

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
December Board Meeting
Thursday, 10 December, 2020, 1:30 p.m.
Video Conference**

In Attendance:

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

Staff in Attendance:

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

Guests in Attendance:

Rachel Medina – City of Cortez
Mike Segrest – La Plata County
John Whitney – Senator Bennet’s Office

Introductions

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

Public Comment

None.

Consent Agenda

- a. October 2020 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. September and October 2020 Financials

David Black motioned to approve the consent agenda, Alvin Schaaf seconded, unanimously approved.

Update from Senator Bennet’s Office:

John reported there have been negotiations on a COVID relief package, he summarized some of the proposed elements that may be included including another round of the Paycheck Protection Program and extended unemployment benefits. If an agreement can be reached it would be in the next week since the session will be ending. Gwen asked if the liability protection would exempt companies from lawsuits related to COVID. John replied that is the intent, and that this has been one of the sticking points throughout negotiations.

Executive Session:

Gwen Lachelt motioned to convene in Executive Session for discussion of a personnel matter under CRS Section 24-6-402(2)(f) and NOT involving: any specific employees who have requested discussion of the matter in open session; any member of this body or

any elected official; the appointment of any person to fill an office of this body or of an elected official; or personnel policies that do not require the discussion of matters personal to particular employees. No decisions will be made in Executive Session, David Black seconded, unanimously approved.

The Executive Session began at 1:47 p.m. and ended at 2:04 p.m.

Discussion items

a. Draft remote work and equipment policies

Miriam described that at the October meeting there was discussion about creating a template work at home policy for the SWCCOG and for member jurisdictions. She mentioned that this is being reviewed by the SWCCOG's liability insurance provider and has not yet been reviewed by legal.

b. Associate Member Policy Discussion

Miriam described that a number of local agencies would like to work with the SWCCOG on broadband, the Board has previously expressed disinterest in a la carte memberships. She asked about the possibility of having broadband specific associate members since a significant portion of her time is being used on these efforts. Gwen asked what jurisdictions this would apply to. Miriam replied that there are some agencies that are eligible to be members, this option may need to be open only to agencies not eligible to be members. She also mentioned that the Board may wish to allow the Tribes to be members. There was discussion about the real cost to the SWCCOG of these support efforts, which is in the thousands. Willy expressed the need to balance disincentivizing membership versus having the SWCCOG left out of regional efforts, and cautioned against creating expectations that overextend Miriam's time. There was discussion about other COG's that have different membership arrangements. Miriam will contact partner agencies to get their thoughts as well.

Decision Items

a. Approval of Discussion Items from Executive Session

Gwen described the discussion regarding a possible raise and the request to see Miriam's goals and objectives for 2021.

Willy Tookey motioned to approve an increase of 5% for the Executive Director, David Black seconded, unanimously approved.

b. Grant Approvals

Miriam explained that there are a number of grant application requests, including two for ratification that were approved by the Executive Committee and three for approval. She described the grant requests. Gwen asked about the staff time required. Miriam replied that the EDA request includes funding to hire a part time employee. Mark asked about the digitization grant for the Regional Housing Alliance. Miriam had suggested that the SWCCOG apply on behalf of the RHA to digitize their files, that would be a separate grant.

Mark Garcia motioned to approve applications for the grants, John Dougherty seconded, unanimously approved.

c. Title VI Policy Updates

Jessica described the updates to the policy.

Willy Tookey motioned to approve the Title VI policy as amended, Andrea Phillips seconded, unanimously approved.

d. Executive Committee Selection

Miriam described that the Board changes the Executive Committee annually, typically everyone moves up a space and a new member is added. Willy stated that he would support someone else serving as Chair, but otherwise would be willing to do so. David offered to serve a Chair. **Andrea Phillips motioned to elect David Black as Chair, Willy Tookey as Vice-chair, and John Dougherty as Treasurer/Secretary in 2021, Alvin Schaaf seconded, unanimously approved.**

e. 2020 Budget Amendment

Miriam described the proposed changes.

Willy Tookey to approve the 2020 budget amendment as proposed, David Black seconded, unanimously approved.

f. 2021 Final Budget

Miriam described the highlights and changes since the draft budget. Mark asked about the CDOT other line item. Miriam replied this is for developing a CDL program. Mark asked about the housing project. Miriam replied this is to help with administration of a joint housing project with Housing Solutions for the Southwest. Mark asked about the DOLA Economic Assistance Program. Miriam replied this is to implement the outcomes of the USDA REDI grant.

Willy Tookey motioned to adopt the 2021 Budget as presented with the change to reflect the 5% increase for the Executive Director, Alvin Schaaf seconded, unanimously approved.

g. 2021 Meeting Schedule

Miriam explained the proposed schedule continues with the Board meeting every other month.

Alvin Schaaf motioned to approve the 2021 meeting schedule as presented, Shari Pierce seconded, unanimously approved.

Reports

- a. 2020 Attendance Report
- b. Director's Report
- c. Broadband Report
- d. Fiscal Administration Report
- e. Grant Updates
- f. Transportation/Transit Report

Miriam reported that she is planning to take some time off. There is a short broadband report, of note there will be new leadership at the FCC. She described changes to the grant report and summarized recent grant awards.

Community updates

David reported that Miriam met with the Town of Bayfield. The Town is working to sponsor an ISP. They are working to build a walkway/bike path along CR 501. They are finishing up a waterline project.

Shari reported that the Town of Pagosa Springs spent their CARES Act money on community and business support, and they have approved additional business support from the general budget. The maintenance facility is on schedule. They awarded a contract for a land use and development code re-write. They are working to plan a new community park.

Mike reported that the City of Cortez is working with Region 9 on COVID relief applications. They are working to hire an airport manager and a finance director. They hosted an employee recognition event. They reviewed community grant awards for nonprofits. They are looking at scheduling a retreat so the City Council can meet in person for the first time. They approved a rural jumpstart program. John added that they completed the 2016 audit.

Willy reported that it is snowing in San Juan County. The December sales tax for October collections were above 2019, collections in the Town of Silverton for year was down slightly, but overall the economy held up relatively well. They have a contract to undertake a community visioning process. He thanked Gwen for serving as Chair.

Steve reported that it is snowing in Dolores County. He reported that sales tax is up. They are moving into the orange COVID category, likely due to hunting season. They are working on a human services building. There has been talk of possible construction of a large solar farm. He reported that they will not be members of the SWCCOG in 2021.

Alvin reported that the Archuleta County jail is open and they are working on moving people over as they are training. All of their COVID relief money has been spent. They are working on building a courthouse. Sales tax has increased, likely due to remote sales.

Mark reported that the Town of Ignacio has been struggling with public health order enforcement. Their sales tax numbers are up. They are working on grants for fiber to the home. They are working on a plan for an affordable housing project, this may be a good project for the Regional Housing Alliance. They are working on an intersection at Becker and Goodard.

Gwen reported that La Plata County sales tax is up, the tax on internet sales has been critical. They designated December 10 as Leonard C. Birch Day. They are at level red for COVID, there was an outbreak at a nursing home. They have distributed approximately \$900 thousand in funding to businesses. The state is working on certification for businesses to open, the County is seeking local input for a local framework for reopening. She wished luck to the group and to the SWCCOG. Miriam and David thanked Gwen for her service.

Miriam will reach out when the newly elected senator and representative have staff on the ground.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 p.m.