

**Southwest Colorado Council of Governments
March Board Meeting
Friday, 4 March 2016, 1:30pm
1188 E. 2nd Ave., Carnegie Building, Durango, CO 81301**

In Attendance:

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

Guests in Attendance:

Cherri Miller – State Purchasing Office (via phone)
John Whitney – Senator Bennet's Office

I. Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:33pm.

II. Presentation: State Purchasing Program

Cherri Miller with the State Purchasing Office presented an overview of the State Purchasing Program available to local governments that provides vendor price agreements for supplies, services, and contracts to save purchasers money. Purchasers can access over 170 price agreements at www.bidscolorado.com. Cherri gave a tour of the website.

III. Consent Agenda

- a. 5 February 2016 SWCCOG Meeting Minutes
- b. January 2016 Financials

Michael Whiting motioned to approve both consent agenda items together as presented, John Egan seconded, unanimously approved.

IV. Reports

- a. Director's Report

Miriam Gillow-Wiles reported that her vacation in Laos was phenomenal and thanked staff for all the hard work done in her absence. Miriam said after getting back from Laos, she spent a few days in Denver working with Representative Coram and Representative Brown on the Tribal Voting at STAC legislation. She also caught up with Eric Bergman of CCI to discuss broadband legislation. See legislative update below for more details.

Dolores County Visit

Miriam reminded the board that the Executive Committee will be visiting Dolores County on Monday, March 7th, including the Senior Center, from 1:30pm-5:30pm. The group will leave the COG office at 11:30am and return around 7:30pm.

Cool and Connected – USDA Broadband and Sustainable Community Development

Miriam reported that a letter of interest was submitted on Wednesday February 24th for the Cool and Connected pilot program. This is a program to help communities revitalize their downtowns through broadband. From the announcement: “USDA Rural Utilities Service Administrator Brandon McBride encouraged communities interested in using broadband service to help revitalize small-town main streets and promote economic development to apply for Cool & Connected, a pilot program sponsored by USDA Rural Utilities Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Sustainable Communities. Through Cool & Connected, a team of experts will help community members develop strategies and an action plan for using planned or existing broadband service to promote smart, sustainable community development.”

b. Broadband Report

NeoFiber was in the region on March 3rd and 4th and gave a presentation update and financial model suggestion just prior to the COG board meeting March 4, 2016. Diane Kruse and Steve Burkholder met with service provider to identify challenges. Community outreach meetings will be held April 11-14. Diane explained that the goal is to create a more financially sustainable model for the SCAN network. This will involve building connections between communities to have redundancy and better broadband into communities. In addition, changing the services offered would allow greater internet service with a minimum of 100 Mbps up to 10 gigabytes. A Virtual Local Area Networks (V-LAN) connection would be beneficial as this connection extends across the local network across the region for governments to share resources and software creating the ability to better provide services to each other, and better connectivity for government applications. NEO Fiber will continue research and make adjustments to the financial model.

c. Legislation Update

SB16-011 – Terminate the use FASTER fees for transit:

Postponed indefinitely in House committee

HB16-1018 – Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee Procedures:

Sent unamended to the Governor

HB16-1031 – Modify Transportation Commission Membership:

Referred from House Committee on Transportation and Energy to House Committee on Appropriations

HB16-1169 – Allow Tribes to Vote at Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee:

Assigned to Senate Committee on Transportation, Staff will testify when it is scheduled.

Miriam reported that a new legislative bill, SB16-136, regarding broadband has been introduced that will make it more challenging for counties to opt out if deemed served or under-served. An area is considered served with a DSL connection. This bill will not affect those that are currently opted out. The Colorado Communications and Utility Alliance (CCUA) are opposed to this bill. Miriam will monitor. Andrea Phillips said a letter should be written on behalf of the COG to oppose this bill.

Shane Hale motioned to have staff create a letter of opposition to SB16-136, John Egan seconded, unanimously approved.

Miriam reported that the Town of Rico contacted Ed Morlan regarding the broadband plan the SWCCOG is currently working on. The Town of Rico is working with the Community Foundation to bring broadband to the area. The Community Foundation has encouraged the Town of Rico to become a member of the COG and benefit from broadband efforts with the Foundation paying for the membership dues that will be approximately \$2,500 for 2016. Miriam is invited to the Town of Rico's board meeting on March 16, 2016 to talk about broadband planning efforts. Shane Hale questioned how dues would be calculated if the Town of Rico becomes a member considering the first quarter of 2016 is gone and whether the membership would end after the broadband grant is complete. He added that COG membership is not meant to be an a la carte type of membership and a multi-year commitment should be requested. Michael Whiting agreed that membership should not be for a single grant and that a commitment beyond broadband should be encouraged. In addition, Michael suggested a pro-rated membership fee with a portion of the 2016 already past and that 100% of any grant match should be required. A commitment cannot be enforceable, but an informal commitment would be appropriate. Dick White suggested creating a policy for membership that should include a waiting period of at least six month for any member that cancels then wants to re-join.

Shane Hale motioned to authorize staff to pro rate membership dues from the requested month to the end of year for any new members, with a minimum of six months of dues assessed, in addition to any other participation fees in way of grant match at full cost, John Egan seconded, unanimously approved.

d. Transportation Report

TPR

The TPR met on Friday, February 5, 2016. There was discussion about federal and state funding opportunities including:

- FAST Act Legislation
- The Federal Lands Access Program
- The Transportation Alternatives Program

There were also updates about the awards for FASTER capital project and Safe Routes to School funding. CDOT gave a presentation about their budget process. Updates on state legislation regarding transportation will be included in the legislative update. The next TPR meeting will be held Friday, April 1, 2016 from 9 am -12 pm at the Carnegie Building.

Transit

The next Transit Council meeting will be held Friday, March 18 at 9:00 a.m. at the Carnegie Building.

e. VISTA's Report (Includes Shared Services)

Shared services project: Shannon reported that the update for this project was the presentation Cherri Miller gave at the beginning of the meeting.

Recycling project: Shannon reported spending most of her time on the CDPHE RREO Grant application. With the help of other staff members, Shannon collected the necessary information per CDPHE instructions. The grant application was due and submitted on March 4, 2016.

f. Community Updates

With time running short, no community updates were given.

V. Discussion Items

a. SWCCOG-4CORE Report

Miriam presented a spread sheet breakdown of current personnel costs for both 4CORE and the COG as well as a spread sheet of combined personnel costs with cost savings. Miriam said

she previously had met with two of the 4CORE Board members to discuss the cost savings, and they thought the cost savings under personnel was a reason to delve deeper into bringing 4CORE under the SWCCOG umbrella. 4CORE has suspended their Executive Director search and hired a Program Director position at 0.5FTE. Miriam said this is a positive step for 4CORE. On April 1st at 12:30pm, the SWCCOG Board and the 4CORE Board are tentatively planning to meet to discuss common goals and further steps. Shane Hale questioned if 4CORE is brought under the COG, would current funders who are already COG members still provide funding towards the 4CORE efforts. Miriam responded that 4CORE would be a program under the COG and not a separate entity; a new dues structure has not yet been calculated. Shane asked if the 4CORE board would be excused. Miriam said the 4CORE board would be an advisory board with the COG board the governing board. Mark Garcia stated that 4CORE is in dire need of leadership at the Executive Director level; with Miriam's time currently at the maximum, will she be able to shoulder this responsibility. Miriam said she has some reservations and integrating another organization and additional staff will be challenging. However, Miriam stated that with the right staff, the ED position will be an actual ED position versus an ED plus grant person position, which will free some of her time to do actual ED work. John Egan responded that Miriam should not be trying to negotiate this entire deal by herself and that the Executive Committee should be involved. Shane said he sees the savings but would like to know what additional services would be provided to COG members with 4CORE on board, such as will LPEA still provide annual contributions. Mark Garcia, an LPEA Board member, said LPEA would probably continue contributions and that it would be a matter of ongoing funding. Julie Westendorff would like to know what Miriam's role would be with 4CORE added as this will need to be defined. The 4CORE audits need to be reviewed and Julie does not want this to be at the COG's expense. John responded that 4CORE will need to be integrated into the COG's business model and 4CORE's focus will have to expand beyond La Plata County. Andrea Phillips voiced concern with staff salary increases as operating costs will increase and questioned, with adding new projects, at what point are salary increases given. If staff are overtaxed, the COG needs to identify where to focus energy. Shane said this discussion needs to be vetted further and that he is not ready to give Miriam further direction without additional information. Michael Whiting suggested that Miriam continue cultivating the relationship and three years of financials and forecasts of where revenue sources are needs to be explored. The Executive Committee will follow up with Miriam and 4CORE.

VI. Decision Items

a. Legislative Committee Policy – DRAFT

Miriam provided a Legislative Committee Policy DRAFT in the board packet. Ultimately, the document is set to guide how the legislative review committee and staff work together on the legislative work, and can be amended as needed. The committee will be comprised of one county representative, one municipal representative, and one Executive Committee member. Ron LeBlanc asked Miriam to update the verbiage to say three members at a minimum. Ron also mentioned that when CCI and CML are opposed, the COG should take no position, and if CCI and CML are in concurrence, the COG should take the same stand; this should be part of the policy. Michelle Nelson requested anytime the committee create a letter of recommendation that this letter and any other information be emailed to all COG members to keep all abreast of Legislative Committee activity. Miriam requested that the COG Board take a stance on issues in advance each year during the legislative season to help guide the committee.

Michael Whiting motioned to direct staff to finalize the Legislative Committee Policy with verbiage that if CML and CCI are in conflict, the Committee is to have no stance, three members at a minimum will comprise the committee, and Shane Hale, Ron LeBlanc,

Michael Whiting, and John Egan will head up the 2016 Legislative Committee, Michelle Nelson seconded, unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm