral resources taken from public lands. It was felt reference to Montezuma County and Mesa Verde needed to be removed and verbiage added to provide sharing with communities impacted by the development.

**Motion to direct staff and chair to prepare letter that removes Montezuma County and Mesa Verde, adds verbiage about benefits to communities impacted, and give authority to chair to sign: Julie Westendorff, Second: Michelle Nelson.**

Telecom Shortfall:

During the Retreat in March there was ample discussion about the SCAN, maintenance, cost, equipment repair, and replacement funding. During the discussion of telecom funding shortfall, the Board Members present indicated they would be interested in alleviating that shortfall, which will greatly help with the budget. As a result of this, staff put together a detailed estimated amount of what that short fall is projected to be by the end of the year.

The board would like to see a base plus population formula. Staff will create a new formula to cover the telecom shortfall and email to communities in order for them to present the information to their elected officials. Staff will bring information to the May board meeting for approval.

1. **Reports:**

Director’s Report:

Miriam informed the board of a severance tax issue going on with state. The state is trying to take away $20 million of severance tax funds and move those funds over to the general fund. This will significantly negatively impact our infrastructure. Miriam will put together some information to send over to elected officials.

The meeting time frame was over at this point, so the last two report items, transportation/transit and WLC, were not covered.

**Adjourned at 3:40pm**