

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 19, 2019
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments met August 19, 2019, 7:00pm, at the High Country Council of Governments Office in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Charles E. Vines, Brenda Lyerly, Robert L. Johnson, Gary D. Blevins, Todd McNeill, Dale Baldwin, Reneé Castiglione, Doug Matheson, Mark Evans, Chris Jones, Vern Grindstaff, 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: Amna Cameron, Wilson Hooper, Julie Wiggins, Jeff Hedrick, Phil Trew, Keith Deveraux, Julie Page and Victoria Potter.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Robert L. Johnson made a motion to approve the Executive Board minutes for July 15, 2019. Todd McNeill seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Chairman Riddle called on Finance Officer, Julie Page to give a report on the Financial Highlights as of July 31, 2019 (Attachment A). Mrs. Page explained that she had updated the Financial Highlights layout so that it is now easier to view and compare the numbers. Her current priorities after the audit (Aug. 26-30) are to evaluate cash/investments, entering the 2020 Budget into the system and holding monthly meetings with department heads. Chairman Riddle noted that the Advisory Committee gave their recommendation for approving the current Financial Highlights. Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights. Brenda Lyerly seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NC FIRST COMMISSION PRESENTATION

Amna Cameron, Deputy Director – Office of Strategic Initiatives & Program Support for NCDOT shared a presentation (Attachment B) on the NC First Commission which is in place to help modernize and increase transportation revenue while promoting sustainable, sufficient and reliable transportation. Ms. Cameron mentioned that Mayor Brenda Lyerly serves as one of the 12 members of the NC First Commission. Ms. Cameron shared information on NCDOT budgets, costs, and investments. Her presentation included valuable information and infographics showing just how much construction costs are compared to the insufficient DOT revenues. Ms. Cameron asked everyone to save the date for the Transportation Summit - January 8-9, 2020.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Mr. Trew presented current funding opportunities through the EDA for Ashe, Alleghany and Yancey counties, which had damage from Hurricanes Michael and Florence. Mr. Trew is scheduling a conference call with those county managers to assist with grant applications. Mr. Trew gave an overview of several projects the Planning & Development department has conducted or taken part in all throughout the region including: Grant Applications, Parks & Rec Trust Fund Authority, ARC Funding, Zoning and Permits, Zoning Ordinances, Annexation, Fire Tax Districts, and Strategic Planning. Mr. Trew reminded the board that the Planning & Development department can take on and is familiar with all of these projects and more and encouraged towns and counties to use them as a resource.

WORKFORCE UPDATES

Mr. Deveraux presented a handout (Attachment C) including the current unemployment rates for each of our seven counties and mentioned that the High Country WDB is working in partnership with Project Lazarus of Wilkes for a Rural Initiative Grant. This grant would help facilitate trainings/preparation for employment, combined with rehabilitation and recovery steps for opioid users. Mr. Deveraux also commented that WDB has completed the one year anniversary of Finish Line Grants and that the program continues to grow and be successful in the High Country. Mr. Deveraux also presented statistics from partnering with the region's community colleges. Mr. Deveraux included the yearly Budget & Tax Center's Economic Snapshots for all seven counties in his handout and presentation. Paul Robinson Jr. commented that he would like to see these snapshots more often so that he can answer questions from the community confidently.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ms. Wiggins announced that the 45th Annual Banquet will be held at Linville Ridge on Friday, September 6, 2019. She reminded everyone that the RSVP Deadline is this Friday, August 23, 2019 and that we have six secured sponsors this year. Ms. Wiggins also made note that there would be no Executive Board Meeting in September in lieu of the Annual Banquet. Ms. Wiggins notified the board that Victoria Potter would be requesting submissions for the October ReCOgnition in the following weeks. Ms. Wiggins also updated the board on the website/rebranding efforts. Ms. Wiggins asked the board to approve that the November 18, 2019 Executive Board Meeting run from 6-8 PM and serve as a strategic planning session, facilitated by Dr. Pat Mitchell. Russell Ferree made a motion to approve of this meeting schedule. Charles E. Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried. Ms. Wiggins also presented advocacy updates and leadership trainings in the area.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

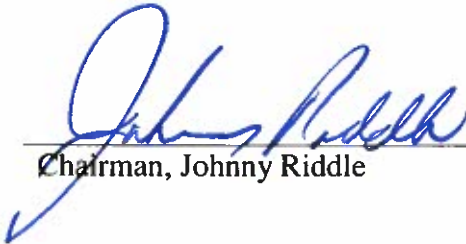
Brenda Lyerly thanked Anna Cameron for attending and presenting. Charles Vines mentioned that the Hometown Strong Program is for rural counties and a representative from the Governor's office would be glad to meet with more communities in the region. Robert L. Johnson introduced North Wilkesboro's new Town Manager, Wilson Hooper, who also discussed the Hometown Strong Program. Mr. Johnson also mentioned that the Town of North Wilkesboro had hired a new Planning Director, Meredith Detsch and thanked Phil Trew for the help HCCOG Planning & Development Staff provided while they were searching for a new director.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Riddle thanked everyone for their attendance and reiterated that there would be no regular Executive Board Meeting on Monday, September 16, 2019 since we will have the Annual Banquet on Friday, September 6, 2019.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Robert L. Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Charles E. Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm.



Chairman, Johnny Riddle



Clerk to the Board, Victoria Potter

Date 10/21/19