

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 18, 2019
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments met February 18, 2019, 7:00pm, at the High Country Council of Governments Office in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Charles Vines, Brenda Lyerly, Robert L. Johnson, Gary Blevins, Todd McNeill, Renee Castiglione, Doug Matheson, Theresa Coletta, Dennis Aldridge, Jesse Smith, Chris Jones, Darla Harding, Vern Grindstaff, Sandra Simmons, Jim Blevins, Russell Ferree, Rennie Brantz, Larry Turnbow, Valerie Jaynes, and Johnny Riddle. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Jeff Hedrick, Drew Christy, Mary Goodnight, Phil Trew, Keith Deveraux, Nicole Hiegl, Amber Chapman, Stevie John, and Victoria Potter.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairman Riddle thanked everyone for attending and called on Charles Vines to lead the invocation. Chairman Riddle then led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Rennie Brantz made a motion to approve the Executive Board minutes for December 17, 2018. Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

January Financial Highlights

Chairman Riddle called on Finance Officer Mary Goodnight to give details regarding the January financials. Ms. Goodnight reviewed the Financial Highlights as of January 31, 2019 (Attachment A). Ms. Goodnight stated that the cash balance remains constant and steady and that total YTD expenditures are lower than January 2018 by \$60k. Charles Vines made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights Report. Larry Turnbow seconded the motion. Motion carried.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Keith Deveraux, Workforce Development Director, updated the Board on his Annual Performance (Attachment B). Mr. Deveraux highlighted key figures and numbers, and Board members commended him for the efforts and accomplishments. Mr. Deveraux stated that the Workforce Development Board is doing a bang-up job here in the region. Mr. Deveraux mentioned that they are low on Youth Credentials because most youth are hard to pin down after they receive their credentials and get a job in their field. Mr. Deveraux said that the Workforce Development Board Annual Performance percentages are all above or in-line with the state and region averages. Board member, Brenda Lyerly expressed concern about the median earnings, Mr. Deveraux explained that those earnings are what employers are paying monthly and that there is nothing the Workforce Development Board can do about that.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Nicole Hiegl, Area Agency on Aging Director (AAA), introduced herself as the new director and was happy to update the Board that AAA now has a full staff. Mrs. Hiegl then introduced Amber Chapman who joined the COG team as the Family Caregiver Support Specialist earlier this month. Ms. Chapman stated she was excited to join the COG team and spoke briefly about her background. Board members welcomed Ms. Chapman. Mrs. Hiegl mentioned that they will be somewhat restructuring this position to include/focus on the Health Programs aspect for the aging community

in our region. Mrs. Hiegl then mentioned some AAA statistics including: last year there were 83 long-term care complaint investigations in the region, AAA served over 3,000 clients, provided 40,000 hours in home aid support and provided 1,800 caregiver support /health promotion programs.

OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT

Stevie John, Regional Ombudsman, presented her Annual Report on program activities for Federal Fiscal Year 2018 (Attachment C). Ms. John highlighted key figures and numbers, and Board members commended her for the efforts and accomplishments. Community Advisory Committees (CACs). Ms. John stated that there were several volunteer vacancies in all the Community Advisory Committees (CACs) except for Watauga County, and asked to help spread the word. Board Member, Rennie Brantz asked how many CAC volunteers there were, Ms. John answered with 28.

2018 APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION REPORT

Phil Trew, Planning and Development Director updated the board on the 2018 Local Development District (LDD) Administrative Grant Report from the Appalachian Regional Commission (Attachment D). Mr. Trew started off by noting the significant community and economic development activities in the region along with projects and funding reports. Mr. Trew also mentioned that the Planning and Development department's GIS work has been expanding thanks to staff members Jessica Welborn and Cory Osborne. Mr. Trew explained that his department works closely with the ARC and has a flexible use of those funds.

RECESS OF HCCOG EXECUTIVE BOARD AND CONVENING OF REGION D DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Chris Jones made a motion to recess the executive board meeting and convene the Region D Development Corporation session. Brenda Lyerly seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chuck Vines made a motion to approve the RDDC Minutes February 19, 2018 (Attachment E). Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Trew explained that the Region D Development Corporation (RDDC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, sister agency established and formed to provide assistance in the region and there are only three like it left in North Carolina. Mr. Trew explained that through the RDDC he can make small business loans and provide local government incentives through a variety of tasks. Mr. Trew spoke of the RDDC investment in Mountain Bizworks in August 2017. This \$47,000 investment pays 3% interest over the course of seven years. From this investment, Mountain Bizworks has distributed 13 loans in the High Country.

Mr. Trew then announced that there were vacancies on the RDDC board. The Ashe county representative nominee is Jim Blevins and the Avery county representative nominee is Renee Castiglione. Russ Ferree made a motion to approve the RDDC board nominees. Gary Blevins seconded the motion. Motion carried. Gary Blevins also commented that the RDDC investment

has been a successful transition and commended Phil for all his work, Gary also asked when there would be another CEDS update and Mr. Trew stated not for another 2 years. Attorney Jeff Hedrick commented that the RDDC was good incentive money.

Rennie Brantz made a motion to recess the RDDC meeting and re-convene the executive board meeting session. Larry Turnbow seconded the motion. Motion carried.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Update on Regional Programs, Projects and Issues

Ms. Wiggins stated that she was fortunate to work with talented staff and thanked them for their work. Ms. Wiggins introduced Victoria Potter, who joined the COG team as Communications and Marketing Manager in January. Ms. Wiggins spoke of Victoria's background and stated that she was highly recommended for this position. Ms. Potter thanked Ms. Wiggins and the board for their hospitality and stated that she was excited to take on this new role and work with the board. Ms. Wiggins announced to Save the Date for COG Advocacy Day on March 27, 2019. Ms. Wiggins also discussed recent conferences she and other staff members have attended including the City/County Managers Winter Seminar and the SERDI Marketing Summit. Ms. Wiggins also mentioned a recent meeting COG staff members had with Rep. Ray Russell about Transportation Planning, there will be a follow up meeting soon. Ms. Wiggins asked that everyone keep in mind the Legislative Breakfast.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

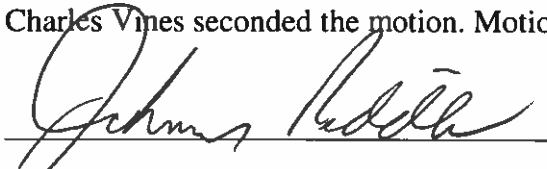
Several board members mentioned an upcoming broadband seminar and that bringing broadband to all rural regions was a top 5 goal from the NC County Commissioners Board. Guest, Drew Christy from the Governor's Office announced that funds to provide broadband in rural counties will be included in this budget cycle.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Riddle stated that he was encouraged and proud to be a part of the COG. He acknowledged the great staff and board members as well. Chairman Riddle also thanked Drew Christy from the Governor's Office for attending and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Robert L. Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Charles Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:52pm.



Chairman, Johnny Riddle



Clerk to the Board, Victoria Potter

Date 3/18/19