

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
November Board Meeting  
Thursday, 02 November 2017, 1:30pm  
1188 E. 2nd Ave., Carnegie Bldg., Durango, CO 81301**

In Attendance:

John Egan – Town of Pagosa Springs  
Fred Brooks – Town of Mancos  
Karen Sheek – City of Cortez  
Chris La May – Town of Bayfield  
Dick White – City of Durango  
Heather Alvarez – Town of Mancos (via phone)  
William Tookey – San Juan County (via video)  
Chris Tookey – Town of Silverton (via video)  
Kari Distefano – Town of Rico (via phone)

Staff in Attendance:

Miriam Gillow-Wiles – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
Jessica Laitsch – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
Dylan Lucas – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
Sara Trujillo – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

Guests in Attendance:

Dr. Rick Smith – Data Safe Services  
Sherri Dugdale – Southwest Colorado Incident Management Team  
Steve Barkley – Southwest Colorado Incident Management Team  
John Whitney – Senator Bennet’s Office

**I. Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 pm, everyone introduced themselves.

**II. Consent Agenda**

- a. 5 October, 2017 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. September 2017 Financials

**Fred Brooks motioned to approve the consent agenda, Karen Sheek seconded, unanimously approved.**

**III. Reports**

Director’s Report

Miriam said staff is still working to solidify the 2018 budget as there are many moving and uncertain parts that are making it quite challenging, especially with FCC, DoLA, and CDOT funding.

Miriam said she attended the National Association of Regional Council (NARC) Executive Director’s Conference where there was a good discussion about ROI not only involving dollars but social capital benefits. Staff is looking to incorporate social capital benefits in ROI reports and better understand what this may look like at future board retreats.

Miriam reported that the 2017 budget was predicted to have a \$25,000 shortfall; however, there are some revenues that have not yet been realized from dark fiber leases. Per contract, there is revenue share with the COG on all dark fiber leases. Because COG staff only manages

Durango's leases, Miriam requested that all members send her a copy of their current dark fiber leases so that COG staff will know how much to invoice members. Miriam will send an email with this request after the board meeting and invoices will go out ASAP.

#### Broadband Report

Miriam reported that the current grant cycle for the state Broadband Fund has \$20.4 million in funding requests with only \$9.4 million available. CenturyLink has requested \$9.3 million of the \$9.4 million available. If CenturyLink is awarded the full amount of their request, no other applicant will be awarded funding, and conversely if CenturyLink is not awarded funding, all other applicants will receive funding. Karen asked what percentage of people would be impacted if CenturyLink were to receive all funds versus other applicants. Miriam said she will ask and send the answer to the board. Miriam said the COG recently sent a letter to Senators Bennet, Tipton, and Gardner's offices regarding the concerns about service to the Lemon area and other CAFII funding concerns.

Miriam said there are two applications that would impact southwest Colorado, Forethought/Brainstorm and AlignTec. The SWCCOG provided a letter of support for the proposed project in San Juan County by Forethought/Braintorm. Staff would like to provide comment in support of AlignTec's application and comment on CenturyLink's application as well. Karen asked if both Forethought/Brainstorm and AlignTec provide the minimum of 25 by 3. Miriam said yes, Forethought/Brainstorm provides those speeds; however, she is unsure about AlignTec but can look at their application to confirm.

Miriam said in addition to providing comment on the mentioned applications, the FCC is proposing to reduce broadband speeds back to 10Mbps download and 1Mbps upload speeds. The current definition of 25Mbps download and 3Mbps upload was increased from 4Mbps download by 1Mbps upload in 2015. The proposed speeds would only continue to put rural areas at a disadvantage and cater to the incumbents as well as disincentivize creative solutions for hard to reach areas. Miriam asked if the board would like to send a letter to the FCC with concerns about reducing speeds. Staff could create a template and send to all members so each community could send their own concerns as well. The board is in support of sending a letter to the FCC and having staff send templates to each member. The board is also in support of sending positive comment on local ISP's applications to support local efforts in broadband development. In regards to a letter stating concerns about CenturyLink's application for all funding, the board directed staff to write a letter requesting a fair and equitable process for all providers.

#### Transportation Report

Jessica said the next TPR meeting will be Thursday, December 7.

In regards to transit, Jessica reported that the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation applied for federal funding to offer rural transportation technical assistance to communities or regions. In preparation for their application, they sought information about specific projects that could benefit from technical assistance (not direct funding) for passenger transportation projects or concepts. The SWCCOG, in partnership with Region 9, submitted a request for assistance exploring how an inter-city fixed route transit line between Cortez and Durango should be run and funded. This project was selected as it has consistently been identified as a top priority for regional transportation development and could be easily expanded to benefit additional communities. Staff has been notified that NADO was selected to receive funding to provide technical assistance and that the SWCCOG's project was selected as one of the projects to receive

assistance. We have been notified that we will be working with the Small Urban, Rural, and Tribal Center on Mobility (SURTCOM), which is a consortium led by Montana State University. We anticipate the staff time required for this project to be minimal.

#### VISTA Report

Dylan reported that the COG submitted an RREO grant application requesting \$25,000 to create an all-in-one recycling web app. This web app would allow users to enter in a specific address and see what materials are recycled in their area and where. The goal of the app would be to provide customers an easier experience rather than looking through web sites.

Dylan said the Spanish recycling website is now up and running. It features the same content as the English language website. Staff is still working on how to best market this website.

#### IV. Discussion Items

Karen said an issue costing much money and man power is when citizens need to be transported for mental health care. Currently, law enforcement is tasked with this transportation. Even when a patient is at the hospital, transport via ambulance is extremely costly and therefore not done. Karen asked for discussion of what could be done to develop something within the larger communities to provide these services at a much lower cost. Setting up something privately comes with astronomical insurance costs so is not an option. Karen said the city has spoken with Axis repeatedly with no solution. Miriam suggested incorporating a forum prior to COG board meetings every other month where staff could bring in experts to help with these types of issues. The board agreed. Miriam will put a forum on the January agenda prior to the COG meeting regarding the transportation for mental health care issue.

#### V. Decision Items

a. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from September 21, 2017

**Chris La May motioned to approved the Executive Committee meeting minutes from September 21, 2017, John Egan seconded, unanimously approved.**

b. Contractor Selection for FTA 5304 Regional Transit Planning Project RFP

Miriam said the SWCCOG Board approved a CDOT 5304 Transit Planning grant in late 2016. This grant was awarded earlier in the year which was matched with DOLA funding. The scope of work encompasses transit planning the Four Corners area as there is much movement of people across state lines; it also partners with the various COGs in the other states, specifically New Mexico and Arizona. The paperwork has taken quite some time to get in order, hence the time difference in award vs RFP. The SWCCOG issued an RFP for a Transit Planning Consultant. Four proposals were received. The SWCCOG purchasing policy states that bids should be awarded to the lowest qualified and responsive bidder. Either Athena or LSC could be awarded this, based on cost, qualifications, and response. Karen asked if staff have talked to any references for these companies. Jessica said she has reached out with no response. Chris asked if there are requirements in the grant for selection of a contractor as sometimes CDOT grants will have a process for selection. Jessica said she will look into this to confirm.

**Heather Alvarez motioned to authorize staff to negotiate and award a contractor conditional upon reference checks and a look into a possible CDOT selection process, Dick White seconded, unanimously approved.**

c. Contract for Fiscal Management of Southwest Incident Management Team

Miriam reported that the 2017 Legislative session allocated a small amount of state funding for the Incident Management Teams across the state through the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) via an application process. The Southwest

Colorado Incident Management Team (SWIMT) approached the SWCCOG requesting fiscal management. The SWCCOG previously provided this service for the SWMIT with a 10% M&A, which will carry forward into the new proposed contract. Chris La May asked if 10% is enough to cover expenses and time. Miriam confirmed yes.

**Fred Brooks motioned to approval the MOU for Fiscal Management of the Southwest Colorado Incident Management Team, Dick White seconded, unanimously approved.**

d. Contract with Region 9 for Enterprise Zone

Miriam said the state approved the SWCCOG Broadband Enterprise Zone application in June. This Enterprise Zone (EZ) is specifically for broadband development. The project would allow private land owners to donate rights-of-way, private companies to donate equipment (such as conduit, switches, or fiber) and labor, and private companies or land owners to donate cash. This contract formalizes the relationship between Region 9 as the Enterprise Zone Administrator and the SWCCOG. The SWCCOG will be approving applications and the day-to-day work. Region 9 is ultimately responsible for our work on the EZ.

**Chris La May motioned to approve the MOU between Region 9 EDD and SWCCOG for Enterprise Zone management, Fred Brooks seconded, unanimously approved.**

e. Contract with Haynie and Company for Audit Services

Miriam said the SWCCOG Board awarded the SWCCOG 2017, 2018, and 2019 audit to Haynie & Company. Legal created a Professional Services Agreement in addition to Haynie & Company's engagement letter. The contract is for 1 year with renewal options in 2018 and 2019. The auditor fees are less than the previous auditor.

**Karen Sheek motioned to enter into contract with Haynie and Company, Dick White seconded, unanimously approved.**

f. RREO Mini Grant Application Approval

Miriam reported that the COG applied for a Recycling Resource Economic Opportunity (RREO) Mini Grant through CDPHE that requests \$25,000 with no matching funds required. This grant will help to enhance the SWCCOG's regional recycling education project and develop an app where a resident can input their address and find out what recycling options they have in the local area. However, after application submittal, Miriam learned from Shane Hale that Cortez applied for the same funding. To prevent competition, which may not always be avoidable, staff can pull the application and apply for another RREO grant due December 13 that would involve a regional planning project on how to make the economics of recycling more viable. Miriam said this grant is for up to \$50,000. In addition, the COG could wait until the regular RREO cycle due around March 1. John said if the COG does not compete with members for some grants, this could significantly curb financial resources and suggested a more lengthy discussion take place in the future where the COG can adopt a policy in regards to competing for grants. Karen said a grant to make the economics more viable seems more useful than adding another feature to the website that may or may not be used.

**Karen Sheek motioned to not pursue the RREO grant, Fred Brooks seconded, unanimously approved.**

Staff was directed to work towards another RREO grant. Dylan added that Durango is working on a similar app that this grant would have created for the COG. If Durango sees much success, this could be something the COG can work on in the future. Dylan will track Durango's progress.

g. DoLA 8011 Downtown Improvement Planning Grant Extension

Miriam said the SWCCOG received funding for a Downtown Planning for the Towns of Bayfield, Ignacio, Pagosa Springs, and Silverton in 3rd quarter 2015. Initially, these funds were distributed and matched equally from the four communities; however, the Towns of Pagosa Springs and Silverton are done with their planning projects and are forgoing any unused funding allotted for their projects. The Towns of Bayfield and Ignacio are willing to increase their match to utilize the additional funding. A grant amendment was submitted to extend the deadline of this grant and include capital expenditures; unfortunately, because of a contract form update, DoLA cannot approve this amendment without rewriting the contract, which they do not have time to do. DoLA has suggested adding the remaining funds from this grant to the 2018 Technical Assistance DoLA grant and include capital expenditures. If the COG does this, DoLA will fast-track the approval of the 2018 TA grant to November 2017. Miriam said her concerns are that the downtown grant funds came from a different pot of funds than the TA grant will come from and she does not want the projects under the TA grant to become compromised by requesting additional funds. She has discussed these concerns with DoLA and has been told that DoLA will work with the COG.

**Chris La May motioned to have the Executive Director change the scope of service in the 2018 TA grant to include the DoLA 8011 downtown grant funds and capital expenditures, Karen Sheek seconded, unanimously approved.**

#### **VI. Other Items**

None

#### **VII. Community Updates**

Chris La May – Town of Bayfield:

- The bridge project is nearing completion and should open November 21, 2017.
- The library received funds to build a park and will have the grand opening November 11, 2017.

John Egan – Town of Pagosa Springs:

- The former manager of Mancos, Andrea Phillips, is now the manager for Pagosa Springs and is doing a great job.
- The town is working on completing the river walk trail and will know more when the purchase of additional land is confirmed.

Fred Brooks – Town of Mancos:

- The town will be hiring their 4<sup>th</sup> deputy and looking to purchase another squad truck.
- The town is in the midst of a bond issue for the school expansion.

Dick White – City of Durango:

- A public hearing will be held next Tuesday for the budget; unfortunately, there is no sales tax growth. In addition, the city will be cutting back on the transit system.
- There are plans to open Lake Nighthorse as the annexation petition has come to the council and is moving forward.

Karen Sheek – City of Cortez:

- The city had 23 non-profits in the community submit applications for grant money from the city. The city approved, with adjustments, 21 applications totally over \$33,000.

Kari Distefano – Town of Rico:

- Sales tax projections are down.
- The town is looking to lease a snow plow.
- The town has been promised a transportation van from the San Miguel Transit Authority to transport folks to and from Telluride for work.

Chris Tookey – Town of Silverton:

- A new town administrator started November 1, 2017.
- The town submitted a grant for the library to be resuscitated.
- Two grants have been received to help repair bridges.

William Tookey – San Juan County:

- The back country roads are shut down over the passes due to snow.
- The November ballot will include a 1.5% sales tax increase.

**Chris La May motioned to adjourn the meeting, Karen Sheek seconded, unanimously approved.**

The next meeting is December 7, 2017.

**End 3:19 pm**