

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
September Board Meeting  
Thursday, 6 September, 1:30pm  
1188 E. 2nd Ave., Carnegie Bldg., Durango, CO 81301**

In Attendance:

Chris La May – Town of Bayfield  
Mark Garcia – Town of Ignacio  
Steve Garchar – Dolores County  
Floyd Cook - Dolores County  
John Dougherty – City of Cortez  
Greg Schulte – Town of Pagosa Springs  
Joanne Spina – La Plata County  
Karen Sheek – City of Cortez  
Melissa Youssef – City of Durango  
Ron LeBlanc – City of Durango  
Fred Brooks – Town of Mancos  
Michael Whiting – Archuleta County  
Andrea Phillips – Town of Pagosa Springs  
Gwen Lachelt – La Plata County  
Kari Distefano – Town of Rico (via phone)  
Heather Alvarez – Town of Mancos (via phone)

Staff in Attendance:

Miriam Gillow-Wiles – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
Sara Trujillo – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
Jessica Laitsch – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments  
Martina Pansze– Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

Guests in Attendance:

Andrew Atchley – DoLA Division of Housing Representative

**I. Introductions**

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

**II. Consent Agenda**

- a. August 2018 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. July 2018 Financials

**Michael Whiting motioned to approve the consent agenda, Steve Garchar seconded, unanimously approved.**

**III. Reports**

Director's Report:

Miriam reported that staff will review progress on the 2018 Goals, the Board Retreat, and work through the 2019 Goals. In addition, CCI and CML are tracking the various solutions the interim conference committee has identified as fixes to the Gallagher Amendment. Documents were shared in the board packet.

#### Broadband Report:

Miriam reported that funding requests for the Rural Healthcare Funding were submitted on June 28 for self-provisioned fiber. Questions were received from the FCC and staff is working on answers. The Board approved an aggregation of services contract in June, and to date none of the eligible member jurisdictions have presented the SWCCOG – Member Jurisdiction contract to their respective Boards. SWCCOG pricing will be as low as \$1.11/Mbps.

Miriam announced a request from the Office of Information Technology and the Colorado Bar Association for Miriam to present next week on broadband related issues. Miriam's presentation will provide continuing education credits.

#### Legislative Report:

Miriam said there are a number of issues that will appear on the 2018 statewide ballot. A few to note include Propositions 108, 109 and 110. Additional information was provided in the board packets regarding these propositions and others.

#### Transportation Report:

There were no questions for Jessica. Miriam added to the report that she spoke with DRCOG regarding jurisdictions participating in TPR but not being a member of the COG. DRCOG said when this happens those non-members do not get their projects prioritized. Essentially, the non-member can participate in TPR, but does not receive as much benefit. Additionally, TPR funding is federal funding and the COG has no rule-making authority to say a non-member cannot participate in the TPR.

#### VISTA Report:

Martina reported that she started as the COG's newest VISTA two weeks ago and has been orienting and familiarizing herself.

### **IV. Discussion Items**

#### Review of 2018 Goals, 2018 Retreat, and 2019 Goal Setting, TPR

Chris said with members in the midst of budget season and questioning appropriations, he asked Miriam to help with members finding value in COG membership. Being that the COG is about to embark on a large project if FCC funding is awarded, COG members need to be prepared to give full effort. Miriam guided a discussion about the accomplishments, challenges, and work the SWCCOG has done over the last year. She also provided a PowerPoint presentation with various maps of broadband attainment, charts, graphs, and other vital information about membership return on investment (ROI). Miriam explained ROI is more than money in and money out as there is much social benefit. Joanne asked how ROI calculations were made. Miriam said the formula is the same as how dues are calculated, 20% base and the remaining 80% divided by population.

Miriam said that dues account for 21% of the 2018 budget and go towards operations as grants will not pay much for administration. Joanne suggested going through those operating costs to see where the COG can be more efficient and effective with a small budget. Miriam said a significant challenge is short term versus long term. Much of what the COG does has long term, but not necessarily short term, benefit. Michael agreed that there must be strategic prioritization with forward thinking versus right now. Greg said opportunity cost must be considered. He said with the money saved in the initial DoLA grant, he is unsure the dues paid have caught up to those savings many years later, which is a tremendous ROI. Ron said after nine years of the COG operating, membership engagement is disappointing and the budget is still challenging.

He will recommend that the Durango City Council not fund the COG in 2019. Durango will continue membership in the TPR. Karen asked what Ron would like to see the COG do that it has not done. Ron said he has been patient to see results, but has not seen results and does not foresee seeing results. The COG applied for broadband funding but this does not mean funding will be awarded; housing, no results; environmental, no results. Durango has a successful recycling program that the COG was not involved in. Michael said if Durango is out for 2019 then COG members need to decide how to absorb that cost and to understand the budget impact. Also, Michael suggested that COG members reach out to Durango versus just Ron. Gwen said she will recommend funding the COG but would not be able to absorb any additional costs. Fred said Mancos may need to use COG dues in 2019 to improve the water situation resulting from the drought. Chris said Durango is a big funder, with them stepping out the COG will need to trim down even if that means down to 1 FTE or maybe start looking at the COG going away. The board needs to discuss the future of the COG and how it may relate to broadband; the question may be whether or not government belongs in the broadband business. Miriam said the RHA, SWIMT, TPR, All Hazards, and Transit Council would need to be housed under other entities and questioned whether the board would accept or deny FCC funding if awarded. JoAnne said she is not prepared to make a recommendation that La Plata County not participate; however, the lack of quorum at the annual board retreat said a lot about how members prioritize the COG over other items. Ron said if the FCC funding is awarded and broadband is placed in Montezuma County, then a non-paying member will receive benefit. Miriam said there is nothing she can do about indirect benefit. Miriam said the COG is one of the smallest organizations and has been tasked to do some of the most difficult and largest projects of the region, an immediate benefit will not be seen. The COG broadband efforts this far have changed the broadband conversation throughout the state, which is a big deal. The COG has done this with minimal staff and a small budget.

Karen said the board retreat two years ago was well attended and the focus was on broadband. Staff has done as the board requested and the board is still having the same conversation. This wears on staff and is stressful. The board needs to be concrete and cohesive. Chris said staff need revenue numbers to move forward with the 2019 budget and requested that all members have an in or out answer for staff by the next regularly scheduled board meeting, if not sooner.

#### 2019 Preliminary Budget

Miriam said the budget needs to be presented before October; with the next meeting being end of October, the preliminary budget needed to be presented at this meeting. Obviously with the previous discussion, this budget will change. Staff will comb through to find cost savings and how Durango's dues can be absorbed without the other members' dues changing. Andrea asked about staffing in 2019. Miriam said the plan was to move from 2.5 FTE to 4 FTE if FCC funding is awarded. Andrea asked if the budget includes staff salary and benefit increases. Sara said that the board voted for a flat rate raise versus a percentage for the ED position if FCC funding is awarded. Miriam said the FCC funding decision will not be known until January or February.

Mark asked what the 2018 budget is looking like. Sara said it has changed significantly and will be in a deficit. Andrea asked about office expenses. Miriam said Durango has asked COG staff to be moved out of the Carnegie Building by November 2018. With little funding for rent, staff will work remotely until a space can be obtained that will fit the budget. Sara said she will present a 2018 budget update at the October meeting.

## V. Decision Items

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from July 19, 2018:

**Karen Sheek motioned to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes from July 19, 2018, Gwen Lachelt seconded, unanimously approved.**

DoLA EIAF 8573 Grant Extension Request:

Miriam said this grant has had a few delays, one being that Place Dynamics was not fulfilling contract requirements and was replaced, and two that the RPF process has not been as quick as anticipated for the member jurisdictions participating. Accordingly, an extension is needed.

**Mark Garcia motioned to approve the DoLA EIAF 8573 grant extension request, Michael Whiting seconded, unanimously approved.**

SWIMT 2018-2019 Contract:

Miriam said the COG contracted with the Southwest Colorado Incident Management Team (SWIMT) for FY2017-2018 fiscal agent. The SWIMT is eager to maintain this relationship for FY2018-2019 grant funding, and it has been relatively easy for SWCCOG staff to manage. The State provides a small pot of competitive funding for the various incident management teams across the state and the state requires that, as the fiscal agent, the SWCCOG Chair signs the contract.

**Gwen Lachelt motioned to approve the 2018-2019 SWIMT contract, Karen Sheek seconded, unanimously approved.**

DoLA 2019 TA Grant Request:

Miriam explained the different budget line items for the 2019 DoLA grant, including consulting services for transportation, VISTA support, a CDL program, and recycling efforts. Miriam presented two potential budgets, one with recycling and one without.

**Mark Garcia motioned for staff to apply for the DoLA 2019 TA grant without recycling, Gwen Lachelt seconded, unanimously approved.**

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

Mark introduced Andrew Atchley from DoLA, the Division of Housing representative. Andrew gave some background on his role and offered any assistance to the COG.

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

Time did not permit.

**Gwen Lachelt motioned to adjourn, Karen Sheek seconded, unanimously approved.**

Adjourned at 4:04 p.m.