

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING  
DECEMBER 19, 2022  
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met December 19, 2022, 7:00pm, at the High Country Council of Governments Office in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Eddie Settle, Jeff Whitson, Mike Inscore, Timmy Evans, Kelly Melang, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Dennis Aldridge, Larry Fontaine, Steve Pitman, Jim Blevins, Rocky Buchanan, Wes Brinegar, Tom Hartman, Tim Futrelle, Paul Robinson Jr., Doug Matheson, and Todd McNeill. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Alan Thompson, Stoney Greene, Jordan Sellers, Charlie Brady, Julie Wiggins, Julie Page, Phil Trew, Cory Osborne, Zack Green, Sarah Price, Tatiana Magee, and Victoria Oxentine.

**CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION**

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS LISTED THEREIN**

Dennis Aldridge made a motion to approve the November 21, 2022 Executive Board minutes and all action items listed therein to reach final resolution with quorum. Tim Futrelle seconded the motion. Motion carried. Attorney Jeff Hedrick also asked for a second vote on the 2022 CEDS Presentation from November. Kelly Melang made a motion to approve the 2022 CEDS. Otis Church seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**Financial Highlights**

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented the Financial Highlights as of November 30, 2022 (Attachment A) and reviewed year to date revenues versus expenditures and balances. Wes Brinegar made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of November 30, 2022. Eddie Settle seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**AUDIT PRESENTATION**

Alan Thompson from TPSA CPAs presented the audit report and presentation summary (Attachment A1) for July 1, 2021- June 30, 2022. Mr. Thompson announced that there were no findings, and they issued a clean report. Mr. Thompson reviewed highlights from the report and noted that grant compliance is one of the most important aspects of the HCCOG's audit and commended the HCCOG staff for maintaining grant compliance. He noted that the HCCOG continues to maintain a healthy fund balance.

**YEAR OF THE TRAIL PRESENTATION**

Jordan Sellers, Northern Peaks State Trail Coordinator for Blue Ridge Conservancy presented a slideshow (Attachment B) about the 2023 Year of the Trail Campaign in North Carolina. Mr. Sellers discussed the campaign strategy, details, and engagement opportunities. Mr. Sellers also noted that trails have a significant return on investment. Chairman Todd McNeill thanked Blue Ridge Conservancy for all their help with projects in Ashe County.

**OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS PRESENTATION**

Sarah Price, Resiliency Planner discussed the large national settlement, the allocation, and responsibilities for counties to receive funding. Mrs. Price reviewed a handout (Attachment C) with important information on the subject. Mrs. Price and Cory Osborne, Recovery and Resiliency Director are available to help counties in our region with the paperwork for this settlement.

**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) RESOLUTION**

Phil Trew, Planning and Development Director presented a resolution (Attachment D) in support of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to expedite funding from the EDA. Jeff Whitson made a motion to approve the Resolution in Support of the CEDS. Otis Church seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mr. Trew noted that not only does the CEDS keep money flowing to our agency to support local government projects, the CEDS make the needs and projects identified therein more competitive for grant funding. Mr. Trew asked Tatiana Magee, GIS Tech & Planner to briefly discuss the Digital Inclusion Plan. Ms. Magee noted that the plan will be compiled by the end of January and will be presented to the board and all seven counties for adoption in February.

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

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director noted that the Legislative Committee met earlier this evening to draft a new slate of priorities for 2023. This draft of priorities will be sent out to the full board and will be up for consideration at the February meeting. Also in lieu of the Advisory Committee meeting in February, this time will be used for a new board member orientation/re-orientation for any board members wanting to attend. The budget process will be discussed and department heads will also attend to give an overview of the services their departments provide to local governments. The nominating committee (Tim Futrelle, Tom Hartman, and Wes Brinegar) will present the officer nominations for 2023 at the February meeting as well. Ms. Wiggins wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked Victoria Oxentine, Communications Manager for her work on the Christmas giftbags this year.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Eddie Settle noted that he has enjoyed and appreciated his time on the board and getting to know the HCCOG staff and board members. Mr. Settle noted that we should continue to think of Mayor Brenda Lyerly who recently lost her husband, Alec. Mr. Settle also noted that we are thankful Wes Brinegar is back in attendance after recent health problems. Mr. Settle was also happy to note that the HCCOG is a good investment for Wilkes County and that the fund balance has grown since his time serving on the board.

**CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS**

Todd McNeill, Executive Board Chairman welcome new board members Commissioner Timmy Evans from Alleghany County and Vice Chairman of the Wilkes County Commissioners, Stoney Greene. Chairman McNeill also wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Victoria Oxentine, Communications Manager noted that the 2023 HCCOG Executive Board meeting schedule (Attachment E) was placed at everyone’s seat and reminded everyone that there is no meeting in January.

**ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no other comments or business, Eddie Settle made a motion to adjourn. Wes Brinegar seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:01 pm.



Chairman, Todd McNeill



Clerk to the Board, Victoria Oxentine

Date 2/20/23