

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 21, 2020
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments met September 21, 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, Kelly Melang, Doug Matheson, Theresa Coletta, Dennis Aldridge, Rocky Buchanan, Tom Hartman, Jim Blevins, Rennie Brantz, Larry Fontaine, Paul Robinson Jr., and Valerie Jaynes. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Jeff Hedrick, Keith Deveraux, Phil Trew 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

Todd McNeill made a motion to approve the August 17, 2020 Executive Board minutes. Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Finance Officer, Julie Page was unable to attend so Executive Director, Julie Wiggins presented the Financial Highlights (Attachment A) as of August 31, 2020. Ms. Wiggins explained that the estimated fund balance is still below the policy of 16%, the actual fund balance is only determined annually based on the audit. Based on the recently amended policy, if we are below the 16% we will have three years to implement a corrective action plan. Ms. Wiggins also mentioned HCCOG has 1.5 million dollars in our operating account and in our investment account. State Health Care Plan Open Enrollment is approaching. Electronic audit uploads are still ongoing.

Budget Amendment #2 (Attachment B) is increasing the Workforce Development Department by \$502,638.00 for the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Federal Grant allocation.

Gary D. Blevins made a motion to approve Financial Highlights as of August 31, 2020 and Budget Amendment #2. Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

PROPOSED UPDATES TO THE CHARTER

Ms. Wiggins recapped the proposed changes to the charter (Attachment C) that have been discussed at previous meetings. Ms. Wiggins mentioned that on page 3, part B, item number 2 the charter states that “One elected official from a municipality within each county with each county’s municipal representative being selected by caucus of their members at the annual meetings of the Council Board.” Key word being from a municipality. At some point along the way an action was taken to incorporate all municipalities from each county. In conclusion, what the Advisory Committee discussed was to present these changes to the full board and to create a committee to comprehensively review all of the documents to make them more cohesive and to update the language used in the charter. Attorney, Jeff Hedrick voiced concern about the potential that in the future new municipalities could be created which would affect the maximum number of Executive

Committee members again and that the language used to describe the Executive Board should be cohesive throughout the document. Mr. Hedrick noted that these changes will make the charter consistent with the bylaws. Todd McNeill made a motion to make the following amendments to the charter:

- Article 1, Section 3, Subsection B, Item 2: One elected official from ~~a municipality~~ **each member municipality** within each county. ~~with each county's municipal representative being selected by caucus of their members at the annual meetings of the Council Board.~~
- Article 1, Section 3, Subsection B: The maximum number of Executive Committee members is ~~fifteen~~ **twenty-seven**.
- Article 1, Section 3, Subsection D: ~~60%~~ **50%** of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum at any regular or special meeting of the Council.

Johnny Riddle seconded the motion. Motion carried.

WORKFORCE UPDATES

Keith Deveraux, Workforce Development Board (WDB) Director presented his report on unemployment rates for each county in the region (Attachment D). Mr. Deveraux also reviewed unemployment rates for North Carolina and the United States. Due to NC moving into Phase 2.5, Workforce services are still being provided remotely and virtually. The NCWorks Centers cannot interact with the public until NC moves into Phase 3. Contracted and DWS staff are currently working in the NCWorks Centers. In the event that services cannot be provided to customers remotely and virtually, then a one-on-one appointment is set up on a case by case basis. When NC moves into Phase 3, NCWorks Centers will be open by appointment only. Mr. Deveraux also mentioned that they are working with Goodwill Industries of the Northwest as a new WIOA service provider that replaces ResCare. Mr. Deveraux also reviewed NC Unemployment Insurance Claims from July 2020, the Labor Market Overview, and presented photos of new NCWorks signage in all seven counties.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Phil Trew, Planning and Development Director discussed three grant opportunities including the CDBG-Infrastructure Program, projects must address a public health need or environmental health problem. This year there is a 2-million-dollar maximum amount per project and there is no local match required. Applications are due in late November and HCCOG is currently working on four regional applications. The 205J Program is federal funding for water quality planning, one local project that was funded last year is now underway. This year HCCOG is submitting two regional applications. Lastly, the NC Parks and Rec Trust Fund is a very competitive program. Only one project from our region was funded, the Town of Boone Skatepark. Paul Robinson Jr. asked Phil about the options for the Water and Sewer projects through CDBG-Infrastructure Program. Other board members commented on the Town of Boone Skatepark project and the community efforts that went toward that.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director mentioned that she received three bids on the surplus car and the highest was \$817.00 which was mid-range with the Kelly Bluebook projection. The Advisory Committee appointed Mayor Wes Brinegar from the Town of Sparta to serve on the Advisory Committee. Ms. Wiggins also mentioned that Commissioner Gary D. Blevins has served on the COG Statewide Forum and was chair for two years, but since he will not be running for reelection this November, we will need to appoint someone else from the HCCOG board to serve. Mr. Blevins noted that they are quarterly meetings, normally (pre COVID-19) it's a two-day commitment and HCCOG covers the costs. Mr. Blevins said that it is a great organization and we need good representation there. If any HCCOG Executive Board member is interested in serving they were directed to email Julie Wiggins for more information. Ms. Wiggins will also send a reminder email with the requirements for serving. Ms. Wiggins will work with Chairwoman Jaynes as she appoints a few board members to make up a committee to review the charter and bylaws. Ms. Wiggins also mentioned that HCCOG hosted another virtual Managers' Meeting. Ms. Wiggins congratulated Charles E. Vines as the Bakersville Town Hall will now be the Charles. E. Vines Town Hall. Mr. Vines said that he was very honored and thanked everyone.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS


Andrew Soots suggested that the HCCOG Executive Board meet in Wilkesboro at the Civic Center where there is plenty of room to social distance. Mr. Soots can see if it is available if there is any interest. Kelly Melang also suggested that would be a good idea. Other board members said it was something to look into. Kelly Melang mentioned that Beech Mountain has implemented a bear hit trash can fine and as a result close to 60% of their population has purchased bear resistant trash cans. Ms. Melang also mentioned that The Land of Oz on Beech Mountain is doing a Locals Night on October 1, 2020 and the times available are 3PM and 4PM, it's a \$5 donation to the Beech Mountain Fire Department.


CHAIRWOMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairwoman Jaynes presented a plaque to the HCCOG former Chairman, Johnny Riddle for his two years of service as Chair. Mr. Riddle thanked everyone and said that it was his honor to serve.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Robert L. Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Jim Blevins seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm.


 Chairwoman, Valerie Jaynes


 Clerk to the Board, Victoria Potter

Date 10-19-20