

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 20, 2023
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met February 20, 2023, 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, Timmy Evans, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Dennis Aldridge, Steve Pitman, Jim Blevins, Rocky Buchanan, Wes Brinegar, Tom Hartman, Tim Futrelle, and Todd McNeill. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Debra Turbeville, Ken Green, Julie Wiggins, Julie Page, Phil Trew, Zack Green, and Victoria Oxentine.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Steve Pitman made a motion to approve the December 19, 2022 Executive Board minutes. Otis Church seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented the Financial Highlights as of January 31, 2023 (Attachment A) and reviewed year to date revenues versus expenditures and balances. Mike Inscore made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of January 31, 2023. Otis Church seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Budget Amendment #4

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented Budget Amendment #4 (Attachment A1) which is an additional \$9,450.00 in federal funding to the Workforce Development department. Jeff Whitson made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #4. Otis Church seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant Project Ordinance

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented a Grant Project Ordinance for NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning which is \$500,000.00 in ARPA funding for the Workforce Development department. The funding will span from November 2022 – December 2026. Dennis Aldridge made a motion to approve the NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant Project Ordinance. Tim Futrelle seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NCWorks Substance Use Disorder Recovery Grant Project Ordinance

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented a Grant Project Ordinance for NCWorks Substance Use Disorder Recovery which is \$200,000.00 in ARPA funding for the Workforce Development department. The funding will span from November 2022 – December 2026. Wes Brinegar made a motion to approve the NCWorks Substance Use Disorder Recovery Grant Project Ordinance. Mike Inscore seconded the motion. Motion carried.

OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT

Stevie John, Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman was sick and unable to attend the meeting, therefore Area Agency on Aging Director, Zack Green gave a quick update. Mr. Green noted that Ms. John will present her annual report (Attachment B) at the next meeting and praised her work with long term care residents that is a multi-faceted, tough job. Mr. Green briefly discussed the Falls Prevention program and noted that they are midway through year one of three.

APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC) UPDATE

Phil Trew, Planning and Development Director presented an ARC report (Attachment C) that he must complete each year that shows how ARC money was spent in the Planning and Development department and how that funding fits into the COG's budget. Mr. Trew gave a brief overview of ARC projects in the region and programs the money was spent on. In 2022 the total allocation was \$141,300.00, this year the total allocation will be \$142,910.00.

RECESS OF HCCOG EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION AND CONVENING OF REGION D DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION SESSION

Chairman McNeill asked for a motion to recess the Executive Board session and convene the Region D Development Corporation (RDDC) session. Charles E. Vines made a motion to recess the HCCOG Executive Board session and convene the RDDC session. Wes Brinegar seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Consideration of April 18, 2022 Minutes

Phil Trew, Planning and Development Director presented the April 18, 2022 RDDC Minutes (Attachment D) for approval. Steve Pitman made a motion to approve the April 18, 2022 RDDC Minutes. Dennis Aldridge seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mr. Trew also noted that the RDDC has \$20,377.51 in the bank, which includes a \$1,200.00 interest payment for Mountain Bizworks investment.

CLOSING OF REGION D DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION SESSION AND OPENING OF HCCOG EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION

Chairman McNeill asked for a motion to close the RDDC session and open the HCCOG Executive Board session. Tom Hartman made a motion to close the RDDC session and open the HCCOG Executive Board session. Wes Brinegar seconded the motion. Motion carried.

REPORT FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE**Officer Nominations and Elections**

The Nominating Committee consisting of Tim Futrelle, Tom Hartman, and Wes Brinegar nominated the current slate of officers for 2023 including Todd McNeill as Chairman, Doug Matheson as Vice-Chair, Dennis Aldridge as Secretary, and Larry Fontaine as Treasurer. There

were no other nominations from the floor. Mike Inscore made a motion to approve the 2023 officer nominations. Jim Blevins seconded the motion. Motion carried.

DRAFT 2023 HCCOG LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director presented the Draft 2023 HCCOG Legislative Priorities (Attachment E) and noted that it was similar to the 2022 priorities list with a few adjustments and a couple of additions. Charles E. Vines made a motion to adopt the 2023 HCCOG Legislative Priorities. Wes Brinegar seconded the motion. Motion carried. Chairman McNeill noted that more on Legislative Advocacy is to come soon.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director noted that the building had a pipe burst and flooded during the extremely cold temperatures at Christmas time. We are still dealing with repairs and will soon have the carpet replaced, which may cause us to have to meet in a different location for the March Executive Board meeting. Ms. Wiggins announced the FY2024 budget planning and Advisory Committee Retreat is coming up in the next couple of months. Ms. Wiggins also shared data from the FY2021-2022 Annual Report which is a great snapshot of the work our departments do in the region. Ms. Wiggins noted that the ROI was up to \$80.42.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Wes Brinegar announced that the Town of Sparta is now the only official state recognized Fried Apple Pie Festival location. The festival will be held on May 6, 2023. Dennis Aldridge thanked Phil Trew for his help with a recent Housing Study in Avery County. Otis Church announced a Bicycle Race/Dog Parade happening in North Wilkesboro on April 1, 2023. Rocky Buchanan noted that the Fire on the Mountain Festival in Spruce Pine will be held on April 29, 2023.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Todd McNeill, Executive Board Chairman noted that it was good to have Brenda Lyerly back with us. Chairman McNeill also congratulated Dennis Aldridge on completing an Advanced Leadership program through the UNC School of Government.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Debra Turbeville and Ken Green with the NC Department of Insurance (NCDI) were in attendance to introduce themselves and learn more about the board and local governments. Ms. Turbeville is the Regional Director for Alleghany, Ashe, and Wilkes counties. Mr. Green is the Regional Director for Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, and Yancey counties. They serve as the liaison between the public and the Commissioner of Insurance/State Fire Marshall, Mike Causey.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Tim Futrelle made a motion to adjourn. Wes Brinegar seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.



Chairman, Todd McNeill



Clerk to the Board, Victoria Oxentine

Date 4/17/23