

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING  
MAY 16, 2022  
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met May 16, 2022, 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, Jeff Whitson, Mike Inscore, Kelly Melang, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Derek Roberts, Dennis Aldridge, Larry Fontaine, Steve Pitman, Kevin Reece, Rocky Buchanan, Wes Brinegar, Tom Hartman, Larry Turnbow, Paul Robinson Jr., Doug Matheson, and Todd McNeill. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Julie Page, Jeff Hedrick, Phil Trew, Cory Osborne, Keith Deveraux, Caroline Briggs, and Victoria Potter. The following guests joined via Zoom: Keith Elmore, Louis Trivette, and Reginald Speight.

**CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION**

Chairman McNeill welcomed everyone to the High Country Council of Governments May Executive Board meeting. Chairman McNeill called on Charles E. Vines to lead the invocation and Doug Matheson to lead the board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

Wes Brinegar made a motion to approve the April 18, 2022 Executive Board minutes. Mike Inscore seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**Financial Highlights**

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented the Financial Highlights as of April 30, 2022 (Attachment A) and reviewed year to date revenues versus expenditures and balances.

**Budget Amendment #6**

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented Budget Amendment #6 (Attachment A1) and explained that it is a reduction of \$70,000 for unspent funds in the Workforce Development Board department in adult services and dislocated workers funding and these revenues will be re-directed to another Workforce Development Board that can use them.

Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of April 30, 2022, and Budget Amendment #6. Larry Turnbow seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**WORKFORCE CONSORTIUM UPDATE**

Keith Elmore, Wilkes County Commissioner Chair and High Country Workforce Consortium Chief Elected Official announced that the NCWorks Commission is moving forward with their realignment plan but there will be no changes for the High Country Workforce Development Board. Chet Mottershead, Assistant Secretary of Workforce Solutions emailed Commissioner Elmore stating that “regarding realignment, High Country Council of Governments and Western Piedmont Council of Governments have no interest in merging and both Workforce Development Boards meet the criteria of the NCWorks Commission’s 8 Guiding Principles.” NCWorks Commission is making no further efforts to combine our Workforce Development Boards.

**NEW USDA STATE DIRECTOR INTRODUCTION**

Reginald Speight, NC USDA Director thanked the High Country COG Executive Board for having him and accommodating his need to join via Zoom. Mr. Speight also introduced Louis Trivette, an Area Specialist from the Asheville office. Mr. Speight discussed rural development and hopes to meet with Western NC leaders in June. Mr. Speight discussed USDA funding for water, wastewater, telecom, and broadband infrastructure. New broadband projects have been announced by the Governor. Mr. Speight announced that Rural Partners Network is coming to NC later this year, which will be one form of entry for to navigate the federal system and find out where target funding is.

**CONSIDERATION OF 2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

Todd McNeill, Executive Board Chairman presented a draft version of the 2022 Legislative Priorities (Attachment B) that the Legislative Committee put together in 2021 and felt all points were still relevant for the NC General Assembly short session. Wes Brinegar made a motion to approve the 2022 Legislative Priorities. Kelly Melang seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**FY2023 BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director presented the draft FY2023 Budget Resolution and supporting documents (Attachment C). Ms. Wiggins highlighted changes in the indirect budget, including adjustments in expenses and revenues being moved to the general fund. For example, the Annual Banquet revenues and expenses were moved to the general fund. HCCOG is primarily federally funded but has a significant amount of state funding (especially in the Aging department). This is year 3 of 3 of the match, which is another revenue and expense in the general fund. Ms. Wiggins also discussed fringe and indirect rates, anticipated project ordinances, and appropriated fund balance. Ms. Wiggins explained that there will be a Public Hearing on June 20, 2022 and then the HCCOG Executive Board will vote on the FY2023 Budget Resolution.

**REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director announced that planning for the September 9, 2022 Annual Banquet is underway. Ms. Wiggins and Victoria Potter, Communications Manager visited the Grandview Ballroom in the Endzone at the Appalachian State University football field after hearing suggestions from board members of this location. The Grandview Ballroom accommodates a larger capacity than Linville Ridge and is much more cost efficient. Executive Board members agreed to try this new facility for the 2022 Annual Banquet. Ms. Wiggins noted that grading work has been completed and we should not have any more flooding issues. Ms. Wiggins also noted that all High Country local governments have successfully submitted first ARPA reports. Ms. Wiggins has received numerous emails applauding Cory Osborne, Director of Recovery and Resilience's help on these reports.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Kevin Reece wished everyone with an election in the primaries good luck.

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Todd McNeill, Executive Board Chairman discussed his upcoming primary election and wished others in the room the best of luck.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Dennis Aldridge announced that he and Julie Wiggins would be attending the NC Association of Regional Council of Governments (NCARCOG) Forum and Legislative Day in Raleigh this June and will be trying to meet with legislators from the entire region. Mr. Aldridge asked to please let he or Julie Wiggins know if there is anything the HCCOG Executive Board would like mentioned to local legislators. Victoria Potter, Communications Manager noted that she would be out on her honeymoon for the June 20, 2022 Executive Board meeting, but Caroline Briggs, Finance Technician will be assisting with clerical duties.

**ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no other comments or business, Brenda Lyerly made a motion to adjourn. Jeff Whitson seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:41 pm.

  
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Chairman, Todd McNeill

  
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Clerk to the Board, Victoria Potter

Date 06-20-22