

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
May Board Meeting and Board Retreat Notes
Thursday, 10 May 2018, 9:00 am
Recreation Center, 2700 Main Ave, Durango, CO 81301**

In Attendance:

Gwen Lachelt – La Plata County
Michael Whiting – Archuleta County
Chris La May – Town of Bayfield
Dick White – City of Durango
Melissa Youssef – City of Durango
Ron LeBlanc – City of Durango
Karen Sheek – City of Cortez
Steve Garchar – Dolores County

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

Guests in Attendance:

Ann McCoy-Herald – Senator Gardner’s Office
John Whitney – Senator Bennet’s Office
Ty Churchwell – Trout Unlimited
Karen Thompson

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:11 am, everyone introduced themselves.

II. Consent Agenda

- a. April 2018 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. March 2018 Financials

Postponed to next meeting.

III. Reports

Director’s Report:

Miriam reported that it has been a busy month, primarily related to the FCC broadband funding. Representative Tipton has a new staff member who will attend the next COG meeting. Staff has been working with the Southwest Incident Management (SWIM) Team to obtain funding for next year, the COG would receive a portion for M&A. The contract template with jurisdictions has been updated to include TABOR and indemnity language.

Broadband Report:

Chris asked if Senator Bennet received the requested information from the FCC. John Whitney replied that they have not received the information they received, however they did receive some information from the Colorado Public Utilities Commission which the office is reviewing. He added that it is clear CenturyLink did not establish the expected connectivity under CAFII. Karen asked if there is any penalty for not meeting the commitment. John replied that he is not aware of a penalty. Miriam added that there may not be rural funding under CAF III. John added that there is question about the true speeds being delivered.

Miriam reported that the COG is no longer working with the Colorado Telehealth Network (CTN). They had previously been trying to work in good faith, however CTN declined to modify their template contract to fit the project. She explained that new RFPs under the Southwest Colorado Council of Governments Healthcare Consortium have been posted to the FCC's website. Karen asked whether legislators could do anything to make this funding application process more streamlined.

Legislative Report:

Miriam reported that the legislative session has ended.

Transportation Report:

Jessica reported that the next TPR meeting would be held in June. There will be a steering committee meeting on the Four Corners Regional Transportation Project in May. The consultant for the Cortez-Durango bus line held a site visit in April. Also, the TPR held a special meeting to develop a priority list of transit related capital projects. Michael suggested looking into transit between Archuleta and La Plata in the future.

VISTA Report:

Miriam reported that Dylan has been working at Kemper Elementary on recycling education. She also reported that the COG was approved for a VISTA for a fourth year.

IV. Decision Items

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from February 15, 2018 and March 22, 2018:

Karen Sheek motioned to approve the executive committee minutes from both meetings, Gwen Lachelt seconded, unanimously approved.

CDOT Mobility Management Grant:

Miriam explained that staff is seeking direction to apply for transit funding with formal approval at the next meeting. Jessica and Miriam explained that this funding would be for a partial staff position to support the Regional Transit Council, specifically to help with solutions to issues faced by the local agencies. Ron expressed concern about the COG competing against jurisdictions for the same pool of funding. Karen asked if there would be an opportunity for the existing position to address larger regional issues. There was discussion about the potential for opportunities for coordination. There was discussion about how to handle direct conflicts with respect to grant funding. There was discussion about the possibility to combine the applications and potential pros and cons of this notion. The general direction was to move forward with the retreat discussion due to lack of quorum and in the future to continue the discussion of how to handle competition for grant funding, both between the COG and member jurisdictions as well as between member jurisdictions.

Good Samaritan Legislation Letter of Support:

Miriam explained that Trout Unlimited requested a letter in support of legislation to remove liability from organizations seeking to clean up mine wastewater. Michael asked what the deadline is. Miriam replied that recess does not begin until August. Karen asked if there is any downside to signing this. Ty replied that various COG members have previously supported this concept; this letter would be to express support for the general concept. John added that there is generally broad support for Good Samaritan legislation and there have been efforts to identify a bipartisan solution. Direction was given to bring this to the June meeting for consideration.

Adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

BOARD RETREAT

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m.

Miriam presented an overview of the purpose of COGs, the accomplishments of the COG in the past year, and the challenges it is facing. Miriam and Karen Thompson provided a review of the critical success factors identified in 2017.

Miriam reported that the Southwest Colorado Council of Governments Healthcare Consortium is applying for broadband funding on behalf of Dolores County Public Health Department, San Juan County Department of Public Health, San Miguel County Department of Health and Environment, and Southwest Health System. She reported that the San Juan Basin Health Department chose not to participate at this time, however they will remain in ongoing discussions moving forward.

There was a discussion about strategies to communicate achievements to the communities, such as annual reports and return-on-investment summaries.

Karen conducted a brief survey. This began a discussion about how the COG could be a more useful organization for the various communities. There was discussion about the broadband friendly policies available for the communities.

Miriam presented information related to the proposed aggregation of connectivity services. There was general discussion about the information presented.

Miriam summarized information about public private partnerships relative to broadband.

Break at 12:30 p.m. Reconvened at 1:04 p.m.

There was discussion about options related to public private partnerships. In general, the direction was to protect local interests and minimize risk while still getting the project done.

Karen asked about the COG's long-term broadband plans, both if the COG does receive FCC Rural Healthcare funding and if it does not receive this funding. There was discussion about the need for private equity to put in open access network fiber. There was discussion about the original intent of the COG and if it's efforts were appropriately focused. Karen asked what the COG should plan if it does not receive FCC broadband funding, whether there should be a continued focus on broadband or if the focus should shift. There was discussion about progress that has been made. Karen asked for particular projects that could be addressed under each of the COG's primary goals:

Aging: Look to jointly address housing and aging needs; coordination and/or streamlining of management of housing and aging organizations. There was discussion about the previous attempt to work with the AAA.

Environment: Miriam described challenges associated with addressing recycling. Explore opportunities for local markets including potential demand, supply and challenges; consider looking at issues related to clean air and water.

Telecommunications: Miriam explained that the COG works with the SWIM Team and All Hazards, and a major concern is communications. Communications is important for each jurisdiction, but not a primary role for the COG at this time.

Tourism: As this is being address by other agencies, this may not be a primary role for the COG at this time.

Housing: There are a number of agencies competing for resources, there may be opportunities for the COG to have a role; a centralized housing expert may be useful for the communities; discussion about expanding the Regional Housing Alliance to encompass the entire region.

Transportation: Discussion about current efforts related to transit and TPR; potential for coordination related to the airports.

The meeting ended at 3:36 p.m.