

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
February Board Meeting
Thursday, 5 April 2018, 1:30pm
1188 E. 2nd Ave., Carnegie Bldg., Durango, CO 81301**

In Attendance:

Willy Tookey – San Juan County
Chuck Stevens – La Plata County
Michael Whiting – Archuleta County
Dick White – City of Durango
Chris La May – Town of Bayfield
Louis Fineberg – Town of Silverton
David Schanzenbaker - Town of Pagosa Springs
Karen Sheek – City of Cortez
Steve Garchar – Dolores County (by phone)
Fred Brooks – Town of Mancos (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
Patrick Rondinelli – Colorado Department of Local Affairs
John Whitney – Senator Bennet’s Office
Peyton Heitzman – City of Cortez
Karen Thompson

I. Introductions

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

II. Consent Agenda

- a. 1 March 2018 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. February 2018 Financials

Dick White motioned to approve the meeting minutes with corrections, Michael Whiting seconded, unanimously approved.

Dick White motioned to approve the financials, Willy Tookey seconded, unanimously approved.

III. Reports

Director’s Report:

Miriam reported that most of her work has been related to broadband. The COG is looking for potential office space. The board retreat will be held on May 10, discussion items will include goals and private equity for broadband. She added that there will not be video conferencing available for the retreat.

Broadband Report:

Miriam reported that all documentation for the four RFPs is posted to the FCC's website. She does not anticipate receiving the entire requested amount, but does expect to receive some level of funding. The Colorado Telehealth Network (CTN) has been reluctant to modify their contract, she is concerned about the amount of the fee based on their formula. Chris asked if they have provided services. Miriam replied that they posted the RFPs, but did not write the RFPs. She has been working with CTN and legal for some time to address these concerns. Karen asked if there were references for their work. Miriam replied that they work well with lit services, but do not have much experience with builds, unfortunately there are not many options for this type of work.

Miriam reported that the COG submitted a grant application for a broadband coordinator, consulting and M&A for the project. There is capital cost included which is for conduit, the intent is to place conduit when there is road construction happening in the region. Also there will be some personnel cost. Michael mentioned that Archuleta County is working on a dig once policy.

Legislative Report:

Miriam reported that there were changes to SB 002 in the House, one result is that there will be more money available in the high cost telephony fund. There was discussion about the other changes made to the bill. HB 1099, the First Right of Refusal, removes the ability of companies to exercise first right of refusal on projects unless they plan to build for the same or better speeds at the same cost.

Miriam explained that there is legislation that would allow counties to give land use authority to the planning commission. There is also a bill to make PERA solvent, she noted that all the local school districts use PERA. The COG is not taking a stance on the PERA bill, but are watching it because it could impact the community. There is a bill to create a state medical leave pool. There is also a bill to create net neutrality in Colorado by requiring net neutral policies be in place before an ISP can receive broadband funding. Karen mentioned that companies are suing states over net neutrality policies, the argument being that this is an interstate issue.

Miriam reported that the legislature is holding the transportation funding bills to allow the ballot issue to move forward.

Transportation Report:

Jessica reported that there was a SWTPR meeting, one item was the development of a Transit Development Priority list. The COG is working on the Four Corners Transportation Plan as well as the feasibility of a fixed route bus line between Cortez and Durango.

VISTA Report:

Miriam reported that Dylan completed the recycling education program. He has been updating the CARO website. He is also available to attend webinars and take notes if that would be helpful for any partner organizations.

IV. Decision Items

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from January 25, 2018:

Karen Sheek motioned to approve the minutes, Chris La May seconded, unanimously approved.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from February 15, 2018:

Tabled

Contact with Place Dynamics:

Miriam explained that the contract has been reviewed by legal, the project is being paid for by a grant through DOLA.

Dick White motioned to approve contract for organizational collaboration with Place Dynamics with signature authority to the Executive Director, Michael Whiting seconded, unanimously approved.

AIRWAVES Letter of Support:

Miriam explained that Senator Gardner's office had asked the COG to look at this as it could be a method to improve connectivity. The local wireless providers were slightly concerned that the major companies would primarily benefit, but the COG does not believe the bill will cause harm. She added that generally this fits within the letter of support policy, but she wanted the Board to have the opportunity to discuss. Chris expressed support for setting aside 10% for rural development.

Willy Tookey motioned to submit the proposed letter of support, Michael Whiting seconded, unanimously approved.

MOU between COG and Member Organizations:

Miriam explained that the COG is sometimes able to identify funding that would benefit member organizations, this template ensures all parties are on the same page with respect to responsibilities. Michael asked for clarification that legal has reviewed this and asked whether TABOR language needs to be included. Miriam replied that this was based on the SCAN contract, which is why there is not TABOR language included. Michael asked that the attorney consider whether TABOR language should be included. He added that he would be comfortable approving the template with additional language included if necessary.

Michael Whiting motioned to approve the SWCCOG member contract template, provided that if necessary TABOR language is included, Dick White seconded, unanimously approved.

V. Community Updates

Willy reported that San Juan County had a mild winter which has been difficult for winter businesses and is creating concerns about the summer. They are planning to build twelve affordable housing units, which are expected to be ready for occupancy by fall. Karen asked if they are modular. Willy replied yes, they will be manufactured then set on site. He added that they will be rentals.

Chuck reported that La Plata County is working with the City of Durango on homeless issues. They are continuing work on the land use code.

David reported that the sanitation district in Pagosa Springs recently built a sewer pipeline. They have an RFP out for a housing coordinator. They are beginning work on street projects, including a Safe Routes to School project.

Louis reported that the Town of Silverton is updating their trail visioning plan. They are preparing for their annual events. The Master Plan update and Municipal Code revision are underway.

John Whitney reported that Congress passed the final appropriations bill which included approval of PILT, reauthorization of Secure Rural Schools, and began a two year phasing to fix

“fire borrowing” which includes additional funding for firefighting in the meantime. There was additional funding identified for rural broadband, he will keep the COG posted as additional information becomes available. Chris asked if there has been movement on the CAFII funding issue, John replied that Senator Bennet has requested information several times and has not received a response.

Dick White reported that the construction of the City of Durango’s wastewater plant is on-time and on budget. He reported that the Lake Nighthorse recreation has opened, and detailed the approved schedule for different types of recreation. The City is engaging the public related to future funding. They are working with the County on the homeless issue and approved overnight camping at the west end of the off leash dog park, one element will be identifying a place for individuals to store their belongings.

Patrick reported that housing is becoming an increasingly major issue. DOLA is setting up some regional trainings including Budgeting for Outcomes and a Small Communities Workshop. They are working through a new grant cycle, a number of COG members have submitted applications.

Karen reported that the City of Cortez held an election, there will be three new councilors and an extension of the recreation center tax was passed. They have begun advertisements for median construction. Shane Hale will be leaving in May and Chris Burkett will serve as interim City Manager. She introduced the City’s intern.

Michael reported that Archuleta County is in litigation with the State courts, CCI has indicated that it intends to weigh in on the County’s side. They are looking at short term rentals and the impacts on the housing inventory, they may consider an annual registration process. They estimate that half of the short term rentals are not paying lodger’s tax. The County has worked out a deal with the Forest Service and a lumber mill for fire mitigation. There will be a new bouldering gym opening in Pagosa Springs.

Steve reported that the Town of Dove Creek elected four new trustees and a new mayor. Dolores County is looking at organizing annual local events. The senior center received a new wheelchair accessible bus. The County applied for a DOLA grant for chipseal. The wireless broadband project is expected to be completed within a few weeks. Montrose Timber Products will begin collecting beetle kill lumber. They are preparing for a dry summer, specifically looking at fire prevention activities.

Fred announced that the Town of Mancos elected two new trustees.

Chris reported that the Town of Bayfield is nearing completion of the comprehensive plan. Their election was cancelled. There was a traffic related fatality and CDOT has begun looking at intersection improvements.

Miriam reported that Dennis contacted her and would like to return to the region through the Best and Brightest program.

Adjourned at 2:58 p.m.