

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

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments met March 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, Todd McNeill, Dale Baldwin, Renee Castiglione, Doug Matheson, Dennis Aldridge, Jesse Smith, Mark Evans, Chris Jones, Vern Grindstaff, Sandra Simmons, Jim Blevins, Russell Ferree, Rennie Brantz, Larry Fontaine, Paul Robinson Jr., Valerie Jaynes, and Johnny Riddle. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Jeff Hedrick, Bill Slagle, and Victoria Potter.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

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

AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA

Chairman Riddle announced that there needed to be an amendment to the March agenda due to Keith Deveraux's absence and due to the vacant Finance Officer position. Rennie Brantz made a motion to delete the following items from the March agenda: **Item 4, Section III. Financial Highlights** and **Section V. Workforce Updates**. Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Chris Jones made a motion to approve the Executive Board minutes for February 18, 2019. Charles Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP OF NC UPDATES

Bill Slagle, EDPNC Regional Industry Manager for the Northwest Zone presented slides (Attachment A) about investment projects EDPNC had a hand in. Highlights from his presentation include: EDPNC will not work on a project with less than 10 new employees, the High Country has a good group of local economic developers right now working on small projects in the region, most big companies want project ready land/sites with acreage and/or buildings with tall ceilings and will buy or lease. Mr. Slagle noted that a community not prepared for economic development, cannot handle economic development. Other key points to help communities be prepared for economic growth include: Workforce Development and Real Estate Development, Community Development – vibrant downtowns, etc., Marketing Strategy, and Opportunity Zones (Attachment B). Mr. Slagle noted that out of 508 Projects EDPNC had a hand in, 66% of those were Manufacturing/Assembly companies. Mr. Slagle ended by saying, it's all about being prepared and making an investment in your community.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Discussion of Finance Officer Vacancy

Chairman Riddle called on Executive Director, Julie Wiggins to give details regarding the Finance Officer vacancy. Ms. Wiggins reported that the Finance Officer had resigned but the position has been posted and the search was well underway. Ms. Wiggins has hired a contractor to fill in for the Finance team. Mr. Paul Ijames is a retired local government employee with 33 years of

experience and has hit the ground running. Chairman Riddle also noted that the Advisory Committee suggested that Ms. Wiggins should serve as the Interim Finance Officer until the position is filled. Renee Castiglione made a motion to approve Julie Wiggins as Interim Finance Officer. Doug Matheson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Capital Bank Signatories

Ms. Wiggins announced that in light of the Finance Officer vacancy the COG was in need of new signatories for signing checks. The Advisory Committee suggested Ms. Wiggins (Executive Director), Kathy Combs (Finance Technician), and Phil Trew (Planning & Development Director with 20-year tenure) to be designated as signatories. Brenda Lyerly made a motion to approve these three signatories. Charles Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FYE 2018 Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co, P.A. Audit Contract Amendment

Ms. Wiggins noted that the audit is not officially complete, but it is currently in draft mode. The Audit Contract Amendment (Attachment C) amends the contract date to March 15, 2019. Ms. Wiggins also noted that the Actuary Study made an impact on the late due date. Chairman Riddle added that amending audit contracts is not an unusual thing for counties/towns. Robert L. Johnson made a motion to approve the Audit Contract Amendment. Russell Ferree seconded the motion. Motion carried.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Keith Deveraux, Workforce Development Director was unable to attend the March meeting. Mr. Deveraux left a handout for each board member highlighting the top four Workforce Development Board Updates (Attachment D).

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ms. Wiggins announced that the audit will not be presented until the May 2019 Executive Board Meeting and noted that there were a couple of findings that are very correctable and will be handled differently moving forward. Ms. Wiggins also shared some general updates including: COG Advocacy Day is coming up next week in Raleigh, Phil Trew, Planning & Development Director is currently in DC for the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) conference, Keith Deveraux, Workforce Development Director had an event/date conflict and could not attend tonight but wanted to share that the Workforce Development Board was rewarded a \$98,000 Innovation Grant with Wilkes Community College taking the lead on the project. Nicole Hiegl, Area Agency on Aging Director and her team are continuing to seek opportunities to expand service delivery, particularly through Medicaid Transformation. Medicaid Transformation is expected to have a significant impact on many of the High County's residents as well as county and non-profit agencies such as DSS and Vaya Health. Vaya Health is scheduled to present to the Executive Board next month. Ms. Wiggins also mentioned that she has an upcoming meeting with Mike Fenley from Senator Burr's office to discuss Legislative updates and collaboration.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

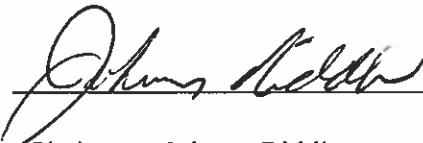
Vern Grindstaff announced that Spruce Pine will be hosting their 1st Annual SPACE – Spruce Pine Alien Conference & Expo on June 14-15, 2019.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS


Chairman Riddle thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Robert L. Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Chris Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.



Chairman, Johnny Riddle



Clerk to the Board, Victoria Potter

Date 4/15/19