

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 16, 2021
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met August 16, 2021, 7:00pm, at the High Country Council of Governments Office in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Charles E. Vines, Eddie Settle, Johnny Riddle/Jeff Whitson, Andrew Soots, Kelly Melang, Dennis Aldridge, Doug Matheson, Rocky Buchanan, Kevin Reece, Tom Hartman, Jim Blevins, Wes Brinegar, Rennie Brantz, Larry Fontaine, and Valerie Jaynes. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Julie Page, Jeff Hedrick, Nicole Hiegl, Angie Chandler, Stephanie McGarrah, Phil Trew, and Victoria Potter.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairwoman Jaynes welcomed everyone to the High Country Council of Governments August Executive Board meeting. Chairwoman Jaynes called on Charles E. Vines to lead the invocation. Chairwoman Jaynes then led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve the July 19, 2021 Executive Board minutes. Dennis Aldridge seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented the Financial Highlights as of July 31, 2021 (Attachment A) and reviewed year to date revenues versus expenditures and balances. Mrs. Page noted that she is still using 2020 as a comparison. 2022 comparison is projecting we will remain above the 16% unassigned fund balance. Audit is progressing and Mrs. Page announced that the FY2021 audit should be presented to the board in November.

Budget Amendment #1

Mrs. Page explained that Budget Amendment #1 (Attachment A1) includes an increase in Planning and Development due to three additional grants. Budget Amendment #1 is also an increase in the Area Agency on Aging in order to reconcile budgets by program.

Larry Fontaine made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of July 31, 2021 and Budget Amendment #1. Kelly Melang seconded the motion. Motion carried.

BLUE RIDGE CRAFT TRAILS PRESENTATION

Angie Chandler, Executive Director of Blue Ridge National Heritage Area presented a slideshow (Attachment B) about the Blue Ridge Craft Trails Project. Mrs. Chandler discussed the background, mission, programs, and initiatives of the Blue Ridge Craft Trails Project in the region. Mrs. Chandler gave updates on new website features, presented videos showcasing three of our region's small towns and discussed next steps for 2022 including funding, infrastructure, marketing and social media campaigns.

NC PANDEMIC RECOVERY PRESENTATION

Stephanie McGarrah, Executive Director of the NC Pandemic Recovery Office (NCPRO) presented a slideshow (Attachment C) on the overview, program highlights, and path forward of the NCPRO. Mrs. McGarrah discussed Relief, Recovery and Resilience, as well as challenges local governments face. Mrs. McGarrah ensured the Executive Board that the NCPRO is there to help local governments navigate receiving pandemic relief funds.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director notified the board of some recent employment changes, including that Andrew Plettner will begin as Regional Planner on August 30th, interviews for the Area Agency on Aging Director are scheduled for this week, and that there will be an internal transition to replace Finance Technician, Kathy Combs, who is retiring at the end of the year. Ms. Wiggins noted that the 46th Annual Banquet is still on at Linville Ridge, but it is likely that masks will be required. Ms. Wiggins reminded the board that there will be no regular meeting in September since the banquet is scheduled for September 10th. Ms. Wiggins presented a Memorandum (Attachment D) from GIS Planner, Jessica Welborn that summarizes the 2020 Census data for our region.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Johnny Riddle announced that this would be his last meeting, he has resigned from the Yancey County Board of Commissioners in order to take another position. Mr. Riddle thanked the board and HCCOG staff for their friendship and hard work over his tenure on the board. Mr. Riddle introduced Yancey County Commissioner Chair, Jeff Whitson who will replace him on the Executive Board. Kevin Reece shared an NCWorks success story from his local business and hopes that others will take advantage of the great services NCWorks and the Workforce Development Board provide.

CHAIRWOMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairwoman Jaynes thanked Johnny Riddle for his service and wished him good luck on his new endeavor.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Johnny Riddle made a motion to adjourn. Wes Brinegar seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.


Chairwoman, Valerie Jaynes


Clerk to the Board, Victoria Potter

Date 10-18-21