

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING  
NOVEMBER 17, 2025  
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met November 17, 2025, 7:00pm, in the HCCOG Board Room in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Charles E. Vines, Wes Greene, Bill Osborne, Kelly Melang, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Larry Fontaine, Jeff Whitson, Bobby Munsey, Mike Parlier, Rocky Buchanan, Teresa McCoy, Tim Futrelle, 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, Samantha Oleshuk, and Victoria Oxentine. The following guests were present: Traci Thompson and present via Zoom: Greg Tierney.

**CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION**

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

**CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES**

Tim Futrelle moved to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2025 meeting, seconded by Charles E. Vines. Motion carried.

**FINANCIAL MATTERS**

**Financial Highlights**

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented the Financial Highlights as of October 31, 2025 (Attachment A) and discussed revenues versus expenditures.

**Budget Amendment #3**

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented Budget Amendment #3 (Attachment A1) noting that it was for deferred revenue from last fiscal year in the Area Agency on Aging, Workforce Development received an additional \$500,000 for Disaster Dislocated Worker funding, and \$130,000 appropriation request from fund balance to the general fund for Suite B renovations and a new car for the COG fleet.

**ARPA Older Americans Act Grant Project Ordinance Amendment**

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented the ARPA Older Americans Act Grant Project Ordinance Amendment (Attachment A2) noting that nothing has changed other than shifting funds to providers in the region that could spend the funding in the timeframe allowed.

Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of October 31, 2025, Budget Amendment #3, and the ARPA Older Americans Act Grant Project Ordinance Amendment. Tim Futrelle seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**SELF-HELP'S NORTH CAROLINA AFFORDABLE HOUSING LOAN FUND**

Traci Thompson, Housing Program Associate presented a PowerPoint (Attachment B) overviewing the Self Help's WNC Affordable Housing Fund Loan. Ms. Thompson discussed the Loan Fund details and guidelines, noting that this program was currently only for Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey counties because of the Dogwood Health Trust.

**NC STATE CLIMATE OFFICE RECOURCES**

Greg Tierney, Research Scholar joined the meeting via Zoom and presented a PowerPoint (Attachment C) about the three main mission areas/programs of the NC State Climate Office. Mr. Tierney noted that climate information and data can be translated to local governments for decision making and that the data collected is always available on their website.

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

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director reminded Executive Board members of two upcoming grant deadlines that Cory Osborne discussed last month. Ms. Wiggins also discussed the unexpected increase in health insurance premiums for COG staff due to the change in insurance rates from the State Health Plan. The Advisory Committee recommends that the COG give a one-time 1.5% stipend to all COG staff to help with the insurance premiums and reassess the situation in 6 months. Braxton Eggers made a motion to approve a stipend of 1.5% to all COG employees enrolled in the State Health Plan. Wes Greene seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Dennis Aldridge announced Avery County Manager. Phillip Barrier's upcoming retirement in early 2026. Board Members noted that they would miss Mayor Tim Futrelle and Commissioner Otis Church and appreciate their service to the board and region. Charles E. Vines announced that he is entering his 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive, 4-year term as the Mayor of Bakersville.

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

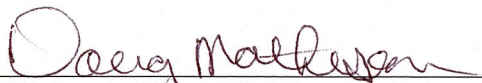
Chairman Matheson congratulated municipal leaders on the recent election and noted that we will miss those who are departing their positions in December.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Zack Green, Area Agency on Aging Director, introduced Samantha Oleschuk to the board. Samantha is the Aging Services Coordinator for Compliance and Administration.

**ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no other comments or business, Otis Church made a motion to adjourn. Braxton Eggers seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

  
Chairman, Doug Matheson

  
Clerk to the Board, Victoria Oxentine

Date 12/15/25