

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

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met November 20, 2023, 7:00pm, in the HCCOG Board Room in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Brenda Lyerly, Mike Inscore, Stoney Greene, Jeff Whitson, Timmy Evans, Kelly Melang, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Dennis Aldridge, Larry Fontaine, Steve Pitman, Chandler Reece, Rocky Buchanan, Wes Brinegar, Tom Hartman, Doug Matheson, and Todd McNeill. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Senator Ralph Hise, Alan Thompson, Debra Turbeville, Chris Grubb, Mason Reece, Julie Wiggins, Julie Page, Cory Osborne, Zack Green, Phil Trew, and Victoria Oxentine.

**CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION**

Chairman McNeill welcomed everyone to the High Country Council of Governments November Executive Board meeting. Chairman McNeill called on Tom Hartman to lead the board in the Pledge of Allegiance and called on Stoney Greene to lead the invocation.

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

Mike Inscore made a motion to approve the October 16, 2023 Executive Board minutes and all action items listed therein (Attachments A, A1, and A2). Stoney Greene seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**Financial Highlights**

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented the Financial Highlights as of October 31, 2023 (Attachment B) and reviewed year to date revenues versus expenditures and balances. Mrs. Page noted that the audit is complete. Mike Inscore made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of October 31, 2023. Jeff Whitson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Budget Amendment #2**

Finance Officer, Julie Page presented Budget Amendment #2 (Attachment B1) which is an increase of \$41,000.00 in local revenue of Planning and Development for Economic Recovery and Resilience and an increase of \$320,641.00 in the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). Brenda Lyerly made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #2. Stoney Greene seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**HCCOG AUDIT PRESENTATION**

Alan Thompson, TPSA presented the Audit Summary for FYE June 30, 2023 (Attachment C) and reported another clean audit with no findings this year.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

Senator Ralph Hise joined the Executive Board in a roundtable legislative discussion. Senator Eddie Settle was unable to attend. Senator Hise noted that he has been serving in the NC Senate for 14 years. Senator Hise discussed investments, projects, and committees he has been a part of over the years in the Senate. Senator Hise noted that counties and municipalities need to let their legislators know when applying for grants or when they have special projects/need funding so that

they can provide assistance/connections. Executive Board members and Senator Hise discussed various legislative topics and reviewed the 2023 HCCOG Legislative Priorities (Attachment D).

### **CONSIDERATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN**

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director presented the updated Strategic Plan Assessment by SERDI (Attachment E). Ms. Wiggins noted that there were six overall recommendations after all the surveys and focus group sessions held in September and October. Stoney Greene made a motion to approve the Strategic Plan Assessment. Otis Church seconded the motion. Motion carried.

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

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director introduced Chris Grubb who will be replacing Phil Trew as the Planning and Development Director. Ms. Wiggins noted that Mr. Grubb will begin on December 4<sup>th</sup> and have some time to work directly with Phil before his retirement on January 10, 2024. Ms. Wiggins discussed The American Flood Coalition regional tour and info session that HCCOG hosted recently along with what Cory Osborne and the Economic Recovery and Resilience department has accomplished in such a short period of time.

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Stoney Greene recognized outgoing Mayor of Wilkesboro, Mike Inscore as he did not seek reelection. Mayor Inscore served the Town of Wilkesboro for 26 years in different capacities. Stoney Greene also thanked the Executive Board for awarding him with the Outstanding Executive Board member award at this year's banquet. Brenda Lyerly noted that PBS recently highlighted the Woolly Worm Festival in Banner Elk. Kelly Melang announced that Beech Mountain recently passed a bond for their water issue and secured one grant so far. Doug Matheson noted that the Blowing Rock Holiday Parade is Saturday, November 25<sup>th</sup>. Rocky Buchanan thanked Senator Hise for attending and for all he has done for Mitchell County/Spruce Pine/the region.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Victoria Oxentine, Communications Manager announced that the Fall 2023 ReCOgnition was complete with printed copies and posted online.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Debra Turbeville, NCDOI noted that there has been a change in the regional map (Attachment F) and that she now covers all seven of the HCCOG counties. She noted that NCDOI will be opening a satellite office in North Wilkesboro. There was a public comment submitted via email from Greg Jenkins (Attachment G). The public comment was read by the clerk and Chairman McNeill noted that the board is grateful for the comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no other comments or business, Stoney Greene made a motion to adjourn. Otis Church seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.



Chairman, Todd McNeill



Clerk to the Board, Victoria Oxentine  
Admin. Asst.

Date 2/19/24