

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
OCTOBER 20, 2025
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met October 20, 2025, 7:00pm, in the HCCOG Board Room in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Charles E. Vines, Brenda Lyerly, Wes Greene, Bill Osborne, Kelly Melang, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Larry Fontaine, Bobby Munsey, Jeff Harding, Rocky Buchanan, Teresa McCoy, Braxton Eggers, Paul Robinson Jr., Dennis Aldridge, and Doug Matheson. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Caroline Briggs, Zack Green, Cory Osborne, Chris Grubb, Jackson Marcellus, and Victoria Oxentine. The following guests were present: Holly Jones, Todd McNeill, and present via Zoom: Kathleen Armstrong.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairman Matheson called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. Rocky Buchanan led the Pledge of Allegiance and Dennis Aldridge offered the invocation.

AGENDA AMENDMENT

Chairman Matheson asked the board for consideration to amend the agenda to add NCARCOG Updates from NCARCOG Executive Director, Todd McNeill. Braxton Eggers made a motion to amend the agenda to add the presentation. Otis Church seconded the motion. Motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Larry Fontaine moved to accept the minutes of the August 18, 2025 meeting, seconded by Otis Church. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented the Financial Highlights as of September 30, 2025 (Attachment A) and discussed revenues versus expenditures. Wes Greene made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of September 30, 2025. Braxton Eggers seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Budget Amendment #2

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented Budget Amendment #2 (Attachment A1) noting that it was a \$79,751 increase in the Aging department match of actual awards received and a \$20,000 increase in the Planning department from the Dogwood Health Trust Digital Inclusion grant. Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #2. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NEW RIVER PADDLE TRAIL

Kathleen Armstrong, Director of Trail Planning + Community Engagement for New River Conservancy joined the meeting via Zoom and presented a slideshow (Attachment B) overviewing the New River Paddle Trail program. Ms. Armstrong discussed the New River which consists of 1 watershed, 3 states, and 360 miles of river. Ms. Armstrong also reviewed the Paddle Trail action plan and project timeline.

CURRENT RECOVERY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Cory Osborne, Recovery and Resilience Director presented a handout overviewing four important, time-sensitive recovery funding opportunities for local governments (Attachment C). Mr. Osborne reviewed the programs, deadlines, and project ideas. Mr. Osborne encouraged local governments to take advantage of these funding opportunities.

NCARCOG UPDATES

Todd McNeill, NC Association of Regional Councils of Governments (NCARCOG) Executive Director noted that he had been in his new role for two weeks now and has been traveling to visit all 16 COG's in the state. Mr. McNeill spoke on the importance of local governments utilizing the COG and its resources.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director gave a brief update on the Government shutdown, noting that the COG has a healthy fund balance if there is a need for Senior Center reimbursement during the shutdown. Ms. Wiggins also announced that the tenant in Suite B will be moving out at the end of the month, and our staff will be expanding back into that area soon, since we have multiple people sharing an office right now. Ms. Wiggins noted that we may need to purchase some new furniture for the space, and we are looking into purchasing an additional COG car because right now, all four cars are often being used daily. Ms. Wiggins thanked everyone for attending the banquet and thanked Victoria Oxentine for planning the event.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There was discussion about Housing needs and Julie Wiggins noted that there are ongoing conversations with ways the COG can support these needs and partnership with existing efforts. There was also much discussion about children living in DSS offices because there are no homes for level 2 & 3 at-risk children.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Matheson thanked COG staff for another great banquet and for all that attended. Chairman Matheson wished those that are running in the upcoming election good luck and thanked Todd McNeill for attending.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Holly Jones from Governor Josh Stein's office discussed the Grow NC initiative, a Hazard Mitigation grant deadline approaching, improvement in DMV wait times, and what a special time it was traveling WNC for Hurricane Helene memorials in September.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Otis Church made a motion to adjourn. Charles E. Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm.


Chairman, Doug Matheson


Clerk to the Board, Victoria Oxentine

Date 11/17/25