

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
JULY 15, 2024
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met July 15, 2024, 7:00pm, in the HCCOG Board Room in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Charles E. Vines, Todd McNeill, Greg Minton, Timmy Evans, Kelly Melang, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Jeff Whitson, Larry Fontaine, Harley Masters, Chandler Reece, Rocky Buchanan, Tom Hartman, Tim Futrelle, Ray Russell, Paul Robinson Jr., Dennis Aldridge, and Doug Matheson. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Drew Christy, Jeff Hedrick, Julie Wiggins, Caroline Briggs, Zack Green, Tim Price, Tammy Nelson, Sarah Price, Cory Osborne, and Victoria Oxentine. The following guests were present via Zoom: Jody Lovelace.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairman Matheson called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. Tim Futrelle led the Pledge of Allegiance and Charles E. Vines offered the invocation.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Todd McNeill moved to accept the minutes of the June 17, 2024 meeting, seconded by Paul Robinson Jr. The motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented the Financial Highlights as of June 30, 2024 (Attachment A) and noted that we are still accruing expenditures and revenues in closing out FY2024. Mrs. Briggs noted that we have received \$10,000 in banquet sponsorship thus far.

NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant Project Ordinance

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented an amended NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant Project Ordinance (Attachment A1). Mrs. Briggs explained that the Workforce Development department was awarded \$250,000 more dollars for this program.

Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of June 30, 2024 and the NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Amended Grant Project Ordinance. Jeff Whitson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

USDA UPDATE

Jody Lovelace, Area Director for USDA joined the meeting via Zoom. Mr. Lovelace gave an overview of the USDA agency and funding programs aimed at increasing economic development and improving quality of life in rural America. Most of the USDA programs are geared toward lower population, rural areas. USDA is known for their affordable interest rates and financial programs/services. Mr. Lovelace wants to ensure that the programs are being taken advantage of in the region while promoting and fostering relationships with local governments.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING UPDATES

Zack Green, Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Director and Tim Price, Compliance Officer presented a PowerPoint (Attachment B) giving an overview of the AAA department and main program areas. Mr. Green discussed community-based services and providers throughout the region, all the programs within the AAA and the funding used. Mr. Green noted that the AAA is in the final year of the Fall Prevention grant but there are several more grant funded positions/programs on the horizon, including the recently posted Digital Navigator position. Mr. Price discussed aging data trends across the state and the recent High Country Area Plan on Aging (Attachment B1).

HCCOG BYLAWS UPDATE

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director presented the HCCOG Bylaws update for consideration that was discussed last month, which is the addition of one sentence under Article V regarding meetings. The additional sentence states: “Executive Board members shall attend all Council meetings in person.” This sentence provides clarity regarding in-person/virtual meetings. Todd McNeill made a motion to approve the HCCOG Bylaws update. Charles E. Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director noted that the NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant Project Ordinance was enabled by the Workforce department to receive these additional funds that other Workforce boards had not used. Ms. Wiggins also officially welcomed Caroline Briggs as the new Finance Officer and announced the Finance Technician, Shannon Logan will start on July 23rd. Ms. Wiggins also discussed additional funding grants that will be coming soon.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dennis Aldridge discussed two bills in legislation regarding property tax that are concerning and tasked the board to contact their Legislators about them. Todd McNeill noted that Ashe County held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Agriculture Complex in Jefferson and that he is the 2nd Vice President nominee for the NC Association of County Commissioners.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS

Chairman Matheson thanked COG staff for their work and for the presentation tonight. Chairman Matheson also congratulated and recognized Julie Wiggins on her six-year anniversary as serving as the Executive Director.

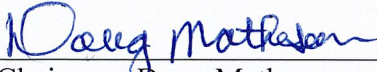
PUBLIC COMMENT

Drew Christy, Director of the Western Regional Office of Governor Roy Cooper discussed the Governor’s Page Program-for high school students to learn about state government in Raleigh. The Governor’s office is still looking for any high school students from Alleghany, Avery, and

Yancey that may be interested in the Page Program. Their goal is to have students from all 100 counties attend.

ADJOURNMENT

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



Chairman, Doug Matheson



Clerk to the Board, Victoria Oxentine

Date 8/19/24