

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
February Board Meeting
Thursday, 8 February 2018, 1:30pm
1188 E. 2nd Ave., Carnegie Bldg., Durango, CO 81301**

In Attendance:

Gwen Lachelt – La Plata County
Michael Whiting – Archuleta County
Dick White – City of Durango
Chris La May – Town of Bayfield
Fred Brooks – Town of Mancos
Karen Sheek – City of Cortez
Steve Garchar – Dolores County
John Egan - Town of Pagosa Springs
Mark Garcia - Town of Ignacio (by phone)
Willie Tookey – San Juan County (by phone)
Chris Tookey – Town of Silverton (by phone)

Staff in Attendance:

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

Guests in Attendance:

Ann McCoy-Herald – Senator Gardner’s Office

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 pm, everyone introduced themselves.

II. Consent Agenda

- a. 4 January 2018 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. December 2017 Financials

Michael Whiting motioned to approve the consent agenda, Dick White seconded, unanimously approved.

III. Reports

Director’s Report:

Miriam reported that she is working on an educational forum on broadband for elected officials and potential candidates, this would involve looking at impacts to the community and answering questions. Karen mentioned that if this is successful it could be adjusted for the public in the future. Dick mentioned that Durango has elections next year, there will be two councilors, and providing educations for candidates would be valuable.

The COG was awarded a technical assistance grant, this includes funding for the capital construction projects in Bayfield and Ignacio. The grant currently ends at the end 2018, the COG is working with the State to try to adjust this. She is working on the annual board retreat to be held in May, this will allow it to be held after the legislative session. La Plata County requested an assessor’s training be set up locally, the intent is to split the cost for the training

between participating counties. There was a discussion about a charge for non-member organizations.

Broadband Report:

The COG is working on rural broadband funding, they are currently waiting on information from the FCC. Michael asked about San Juan Basin Health Department (SJBHD). Miriam replied that she met with them, they had some questions and pending the answers they are willing to send a letter. If they do not participate the focus would be on the western side of the region, which could allow the project to be phased. There was a discussion of the composition of the SJBHD board. Dick asked if part of the delay is federal funding issues. Miriam replied yes, as well as leadership changes at the FCC. She is working on a contract with Colorado Telehealth Network (CTN).

Miriam described a potential solution to allow flexibility with ISP providers. There could be contracts allowing “a-la-carte” options where entities could save money by purchasing service in bulk, but if an entity needed to use a different provider they could do so and providers could be changed as needed. Chris asked if this would include community anchor institutions. Miriam replied it would. Dick asked how much entities are currently paying. Miriam replied that it varies widely, much more than the amount being proposed. She added that the video the COG helped put together is linked in the packet, the video highlights Osprey as a community anchor that stayed as result of broadband.

Legislative Report:

Miriam asked what other legislative issues the board would like the COG to follow. There was discussion about public lands, oil and gas, and Tabor/Gallagher. Gwen mentioned that there is a new county representation organization, CCAT. There was discussion at the last TPR meeting about the potential sales tax. Miriam reviewed the history of various proposed legislation for transportation. Dick added that CDOT has reallocated its federal funds which will reduce transit funding for Durango. Miriam mentioned that the bill last year died in committee despite being very popular. In 2018, two funding bills have been introduced, one includes transit and the other does not. Both reallocate a portion of existing sales tax which would negatively impact other state programs, rather than raise new funds. Chris mentioned that there was discussion at TPR which indicated there would not be an increase to local funds.

Miriam reported that while the Broadband legislation began as a relatively good bill, there have been amendments added to reduce required speeds, change population requirements, limit high cost broadband funds if the census block receives federal or DOLA funds, reduce the number of government seats on the board and adds a seat to the telecom industry. The bill passed out of the Senate, there will be efforts to have it revised in the House. There was discussion about showing up at the capitol to give commentary. Miriam added that there is another bill concerning the high cost fund mechanism to change the first right of refusal. There was discussion about encouraging the legislature to expand the use of distance testimony. There was discussion about changing interactions with the telecom industry.

Transportation Report:

Jessica reported that the Four Corners regional transportation project kick-off meeting was the day before. There was a discussion about Montezuma County no longer contributing to the TPR. Jessica reported that Phil Johnson of the City of Cortez was elected as Vice Chair of the TPR.

VISTA Report:

Dylan reported that he has been working on professional development. He is working with Kempar Elementary on a recycling program. He has been doing an online data analysis course.

IV. Discussion Items

Legislative Priorities

This was addressed in the previous discussion. Chris asked if the legislative committee has met. Miriam replied that it has been difficult to set up a meeting, she asked that if anyone wants on or off the committee to let her know.

V. Decision Items

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from December 21, 2017:

Gwen Lachelt motioned to approve the Executive Committee minutes, Chris La May seconded, unanimously approved.

2017 Budget Amendment:

Miriam explained that the COG had been expecting a very large shortfall, it ended up being considerably less, approximately \$9,000. This shortfall was a result of less than expected community match for a project and a journal entry for the All Hazards Grant. Sara reported that audit will be done in April. There was a discussion about the difference from the anticipated budget shortfall.

Dick White motioned to approve the final 2017 Budget Amendment, John Egan seconded, unanimously approved. Dick commended staff on cost containment.

DoLA 8330 Extension Request:

Miriam explained that this is the current technical assistance grant, this request would be to extend the grant through 2018. Dick asked if Miriam has spoken with Patrick. She replied yes.

Dick White motioned to approve the extension for DOLA EIAF grant 8330, Michael Whiting seconded, unanimously approved.

Contractor Selection for DoLA 2018 TA Grant:

Miriam explained that one item in the 2018 DOLA technical assistance grant included a consultant for working with Region 9. The COG issued an RFP and there were four responses, all were underwhelming, so staff is asking for board direction to help inform the decision. There was discussion about the options. Karen asked if the quotes include travel hours. Chris asked what the COG wants. Miriam replied that she is seeking direction on what board wants. Karen asked about the expected number of hours. Chris asked about the anticipated outcomes. Miriam replied they are looking to have a third party work with the two entities, ideally recommendations for how to be sister organizations and to what level of overlap this would entail. Karen asked if everyone had attended the retreat and mentioned that she was impressed with Thompson and her ability to get participants on board. Dick asked how much time it would take to bring an outside agency up to speed. Miriam replied this would be a factor. She suggested working with Region 9 and Karen Thompson on deliverables and then working with the executive committee. Dick asked if there will be any impact with Montezuma County leaving Region 9. Miriam replied this will likely change the situation moving forward. The consensus

was to have a contract prepped to sign at the March meeting. Willie mentioned that members from Montezuma County are still on the Region 9 board.

VI. Community Updates

Fred reported that Mancos has been doing well despite the fire at Western Excelsior. The Town will be purchasing two patrol vehicles. They took a tour of Western Excelsior, they have begun limited operations, although they are still uncertain about their long-term plans. The Town had a water tank inspected that will require repair or replacement.

Steve reported Dolores County has two new buildings. They are excited for broadband, they have fiber to the courthouse and anticipate being able to broadcast up to a 10 mile radius.

John reported that Pagosa Springs is working out details for sharing equipment with Archuleta County. They are working through details on impact fees. Also, they are working on a dark sky community designation.

Karen reported that staff is working on the State of the City of Cortez. They are also working on a new land use code.

Dick reported that Durango representatives attended the Colorado Community Symposium, and he gave overview of some of the items covered. One question raised was whether the COG could be a member of the Compact of Colorado Communities. They are on track with the wastewater treatment plant. The Council passed a housing plan to try to address affordable housing. They have been working through a public process regarding transit. Homelessness remains a major issue, they are currently looking at how to address fire concerns related to people living in the forest.

Michael reported that Archuleta is working on impact fees, they are looking to prevent encouraging sprawl. There are efforts to include water issues in the planning process. Broadband, early childhood and affordable housing are three joint strategic priorities with the town. The County is struggling with issues related to the courts and the jail. They are looking to pave the final section of Piedra Road, seeking an airport manager, preparing for a CDOT repaving project up to Wolf Creek Pass, and working with some residents who are opening a bouldering gym.

Gwen reported that La Plata is working on a draft land use code, they are taking public input, then will issue a revision followed by further comment. She mentioned that the current code is the most frequent complaint to the commissioners. They are working to address homelessness. They are trying to prepare to address the fire season.

Willie reported that the lack of snow is impacting the economy and they are anticipating significant impacts to the economy in the summer. He added that they had to cancel the dog sled race due to lack of snow.

Mark reported that there is an election scheduled in April, the ballot will include sales tax but no races due to no opposition. They are working on a rate analysis on water systems. They are also working with the Tribe on water and wastewater treatment.

Chris reported that Bayfield cancelled the election due to uncontested races. They are revisiting retail marijuana. They are updating the comprehensive plan and taking public input on the river corridor.

Adjourned at 3:23 p.m.