

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
January Board Meeting
Friday, 8 January 2016, 1:30pm
1188 E. 2nd Ave., Carnegie Building, Durango, CO 81301**

In Attendance:

Andrea Phillips – Town of Mancos
Dick White – City of Durango
Julie Westendorff – La Plata County
Michael Whiting – Archuleta County
Ron LeBlanc – City of Durango
Mark Garcia – Town of Ignacio (by phone)
Chris La May – Town of Bayfield (by phone)
Shane Hale – City of Cortez (by phone)
John Egan – Town of Pagosa Springs (by phone)
William Tookey – San Juan County (by phone)
Chris Tookey – Town of Silverton (by 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
Shannon Cramer – Southwest Colorado Council of Governments

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:36pm. Andrea Phillips presented a gift basket to Dick White in gratitude for service as chair.

II. State of the SWCCOG

Dick described that in keeping with the national practice to give annual state of the union and state of the state addresses, he distributed and presented the state of the COG for the transition from 2015 to 2016. Highlights included:

- Staff is functioning very well.
- The strategic plan was updated.
- Policies were adopted pertaining to letters of support, expense allocation among members and the fund balance.
- Letters of support were provided for proposals that proved successful.
- Progress was made in partnering with a number of organizations.
- The success rate of grant submissions has been very high, the amounts awarded totaling \$680,000 since 2014. This is powerful leveraging of member contributions. Dick described the status of various grant funded projects.
- Financial challenges in our communities highlight the need for value demonstration by the COG. A focus for 2016 needs to be identifying, as quantitatively as possible, areas where COG membership is providing actual cost savings, not just how it accesses value mostly unrealizable by individual community efforts.
- 2016 is shaping up as a critical year for the future of the COG. Success will require sustained engagement from the representatives of each community.

III. 2016 Goals Overview

Andrea provided an overview of the 2016 board goals – address opportunities to increase value to COG members, fiscal stability and growth, staffing, and advocacy – and the specific objectives associated with each.

IV. Consent Agenda

- a. December 4 2015 SWCCOG Board Meeting Minutes
- b. December 11 2015 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
- c. November 2015 Financials

Julie Westendorff motioned to approve the December 11, 2015 Executive Committee, Dick White seconded, unanimously approved.

Michael Whiting motioned to approve the December 4, 2015 Board meeting minutes and the November 2015 Financials, John Egan seconded, unanimously approved.

V. Reports

- a. Director's Report

Julie asked about the status of a follow-up meeting with CenturyLink. Miriam Gillow-Wiles replied that she has initiated contact, but does not have any information at this time.

Miriam reported that a grant in the amount of \$20,000 was awarded for the Transit Council. There was progress made at the Recycling Taskforce meeting. She reported that legislation has been written for tribal votes at the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC). The Transit Council held a Medicaid billing training for health and human service and transit providers.

She explained that the Executive Committee would like to schedule a regional "road show" on January 22. Andrea added that the executive committee would like learn more about the communities in the region and meet the elected officials and employees. She mentioned that any interested board members are welcome to join. She asked if any organizations would like to volunteer to host on January 22. Julie elaborated that this was suggested as a way to better understand each of the communities. She suggested first going west due to weather. Andrea stated that she would contact Ernie Williams to ask about setting this up in Dolores County. She added that she will send final details to the board members. Chris Tookey suggested waiting to schedule this in Silverton until the spring. John mentioned that this could help the member communities reinforce the importance of their membership in COG. Andrea added that this ties in with the goals for advocacy and demonstrating value to members. Dick recommended leaving adequate time in the day for casual discussions, even if this requires scheduling with fewer communities per day.

Miriam reported that she would be on vacation in February.

- b. Broadband Report

Andrea stated that there was a meeting earlier in the day. Miriam reported that there had been discussion about broadband friendly ordinances and policies communities could put in place, some of the needs for the infrastructure currently in place to best utilize the network and reduce costs for connectivity. Andrea mentioned that each community should have a representative on the broadband

subcommittee. Julie requested a list of interim items between meetings versus receiving a large amount of information every other month. Miriam replied that she frequently speaks with Diane and will ask her about providing information on an ongoing basis. Dick mentioned that the next steps will be providing policies to each community to allow them to determine how best to apply any such policies and to engage the public once there is a more clear sense of what the plan will be. He added that Diane is doing an inventory of existing assets to look at how they can be leveraged. He asked when grant submissions are due. Miriam replied that these are ongoing, however the target date for the Broadband Infrastructure Grant is June 2016. Julie clarified that she would like to ensure there is ongoing information for the communities to address rather than only seeing progress every other month. Andrea asked if this would require the subcommittee to meet more often. There was discussion about sharing information on specific tasks to be undertaken between meetings. Michael asked if a final outcome would be recommendations for how and when to implement specific policies. He also asked for clarification on how coordination should work with technology staff as well as communication with the public. Ron LeBlanc suggested this could be an opportunity for education on franchising which would allow for standardized language. He added that defined end goals will be critical prior to laying conduit. There was discussion about having education on basic broadband infrastructure, policies and best practices.

c. Recycling Report

Andrea mentioned that there was an article in the Durango Herald about the waste audit. Miriam reported that the DOLA grant includes \$15,000 for education and marketing. The taskforce determined that a central website and uniform educational materials would be the most useful tools at this time. Andrea asked about the idea of renting trailers. Miriam replied that there had been discussion about purchasing trailers through another grant, but at this time the taskforce believes education will be more important. She elaborated that staffing would be required for trailers and at this time there is no value in collecting those commodities so there would not be money for staffing. Miriam reported that she had done an interview on KDUR on Tuesday. Julie pointed out that since the City of Durango changed from satellite recycling to the recycling center, a number of people have not converted to the new center. She suggested that the change could seem like an obstacle, although it is now easier, and mentioned creating an educational video. Ron offered to have the city's video staff create something. There was discussion about sponsoring education and incentives through the schools. Miriam mentioned that the next RREO grant application is due March 4, and these ideas could be included. There was discussion about encouraging reuse, such as through public art, rather than only recycling.

d. Transportation Report

Jessica Laitsch summarized the most recent TPR meeting. Miriam reported that Representative Coram will bring legislation to allow the tribes to vote at STAC and the TPR will have a letter of support to go out in February. She does not anticipate issues, but will reach out to the Denver Regional Council of Governments.

Jessica reported that the Transit Council held a Medicaid billing training and is developing a template for an ADA/paratransit plan. Miriam elaborated that this would reduce staff time for organizations to be in compliance.

e. VISTA's Report (Includes Shared Services)

Shannon Cramer reported that she is compiling a master spreadsheet for shared services that will be distributed. She added that she is working on setting up training sessions for CDL and water/wastewater. Miriam added that the spreadsheet would be sent out next week.

Andrea asked if anyone has upcoming trainings on road grading, specifically hands-on training would be very useful. Julie replied that she will forward contact information for the county's road maintenance personnel. She asked if non-member entities would be included in local trainings. There was general agreement that wider inclusion would be advantageous for the entire region, including trainings that individual organizations are already planning.

VI. Discussion Items

a. 4CORE Discussion

Andrea explained that the subcommittee met with members of the 4CORE board and the group is interested in pursuing additional discussions with them. She explained that there had been clarification about expectations, for example they would like to look at sharing office space, billing functions, and other administrative tasks as opposed to program management. Julie agreed that this is worth looking into further and elaborated that they will bring their own money, the intent is not to keep them afloat. She added that one issue is that Montezuma County will benefit while not being a member of the COG. She mentioned that La Plata County and the City of Durango currently provide funding to 4CORE and one potential benefit of this collaboration could be gaining access for the smaller communities to energy audits. Additionally, this would alleviate 4CORE's administrative burden and allow them to focus on their programs. She questioned whether the COG would charge an administrative fee when an organization comes under the COG. Andrea summarized that there was interest in moving forward and asked for feedback.

Mark Garcia agreed that this is worthy of additional research and it would be beneficial for the organization to have the opportunity to provide services throughout the communities. Julie mentioned that La Plata Electric Association serves La Plata and Archuleta counties and asked if there is the potential to collaborate with Empire Electric. Mark replied that there have been challenges at La Plata Electric with continuing funding for 4CORE, but if 4CORE is able to expand its services into Montezuma County it could be worthwhile to reach out to Empire Electric. Julie mentioned that 4CORE has done work in Montezuma County when funding is available for projects there. She added that one of their challenges in finding an executive director has been finding someone with both technical expertise and the ability to manage administrative duties, so the ability to focus the search on the technical side should allow them to more easily fill the position. Miriam added that they discussed having the program manager be the technical person and the program coordinators providing the actual services. Mark summarized that Miriam would provide the administrative support while they focus on the technical aspects. He surmised that their next challenge seems to be identifying future projects to undertake and suggested they consider expanding services to San Juan County. Willy Tookey stated that 4CORE has done weatherization work in San Juan County.

Andrea summarized that the broad consensus seems to be a desire to continue the discussion and the subcommittee will gather additional information to bring back to the board.

Dick pointed out that 4CORE would need office space and the COG does not currently have enough space. He added that the need for alternative office space will be a longer term issue facing the COG and

the board may need to consider transitioning into commercial space in the future. Michael added that 4CORE seems to be a willing potential partner and the willingness to work together will be critical for moving forward. Dick added that the services they provide have ongoing economic benefits. Julie added that it was made clear that 4CORE would remain in charge of their grant writing and administration.

b. SWCCOG Schedule for 2016

Andrea presented the master schedule of meetings for 2016, including the annual retreat in April and the proposed dates for development of the budget. She stated that the board meetings in July and September will be moved to accommodate holidays. Miriam added that a day will need to be decided for the all-day retreat as the TPR meeting falls on the regular board meeting day.

c. Ideas for Hot Topics Discussions

Andrea asked if the board would like to set up regular times to discuss and share knowledge on topics of regional concern. Julie suggested a discussion on the airport, the consensus between La Plata County and the City of Durango for a next step is a terminal expansion and she would like to get input from the other communities. Michael replied that the major issue in Archuleta County is transportation to the airport. Dick mentioned that another player is San Juan County, New Mexico, the economic development people there have been very supportive as the Durango-La Plata airport has become the regional airport and it could be important to invite them to the discussion. He added that roads, in addition to transit, are important aspects for consideration. John added that the airport is critical for economic development and tourism in Archuleta County. He agreed that transportation is a major issue and Mountain Express Transit cannot provide service to La Plata County at this time.

Dick suggested a discussion on affordable housing. He added that the City of Durango is working on a housing study and resulting policy initiatives that may be useful. He pointed out affordable housing is an issue throughout Colorado and it is a multi-faceted issue.

Andrea summarized that future topics will include the airport expansion, affordable housing and panhandling. She added that the airport expansion will be the hot topic discussion in February.

VII. Decision Items

VIII. Other Items

a. Community Updates (if time allows)

Andrea reported that the Town of Mancos is searching for a town marshal and a deputy marshal. The town has been recommended for off-system bridge enhancement funding for their downtown bridge.

Dick reported that the City of Durango Council received updates from Three Springs and Twin Buttes, and Twin Buttes is moving forward toward construction.

Ron reported that the city is has a number of capital improvement projects planned for 2016. They are hiring an engineering firm to design a wastewater treatment plant. In the spring the city will finish paving Wilson Gulch Road to tie the interchange to the hospital. City sales tax receipts were up in 2015. There is a joint meeting scheduled with the county commissioners to discuss the airport among other

issues. He mentioned that Three Springs currently has more residents than the Town of Ignacio and represents \$250 million in investments. He mentioned that a local business was sold for \$1.8 billion and the seller has purchased Ewing Mesa, where the county is pursuing relocation of the fairgrounds, so the plans would include an outdoor concert venue. The city council has approved an update to the comprehensive plan. He reported that a water line connecting StoneAge and Animas Airpark to the city is nearly completed.

Willy reported that the fiber for the school district is lit and online although they are still working on the SCAN line. Additionally, there have been discussions with the CDPHE and EPA concerning superfund designation in the county. Julie mentioned the potential delays involved with missing the next deadline for the superfund and asked whether a March application is realistic. Willy replied that they have committed to as much time and effort necessary to move this forward by March. Julie mentioned that La Plata County has drafted a resolution in support of the decision made by San Juan County and the Town of Silverton. Dick added that the City of Durango is expected to approve a similar resolution.

Chris reported that the Town of Silverton searching for a town planner.

Mark reported that the election will be in April and petitions will be available sooner due to recent changes. The town has been working on building relations with the tribe and are currently clarifying issues surrounding sales taxes.

Chris La May reported that the water treatment plan is under construction and they hope to have it running by early June. The town is working on replacing two bridges, however a complication arose regarding a requirement for offsite mitigation for wetlands. They will be working on a waterline replacement project and installation of isolation valves. They will be closing on property with the school for acquisition of 23 acres off the Pine River, after this is approved by the school district it would need to be annexed by the town.

John reported that tourism going well, skiing is currently the major attraction. The Town of Pagosa Springs is looking at some new development and dealing with a number of issues, but things are going well.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35pm