

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
JULY 18, 2022
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met July 18, 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, Eddie Settle, Bill Osborne, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Dennis Aldridge, Larry Fontaine, Steve Pitman, Kevin Reece, Jim Blevins, Rocky Buchanan, Wes Brinegar, Tom Hartman, Tim Futrelle, Doug Matheson, and Todd McNeill. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Julie Page, Cory Osborne, Phil Trew, Tatiana Magee, Misty Bishop-Price, Zack Green, and Victoria Potter. The following guests attended via Zoom: Samantha Graham.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairman McNeill welcomed everyone to the High Country Council of Governments July Executive Board meeting. Chairman McNeill called on Eddie Settle to lead the invocation and Bill Osborne to lead the board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve the June 20, 2022 Executive Board minutes. Tim Futrelle seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

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

Budget Amendment #1

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented Budget Amendment #1 (Attachment A1) and explained that it is an increase of \$4,529.00 in the Area Agency on Aging department for training and travel for a new agreement with UNC Asheville.

Wes Brinegar made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of June 30, 2022, and Budget Amendment #1. Tom Hartman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

INSTITUTE FOR EMERGING ISSUES PRESENTATION

Samantha Graham, Interim Director of BANDNC Grants Program with the Institute of Emerging Issues (part of NC State University) presented a slideshow (Attachment B) about Digital Inclusion Planning. Ms. Graham noted the importance of breaking the digital divide and achieving digital inclusion because of health and education services. Digital inclusion means that everyone has access to affordable high-speed internet, has a device that meets the needs of the user, has the digital skills to use the internet and device, has quality technical support, and has access to apps and online content designed for self-sufficiency. HCCOG's role in this Digital Inclusion plan will be to lead the process for the region and serve as the fiscal agent. Tatiana Magee, GIS Tech and Planner will be the lead staff member at HCCOG and has two kick off meetings scheduled for the region on July 26th (Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga and Wilkes counties) and July 27th (Avery, Mitchell and Yancey counties).

POLICIES FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUND

Cory Osborne, Director of Recovery and Resilience presented a memorandum (Attachment C) explaining the four policies up for consideration by the HCCOG to stay compliant for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund. The policies for consideration included: Record Retention Policy (Attachment D), Nondiscrimination Policy (Attachment E), Conflict of Interest Policy (Attachment F), and Eligible Use Policy (Attachment G). Mr. Osborne explained that the Executive Board may need to adopt additional policies later and that these current policies are consistent with UNC School of Government guidance. Wes Brinegar made a motion to approve all four policies for the American Rescue Plan Act Fund. Charles E. Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD UPDATE

Misty Bishop-Price, NCWorks Operations Manager thanked Executive Director, Julie Wiggins for her help during the recent staff transition. Mrs. Price discussed the Workforce Development Board process of updating their Annual Plan, which has received final approval. Mrs. Price discussed WDB vacancies and that they are working on filling those with local elected officials. Mrs. Price also noted that NCWorks Career Centers are having successful in-person hiring and training events. Mrs. Price also discussed other projects, services, and grant funding. There was discussion among Executive Board members about NCWorks services and programs.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director discussed two grants previously mentioned that are well underway including the Dogwood Health Trust to help the Resilience and Recovery department and the Natural Disaster Hazard Mitigation Fund. Ms. Wiggins reminded the Executive Board about the upcoming 47th Annual Banquet to be held on Friday, September 9, 2022 and noted that invitations will be mailed soon and nomination forms for 2022 Outstanding Executive Board Member, Manager, and Local Elected Official have been emailed out. Ms. Wiggins announced that the Workforce Development Director position has been posted online. Ms. Wiggins said that she appreciates the openness and recommendations for improvement from Executive Board members and thanked Misty Bishop-Price for her help during this transition. Ms. Wiggins announced that Amber Chapman will be leaving the HCCOG at the end of July and taking a position at Appalachian State University.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Eddie Settle encouraged board members to attend future races at the newly re-opened North Wilkesboro Speedway. Board members discussed how this will positively impact the economy for our entire region. Eddie Settle and Kevin Reece discussed the “A Bed and A Book” program for underprivileged youth in the area.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS

Todd McNeill, Executive Board Chairman noted the Town of Lansing’s new mural of Olla Belle Reed, a local hero and famous bluegrass musician.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Eddie Settle made a motion to adjourn. Brenda Lyerly seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.



Chairman, Todd McNeill



Clerk to the Board, Victoria Oxentine

Date 09-19-2022