

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 19, 2024
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met February 19, 2024, 7:00 pm in the HCCOG Board Room in Boone. The following members were present: Charles Vines, Brenda Lyerly, Stoney Greene, Jeff Whitson, Dale Isom, Kelly Melang, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Dennis Aldridge, Larry Fontaine, Harley Masters, Chandler Reece, Teresa McCoy, Wes Brinegar, Tom Hartman, Ray Russell, Paul Robinson, Jr., Jeff Medrick, Doug Matheson, Todd McNeill. The following staff were present: Zack Green, Chris Grubb, Cory Osborne, Julie Page, Julie Wiggins and Linda Slade.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairman McNeill called the meeting to order welcomed everyone. Chairman McNeill asked Doug Matheson to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and called on Dennis Aldridge to offer the invocation.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Stoney Greene moved to approve the November 20, 2023 Executive Board minutes, seconded by Brenda Lyerly. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Julie Page, Finance Officer presented the Financial Highlights as of January 31, 2023. Ms. Page also presented Budget Amendment #3 showing an increase in Flood Damage Revenue and expenditure in Area Agency on Aging Fund. Stoney Greene moved to accept the financial statement, as well as the approval of Budget Amendment #3, seconded by Jeff Whitson. Motion carried.

RURAL CENTER COLLABORATIVE BROADBAND INITIATIVE PRESENTATION

Via Zoom presentation, Michael Kelly, Director of Collaborative Broadband and Innovation introduced Joe Freddoso who updated the Board on Collaborative Broadband, a project of the NC Rural Center working with local governments to coordinate regional broadband initiatives. Mr. Freddoso invited municipalities to reach out to learn more on securing broadband into rural areas. Mr. Freddoso's PowerPoint presentation will be forwarded to Executive Board Members.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & UNC CHAPEL HILL ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE CENTER PRESENTATION

Dr. Austin Thompson-Spain Associate Director of the UNC-Chapel Hill Environmental Finance Center (UNC EFC) presented to the Board via Zoom. The UNC EFC is dedicated to enhancing the ability of governments and other organizations to provide environmental programs and services in fair, effective and financially sustainable way. Dr. Thompson-Spain gave examples of how UNC EFC can assist local governments. Board members asked for Dr. Thompson-Spain's contact information be forward to them. Her presentation will also be shared with the Executive Board Members after the meeting.

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

Dennis Aldridge moved to close the HCCOG Executive Board Session and Convene the Region D Development Corporation Session. Seconded by Jeff Whitson. Motion Carried. Chris Grubb, Director of Planning & Development presented the minutes of the February 2023 RDDC meeting. Wes Brinegar moved to accept the minutes, seconded by Jeff Whitson. Motion carried. Mr. Grubb presented

information regarding a request from Mountain Bizworks to continue a partnership and financial support. Members received information of the impact the RDDC's loan to Mountain Bizworks has made to the region in the past. After discussion, Wes Binegar moved to invite Mountain Bizworks to a meeting to explain more about their organization and their work. Seconded by Stoney Greene. Motion carried. Charles Vines moved to close the RDDC Session and reconvene the HCCOG Executive Board Session. Seconded by Dennis Aldridge. Motion carried.

REPORT FROM PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Chris Grubb, Planning & Development Director updated the Board on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). The CEDs analyzes regional demographics, infrastructure, economic sectors, and economic development efforts. It also identifies economic development goals and objectives, local economic development projects, projects deemed vital to the region, and performance measures by which to gauge implementation of the CEDs. There are no adjustments to the 2022 High Country Council of Governments CEDs. There are 6 goals outlined for the FFY 2024 HCCOG strategies. The written report was included in the Executive Board packet.

REPORT FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

It comes as a motion of the Nominating Committee to elect the following offices for the upcoming year: Doug Matheson, Chair, Dennis Aldridge, Vice Chair, Larry Fontaine, Secretary, and Jeff Whitson, Treasurer. All ayes, Motion Carried.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COUNCIL AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Executive Director Julie Wiggins called attention to the latest annual report and the return on investment of the COG. Ms. Wiggins also alerted members of the 2024 Regional Needs Assessment Survey from the Area Agency on Aging (copy included in packet) and asked members to help distribute the survey.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

It was noted that all members should be sure to vote on March 5.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

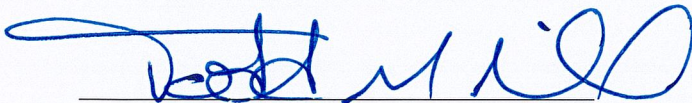
Chairman McNeill welcomed new members to the Board, Ray Russell, Teresa McCoy and Dale Isom. Mr. McNeil also reported that he is running for VP of the NC Association of County Commissioners and encouraged commissioners to attend the late summer annual meeting. Mr. McNeill thanked all members who have their name on ballots in their local counties/municipalities and for their service.

PUBLIC COMMENT

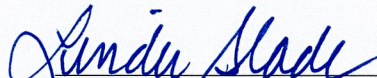
There were no public comments.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business or comments, Stoney Greene moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Otis Church. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.



Chairman, Todd McNeill



Linda Slade, Administrative Assistant