

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
MAY 18, 2020
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments met May 18, 2020, 7:00pm, virtually via Zoom. The following members were present at the meeting: Charles E. Vines, Robert L. Johnson, Brenda Lyerly, Gary D. Blevins, Johnny Riddle, Todd McNeill, Andrew Soots, Doug Matheson, Theresa Coletta, Dennis Aldridge, Rocky Buchanan, Tom Hartman, Jim Blevins, Larry Fontaine, and Valerie Jaynes. All board members maintained connection throughout the entire meeting. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Jeff Hedrick, Phil Trew, Keith Deveraux, Julie Page and Victoria Potter.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairwoman Jaynes welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting and called roll. Chairwoman Jaynes called on Robert L. Johnson to lead the invocation. Chairwoman Jaynes then led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve the Executive Board minutes for April 20, 2020. Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented the Financial Highlights as of April 30, 2020 (Attachment A) and explained that we are still running at our fund balance correctly. Mrs. Page then discussed current projects including: Workforce monitoring is underway, budget review with the Executive Director and department heads to ensure all is in compliance for FYE 2020, and preparation for fiscal year end. Mrs. Page also explained that BB&T has a very low interest rate right now and we are looking at refinancing the building. The Advisory Committee recommended creating a building committee to assess the needs of the building and see how much extra funding may be needed to complete building updates.

Budget Amendment #6

Mrs. Page also discussed Budget Amendment #6 (Attachment B) which is a reduction in Planning and Development from delayed local contracts by \$22,990.00 and an increase in Area Agency on Aging Families First Coronavirus Response Act funding that will carry over to the budget for next year by \$207,238.00.

Contract to Audit FYE 2021

Lastly, Mrs. Page discussed the Contract to Audit FYE 2021 (Attachment C). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we can extend our audit deadline from October 31, 2020 to January 31, 2021. The total contract with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co, P.A. is \$19,250.00. Mrs. Page is looking into bidding out the audit services in FY 2021.

Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights, Budget Amendment #6 and the Contract to Audit FYE 2021. Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FY21 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Executive Director, Julie Wiggins presented the proposed FYE 2021 Budget Message (Attachment D) and FYE 2021 Budget Resolution (Attachment E). Ms. Wiggins noted that this budget is 26% more than what was originally adopted last fiscal year. Ms. Wiggins discussed the FYE 2021 Budget Highlights including:

Revenues:

- This budget is a 26% increase over last year's originally proposed budget due to new funding from the pandemic
- A new lease agreement for Suite B will generate \$21,800
- Membership dues increase for one of the three-year planned phase-in to meet local match requirements
- Workforce Development budget includes \$350,000 in National Emergency Dislocated Worker funds
- Planning and Development department contractual revenue includes an estimated \$75,000 in revenue for GIS services, the rate is budgeted at the same \$60 per hour rate
- AAA revenues include \$207,238 for county-based nutrition services from the Families First in Coronavirus Response Act and \$695,339 for various programs from the CARES Act

Expenditures:

- A cost of living adjustment of 2.5% is proposed for all employees as discussed at the prior Executive Board meeting
- The fringe rate (employee benefits) is 40%, matching contributions to the Local Government Retirement System has increased from 8.95% to 10.15%
- Software expenditures includes estimated expenses for IT support and various software systems as required by each department

Ms. Wiggins also noted a proposed shared position between Planning & Development and Area Agency on Aging.

WORKFORCE UPDATES

Keith Deveraux, Workforce Development Board (WDB) Director presented his report (Attachment F) and gave an update on the NC Unemployment Insurance Claims with data from each county. Mr. Deveraux noted that the link for the new data dashboard is in the packet and asked Victoria Potter, Communications and Marketing Manager to share the link in the next HCCOG bulletin. Mr. Deveraux also noted that the NCWorks Centers are still providing workforce services virtually and remotely and will continue to do so for now with a tentative opening date (for staff only) on June 22, 2020. Depending on the pandemic situation a tentative opening date for the public is set for July 1, 2020 with all precautions and safety measures in place.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director discussed the logistics of the budget process according to the new Remote Meetings Law. If any member is attending the meeting virtually/remotely, at least 24 hours needs to pass to give the public an opportunity to submit written comments before the budget can be passed. Next month we will have our public hearing on Monday, June 15, 2020 at 7:00 PM, we will then need to recess the meeting for at least 24 hours and then reconvene later that week to take into consideration any written comments received and vote on the budget. Ms. Wiggins and Jeff Hedrick explained that we must have a quorum to vote and need at least half of the members present for the first part of the meeting to also be present again for the post-recess meeting to vote on the budget. Ms. Wiggins will send out a Doodle Poll to see what date will be best to reconvene. Charles E. Vines commented that we need to communicate this process to members and explain the importance of the new law requirements. Ms. Wiggins also noted that the Planning department is available as a resource to help with grant writing or administration as towns and counties navigate through the pandemic.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Charles E. Vines thanked Keith Deveraux for the in-depth presentation. Johnny Riddle thanked the COG staff for helping the board navigate these changes and commended Chairwoman Jaynes. Theresa Coletta thanked everyone.

CHAIRWOMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairwoman Jaynes announced that she recently retired from Mountain Electric after 33 years of service and is excited for this new journey. Board members congratulated Valerie on her retirement.

ADJOURNMENT

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

 Chairwoman, Valerie Jaynes

 Clerk to the Board, Victoria Potter

 Date 06-15-2020