Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

February Board Meeting

06 February 2015

La Plata County Court House

Board in Attendance:

Dick White – City of Durango

Andrea Phillips – Town of Mancos

Ernie Williams – Dolores County

Michael Whiting – Archuleta County (via phone)

William Tookey – San Juan County

Chris Tookey – Town of Silverton

Lee San Miguel – Town of Ignacio

Chris LaMay – Town of Bayfield

Greg Schulte – Town of Pagosa Springs

Shane Hale – City of Cortez

Julie Westendorff – La Plata County

Joe Kerby – La Plata County

John Egan – Town of Pagosa Springs

Ron LeBlanc – City of Durango

Staff in Attendance:
Miriam Gillow-Wiles – Executive Director

Sara Trujillo – Assistant/Accountant

Guest in Attendance:
Ken Charles - DoLA

Hannah Oliver – Program Associate, Western Lands and Communities

Ralph Marra – Contractor, Western Lands and Communities

Jessica Laitsch – SWCCOG consultant, Western Lands and Communities Grant

Mark Thompson – Phoenix Recycling

1. **Call to Order/Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 1:34pm; everyone introduced themselves.

1. **Western Lands and Communities (WLC) Presentation**

The WLC grant was the COG's first successful grant last year. The purpose of this grant is to produce a document about how our communities can be more resilient in the face of an uncertain future. To help us reach this goal is Hannah Oliver from the Sonoran Institute and Ralph Marra, a consultant with Western Lands and Communities.

Hannah and Ralph flew in from Tucson, Arizona and gave a presentation on scenario planning as a flexible way of dealing with an uncertain future. The focus was on uncertainties and how to create a risk assessment, find appropriate solutions, and mitigate. The following link on the SWCCOG.org website shows the presentation slides by Hannah and Ralph:

<http://www.swccog.org/projects/environment/western-lands/>

1. **Consent Agenda: January 2015 Minutes & Financials**

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

1. **Discussion Items:**

Broadband Non Profit and Legislation Update:

▫ State

CML and CCI are working on an amendment of SB05-152 that will be introduced late in the session (late March or April). They are currently working on meeting with industry reps to help move private sector in support of changing 152. Ideally, the update to 152 will include: use of FCC definition of Broadband, if the community is not receiving FCC defined broadband then the local government will be free to do what is necessary without a vote, allow for public private partnerships (without a vote). As this moves through the Senate and House, we will need the local elected officials, local ISPs, business owners, and economic development organizations to vocalize their support of these changes. Staff will put together a letter of support and any other docs needed in a template form.

▫ Federal

Last week the FCC updated the definition of Broadband. Previously, the definition was 4Mbps down and 1Mbps up. The new definition is significantly higher to a minimum of 25Mbps down and 3Mbps up. This is very good news and is important for businesses, education, and residents who all know the former definition was not fast enough. This also is important because much of SW Colorado had broadband under the previous definition, but now does not. So we will be eligible for more funding.

Broadband Non Profit

This is still important to keep on the radar in the event the changes to 152 are not passed or are limited in their scope. After staff spoke with Ken Fellman, this is an option, as there isn’t anything in the existing law that prohibits it. However, it is still a risk and if this is something the Board wants to move forward with, we need to assess our risk adversity to move forward. The La Plata County Economic Development Alliance is willing to house a 501c3 for the region, pending board approval and need. Shane Hale suggested communication with CLUB 20 could be beneficial. As bills are written, staff will keep the board up-to-date.

1. **Decision Items:**

March 2015 Board Meeting

Miriam would like to hold a half-day board retreat at the March Board Meeting to discuss the SWCCOG 2015 and 2016 goals to help give staff better direction and criteria to select grants and to focus the organization on growing properly, and not just for growth’s sake. Ken Charles will facilitate the meeting. The board agreed on a proposed meeting date of March 6 from 9am – 3pm depending on agenda length and items.

Personnel Policy Update:

When the Personnel Policy was originally written, there were no specifics regarding maternity and paternity leave. Staff feels it is important to offer this benefit to current and future employees and presented an updated Personnel Policy to the board for review and consideration. Staff proposed a three-week paid parent leave. This time frame was chosen because Miriam feels she can handle COG business alone for this amount of time. As far as budget, this three-week paid period is automatically included in payroll for the year.

A verbiage update was requested to change the verbiage “husband and wife” to “spouses”.

**Motion to approve the amended Personnel Policy to include parent leave with verbiage change of “husband and wife” to “spouses”: Julie Westendorff, Second: Ernie Williams. Passed by a unanimous voice vote.**

Letter of Support – Phoenix Recycling RREO Grant:

Durango based Phoenix Recycling will be applying for a RREO grant to expand their existing facilities on a much larger piece of property southeast of Durango. The expanded facility will be able to sort singlestream and multistream recyclables within the region, instead of sending the materials and jobs to areas such as Oklahoma or Salt Lake City. This should help existing programs reduce the hauling fees and the greenhouse gases involved with transporting materials long distances.

Mark Thompson from Phoenix Recycling was present to request a Letter of Support from the SWCCOG to help support the Phoenix Recycling request for funding through the Recycling Resources Economic Opportunity (RREO) grant program. The grant is for a bailer and a conveyer belt that leads into the bailer at a cost of $262,000.

**Motion to authorize Dick White to sign Letter of Support for Phoenix Recylcing: Shane Hale, Second: Michael Whiting. Passed by a unanimous voice vote with one abstention of Julie Westendorff because at as some point Julie will have to consider a land use permit for Phoenix Recycling.**

Ron LeBlanc suggested an item pertaining to letters of support be added to the March board retreat agenda or the April meeting. Julie Westendorff has land use authority; therefore, the COG needs to check jurisdiction before signing letters of support. This is also important for grant writing as letters of support should relate to COG goals. The weight of the COG should not be behind political actions. An established guidelines and schematic could be useful to help develop the principles behind selecting letter of support to sign. Staff will research how other COG’s deal with selecting letters of support.

Dark Fiber Lease MOU:

This item was tabled at the last SWCCOG board meeting to be readdressed now. The MOU agreement would be implemented individually between COG and entity; the MOU document presented would only service as a template. There were questions about an opt-in versus mandate policy for use of the SCAN network, which led to questions about the original content of the SCAN contract and board decisions made at that time. Staff will find original SCAN contract and documents, board meeting minutes, any guidance documents for SCAN use, and facts and history to present this information at the March board retreat. Board would like to know how many dark fiber strands are out there available to be leased and what kind of revenue this would create.

Lee San Miguel requested maps of what Ignacio currently has, which Miriam will send on a thumb drive.

**Motion to table this item until the board is presented with a clear understanding of the SCAN project: Julie Westerndorff, Second: Lee San Miguel. Passed by a unanimous voice vote.**

1. **Reports:**

Director’s Report:

Alternative Fuels – Sparq Natural Gas has just begun communication with CDOT.

Western Lands and Communities (WLC) – The presentation earlier covered this item.

AmeriCorp VISTA - Miriam is finishing up the AmeriCorp VISTA application. The VISTA will be starting in July to help with administration and grants. In addition, Miriam was nominated to receive an AmeriCorp VISTA National Award.

Recycling Resources Economic Opportunity (RREO) – an in-depth report will be given at the March board retreat.

IBM Grant – This application did not happen due to staff time limitations. In addition, Miriam does not want to be applying to grants just to be applying. She would like to further examine COG goals and strategies for the next year at the March board retreat to get some guidance as to what grants the COG would like to apply for that are in conjunction with goals and year plans.

TPR/Transit – The TPR meeting was held this morning. Discussed was the state statute that does not allow the Indian Tribes to have a STAC vote. The TPR would like to pursue a change in legislation to allow tribal voting at STAC. The next meeting will be April 3.

The next transit meeting will be February 10.

John Egan announced the Archuleta County Transportation Summit meeting being held February 26 at the Quality Resort, from 9am – 11am, breakfast will be provided. This meeting will involve La Plata County, Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio, among others. Pagosa would like to establish good relationships with other communities to help make transportation plans work. All are invited.

**Adjourned at 3:45pm**