

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 17, 2020
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments met August 17, 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, Dennis Aldridge, Bill Osborne, Rocky Buchanan, Jim Blevins, Rennie Brantz, Larry Fontaine, Larry Turnbow, Paul Robinson Jr., and Valerie Jaynes. Two board members lost connection briefly during the meeting but were able to regain access. All board members heard discussion and voted on action items. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Jeff Hedrick, Keith Deveraux, Nicole Hiegl, Phil Trew, Julie Page and Victoria Potter.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairwoman Jaynes welcomed everyone to the Zoom meeting. 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 AND RATIFICATION OF JULY ACTION ITEMS

Chairwoman Jaynes called on Attorney Jeff Hedrick to explain the ratification of July action items. Mr. Hedrick explained that because there was no quorum at the July 20, 2020 Executive Board meeting that we needed a motion and second to ratify the two action items: June 2020 minutes, with revisions (Attachment A) and July Financial Highlights (Attachment A1) from the July agenda. Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve the July 20, 2020 Executive Board minutes and the ratification of July action items. Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented the Financial Highlights as of August 13, 2020 (Attachment B). Mrs. Page discussed expenditures and balances for FY2021. Mrs. Page is still working on the audit information for FY2020 and should have it entered by August 31, 2020, but she has not heard when the auditors will make their onsite visit. Mrs. Page and Ms. Wiggins are working with department heads to keep the FY2021 budget current and will bring any necessary budget amendments to the board as soon as possible. Mrs. Page also noted that Workforce monitoring finished up on August 14, 2020.

The Resolution to Amend the Minimum Unassigned Fund Balance Policy (Attachment B1) was presented because the original policy does not indicate the process for correction should the fund balance fall below the 16% required in the policy. Further, without a corrective action plan process spelled out in the policy, a lower-than 16% fund balance would result in an audit finding. The increase in federal grants for FY2021 has made it possible for the next audit to reflect a lower than 16% fund balance. The Unassigned Fund Balance is calculated on our total budget, so next year we may go below what the policy put in place in 2017. Even if we drop below the 16% minimum fund balance this does not impact our general fund cash, it just increases our federal and state grants coming in and out. This amendment allows us a 90-day period to work on a corrective action plan to bring to the board, once the audit is complete. This amendment also gives us a 3-year period

to bring the fund balance back to 16%. Larry Turnbow asked if grants we received are to be spent in the fiscal year, Mrs. Page confirmed that is correct.

Budget Amendment #1 (Attachment B2) is increasing federal funding in Planning and Development from an EDA grant and decreasing federal funding in Workforce Development because of only receiving \$175,000 for the National Emergency Dislocated Workers grant. Our total amended FY2021 budget is now \$7,228,730.00. Ms. Wiggins also added that much of the funding HCCOG has received is direct passthrough money.

Todd McNeill made a motion to approve Financial Highlights as of August 13, 2020, the Resolution to Amend the Minimum Unassigned Fund Balance Policy, and Budget Amendment #1. Larry Turnbow seconded the motion. Motion carried.

DRAFT RESOLUTION DECLARING SURPLUS PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING SALE OF SURPLUS PROPERTY

Ms. Wiggins explained that along with the purchase of new COG cars a few years ago, it was decided to keep one of the 2007 Chevrolet Malibu's (car #5). With the pandemic circumstances, staff members are not driving as often and car #5 has almost 200,000 miles on it, with inspection due in October. Ms. Wiggins anticipates car #5 will need more maintenance and service because of its age and mileage. The car is not generating any revenue. Ms. Wiggins asked the Executive Board to review the Resolution Declaring Surplus Property and Authorizing Sale of Surplus Property (Attachment C) for consideration. Board members agreed that HCCOG should sell the car the sooner the better and to go ahead and vote on the draft resolution. Charles E. Vines made a motion to declare the automobile as surplus property and sell it. Rennie Brantz seconded the motion.

While waiting for one board member, who briefly lost connection after the discussion of the action items, to reconnect to the Zoom meeting, Andrew Soots asked Ms. Wiggins how the increase of dues that was proposed a few months ago was going with all the counties and towns. Ms. Wiggins explained that most all of the dues have been received in full, and one local government is monitoring their budget as a result of the pandemic, so that conversation is ongoing.

Once connection was regained and we had 17 board members for quorum, Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve all three of the Financial Matters action items and the Resolution Declaring Surplus Property. Brenda Lyerly seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING UPDATES

Nicole Hiegl, Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Director announced that the Four-Year Area Plan has been approved and is now online on the AAA website. Mrs. Hiegl shared her screen so that board members could view the plan on the website. Mrs. Hiegl also shared local COVID-19 resources. Mrs. Hiegl also noted that her team is in the process of hiring a Special Projects Assistant to work with COVID-19 CARES Act funding/programs and with the Family Caregiver

& Health Promotions Specialist. Interviews will be conducted this week and the new employee will hopefully begin by September 1, 2020. Johnny Riddle complimented Mrs. Hiegl's work and the Four-Year Plan.

WORKFORCE UPDATES

Keith Deveraux, Workforce Development Board (WDB) Director presented his report (Attachment D). Mr. Deveraux noted that because of the Governor's pause in Phase 2, the NCWorks Centers are still providing workforce services remotely and virtually. In the event that someone cannot get the workforce services needed virtually, the NCWorks manager or WIOA coordinator will set up an appointment in the center. On August 31, 2020 all NCWorks staff will report back to the offices for a two-week period to retrofit the centers to comply with the COVID-19 plan, offices will remain closed to the public until September 14, 2020. In the event that NC does not move into Phase 3 by then, the NCWorks team will reevaluate their re-opening plan. Mr. Deveraux announced that the new Workforce Development Board Chair is Jeff Dreyer from AEV, and the Vice-Chair is Edward Hinson from Skyline/Skybest. Mr. Deveraux also noted that there is a new member representing Avery county: Stephanie Greer with Appalachian Regional Healthcare.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Phil Trew, Planning and Development Director announced that Mountain Bizworks has received COVID-19 funding and has made 28 loans in the High Country (a total of over half a million dollars) to retain 138 jobs in our region. Mr. Trew mentioned that his department received CARES Act funding through the EDA which will be used specifically to complete economic development pandemic recovery in the region. EDA dictates what the money can be used for, Planning and Development will focus on three areas for the funding: the development of an Economic Resiliency Plan for our seven counties, providing technical assistance to local governments with pandemic recovery (reimbursement requests, grants, projects), and the development of an Outdoor Recreation Plan. Mr. Trew also mentioned that the CEDS update will begin this fall and will finish up by June 2021. Gary D. Blevins complimented all three HCCOG departments and thanked them for all their work. Mr. Blevins also thanked Mr. Trew for his team's guidance on relief funds in Wilkes county.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director discussed the discrepancy between the quorum definition listed in the charter versus the bylaws. The charter (the overarching governance) defines quorum as 60% of the full board and the bylaws define quorum as 50% of the full board. The charter also states that there will be a maximum of 15 members on the Executive Board, and we have a 27-member board. The changes were presented on the screen, but Ms. Wiggins explained that this is not an action item this month. Ms. Wiggins would like to give the board a full month to review the changes before taking action. To amend the charter, we must have 60% quorum and two-thirds vote in favor of the changes at the September meeting. Ms. Wiggins mentioned some

financials and noted that we have around \$900,000 of additional funding that is going directly to our service providers, housed within the communities throughout the region, (most is Aging funds; a portion is also Workforce funds). Ms. Wiggins and Mr. Trew held a virtual Managers' Meeting last week that focused on COVID-19 recovery and the 2020 Census. Ms. Wiggins mentioned that our region has a relatively low census response rate. The COG Forum met recently as well and is comprised of one Executive Board member from every region throughout the state and the Executive Directors of the COGs. Ms. Wiggins mentioned that Gary D. Blevins has served as the chair up until recently and that there is a lot of great momentum around increasing advocacy of COGs administering programs. Ms. Wiggins congratulated Todd McNeill who was voted in as the western representative for the NC Association of County Commissioners. Ms. Wiggins and Chairwoman Jaynes reminded everyone that since the Annual Banquet has been postponed, we will have an Executive Board meeting on Monday, September 21, 2020 at 7:00PM via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Robert L. Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Brenda Lyerly seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.

Chairwoman, Valerie Jaynes

Clerk to the Board, Victoria Potter

Date _____

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Date 09-21-20