

Minutes
Western Piedmont Council of Governments
Bimonthly Policy Board Meeting
Tuesday, January 28, 2020
Mount Zion Baptist Church, Hudson NC

Members Present:

Bob Floyd, Jr., Chair
Jill Patton, Vice-Chair
Johnny Berry, Secretary
George Holleman, Treasurer
Barbara Pennell, Past Chair
Chip Black, At-Large
Wayne Abele, At-Large
Joseph L. Gibbons, At-Large
Larry Yoder
Johnnie Carswell, Alternate
Ronnie Setzer
Mike Labrose
Donald Robinson
Dale Sherrill
Joie Fulbright
Kyle Hayman, Alternate
Dennis Anthony
Ron Lackey, Alternate
Sheila Perkins
Dr. Caryl Burns
Larry Knight, Alternate
Ben Honeycutt
Larry Chapman
Marla Thompson
Ronnie Williams
Trina Michael, Alternate
Jerry Hodge
Gary McClure
Johnnie Greene, Alternate
Jack Simms, Alternate
Amparo Alfaro
Tommy Luckadoo
Malla Vue
Helen Chestnut
Jeanna Price

Local Government/Agency:

Cedar Rock
Hickory
Connelly Springs
Taylorsville
Gamewell
Valdese
Burke County
Lenoir
Alexander County
Burke County
Cajah's Mountain
Caldwell County
Catawba
Claremont
Conover
Conover
Drexel
Gamewell
Glen Alpine
Granite Falls
Granite Falls
Hildebran
Hudson
Long View
Maiden
Maiden
Newton
Rutherford College
Sawmills
Taylorsville
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed

Randy Burns

Appointed

Members Absent:

Kitty Barnes, At-Large

Catawba County

James Weaver

Brookford

Chris Jernigan

Morganton

Rick Justice

Rhodhiss

Casey Pope

Appointed

Guests/Others Present:

Donald Duncan, Conover

Mary Carter, Gamewell

Brad Moody, Catawba

Scott Hildebran, Lenoir

Todd Herms, Maiden

Tamara Brooks, Connelly Springs

Sherri Bradshaw, Drexel

Randy Feierabend, Cahah's Mountain

Barbara Harmon, Rhodhiss

Kenneth Geathers, Rutherford College

WPCOG Staff Present:

Anthony Starr, Executive Director

Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director/Director of Community & Economic Development

Ashley Bolick, Director of Administrative Services and Human Resources

Andrea Roper, Finance Director

Tina Miller, Director of Area Agency on Aging

Mary Mitchell, Family Caregiver Support Specialist

Wendy Johnson, Director of Workforce Development

Jason Toney, Communications Specialist

Alison Adams, Director of Community & Regional Planning

Patrick DeMauro, Code Enforcement Officer

Todd Stroup, GIS Analyst

Taylor Dellinger, Senior Data Analyst/GIS Manager

Lori Dixon, Administrative Assistant

Call to Order/Welcome

A regular meeting of the WPCOG Policy Board was called to order at 6:46 pm by Chair Bob Floyd. Chair Floyd thanked the Town of Sawmills for hosting the meeting. Sawmills Mayor Johnny Greene welcomed the board to Sawmills.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting both regular and closed session were considered. Mr. Wayne Abele

made a motion to approve both regular and closed session minutes from the November 26, 2019 meeting and Mr. Johnny Berry offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business/Reports

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Recognition of New Board Members

Chair Floyd asked the newly appointed Policy Board Delegates, Mr. Ronnie Williams representing Town of Maiden and Ms. Jeanna Price and Mr. Randy Burns, both of whom are Appointed Delegates, to come forward to receive a certificate of recognition.

FY Audit Update

Ms. Andrea Roper, Director of Finance, shared provided an update to the board on the status of the FY19 audit. On December 20, 2019 the Executive Committee approved to amend the FY19 audit contract with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. The contract amendment reflected an audit report due date of February 28, 2020 as opposed to the original October 31, 2019 due date. The extension was necessary due to circumstances and unforeseeable set-backs, resulting from a change in auditors and an understaffed finance office. The audit process with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A. has been more comprehensive, with an emphasis placed on more testing than WPCOG experienced in past audits. The finance department staff & Martin Starnes & Associates' (MSA) staff have diligently been working together to prepare the FY19 audit report by the February 28, 2020 deadline.

To date, all accounts have been reclassified to be compatible with MSA software. The trial balances for all major funds are complete in MSA software. Preliminary financial statements have been created now that data has been classified correctly and uploaded to MSA software. Compliance testing is underway, but not complete.

Regional Job Flows

Mr. Taylor Dellinger, Senior Data Analyst/GIS Manager gave a detailed presentation on regional job flows. Overview of the presentation included Spring 2019 statics and the US Census Bureau migration data estimates for every county in North Carolina on "Census Flows Mapper" based on 2012-16 (5-year) American Community Survey (ACS) estimates. This dataset reveals how many persons (age one year and older) moved from one county to another during a year, as well as movers to counties in the US from abroad. Other areas of statistics included 2012-16 migration results for each county in the Hickory MSA.

4th Amendment of the 2019-2020 Budget

Ms. Andrea Roper, Director of Finance, discussed the 4th Amendment of the 2019-2020 Budget which reflects a total budget of \$20,770,171 and an operating budget of \$7,349,834 which represents an increase of the total budget from the November 26, 2019 budget amendment of \$19,214.

Highlights of the 4th Amendment of the 2019-2020 Budget include:

- Environmental Protection increased by \$15,000 due to additional revenue for the 319 Septic Tank project.
- An increase of \$4,214 in Area on Aging Services to account for additional revenues for aging special events.
- Salaries, Compensated Absences, Retirement, and Group Insurance increased due to the addition of a new finance position and additional compensated absence expenses.
- Contractual increased \$15,000 to cover expenses for the 319 Septic Tank project.
- Contingency decreased by \$32,725 due to the reallocation of these funds to cover the new finance position and normal program expenses.
- All other changes to the expenditure lines reflect normal program needs.

Staff requested that the Policy Board review and approve the fourth amendment of the 2019-2020 Budget.

Mr. Chip Black made a motion that the Board approve the fourth amendment of the 2019-2020 Budget as proposed. Ms. Jill Patton offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

FY 20-21 WPCOG Assessments for Local Governments

Mr. Anthony Starr, Executive Director, presented the proposed assessments for local governments for FY 20-21. The proposed assessments for FY21 reflect a 0.6% increase in population and a total increase of assessments of 7.3%. The total increase is primarily attributed to the planned third and final phase of a general dues increase.

In summary, in 2018, the WPCOG Policy Board unanimously approved a 10-cent increase to 60 cents per capita for FY2018-19 with two additional increases anticipated. Last year, the Board approved the second 10-cent increase. One of the tables reflects the new general assessment rate of 80 cents per capita. Prior to 2018, the last assessment rate increase occurred in 1997. The increase in assessments provide additional funds for implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), project development and grant writing, Regional Data Center services, and Area Agency on Aging administration. The FY2020-21 assessment rate increase will generate \$37,148 in additional revenues to serve the local governments in our region. Minor annual increases for inflation are anticipated after the third phase increase. This 3-phase set of increases to 80 cents per capita will restore the per capita value of WPCOG assessments when adjusted for inflation, back to 1997.

The assessments also include the required match for the MPO per federal and state requirements. The federal funding for the MPO is decreasing 20% for FY20-21 and thus reduces required match for local governments. A 5% decrease is proposed for the MPO assessments. Staff proposes only the 5% reduction so as to avoid significant fluctuations in local government assessments from year to year. It is likely no MPO assessment increases will be required for the next few years with this approach. Reducing the MPO assessments by 5% also maintains existing levels of transportation planning services to our local governments.

Staff requested that the Board review and approve the FY2020-21 assessments.

Ms. Jill Patton made a motion that the Policy Board approve the assessments as presented. Mr. Larry Chapman offered a second. The motion was passed unanimously.

NADO Award Recognition

Mr. Anthony Starr provided an overview to the board of the three National Association of Development Organizations' (NADO) awards received during the 2019 Annual Training Conference, held October 19-22 in Reno, NA.

2019 Catawba Head Start Community Assessment

The purpose of the 2019 Catawba Head Start Community Assessment is to present CCS-EHS Policy Board and staff with a thorough assessment of the current state of the physical, social, and economic welfare of families with very young children in Catawba County, and provide an understanding of factors affecting this population. The assessment includes a variety of maps to illustrate how various forms of hardships are experienced in communities throughout Catawba County. The assessment also compares changes in the demographic and economic makeup of very young children and their families in Catawba County over the last five years. One goal of the community assessment is to determine geographic areas of Catawba County in which to concentrate outreach and enrollment efforts of the Early Head Start Program. The assessment makes extensive use of WPCOG's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis of various sources of data, including: US Census ACS Estimates 2005-09, 2008-12 and 2013-17, Birth Certificate Data (from NC DHHS SCHS), NC Department of Public Instruction school data, CDC, NC Department of Public Health, and many others. The results of the community assessment were given to the CCS-EHS board in June 2019.

Early Head Start staff is already using the data to develop strategies to improve the Early Head Start program. Other nonprofits, local governments, and the WPCOG, are using the results of the report to complete grant applications to improve the quality of life of young children in the County. The Catawba County School Board will use the information in the report to analyze kindergarten readiness of their future students.

WPCOG staff compiled the data and graphics used in the report. GIS staff generated over 20 maps for the report using data from a variety of sources. WPCOG staff also completed the Catawba Early Head Start parent survey that was used in the report. In total, over 75 tables and charts are included in the 100+ page report.

Parenting the Second Time Around (P2TA) WPCOG Area Agency on Aging and Adrian L. Shuford YMCA collaborated to form the initiative "Parenting the Second Time Around" (P2TA) to provide a support group for families across Catawba County in which grandparents are taking the responsibility for raising their grandchildren.

P2TA initiative provides a monthly get-together (September-June) including dinner for families to enjoy as a group, followed by support group meeting for grandparents, and supervised playtime for their children at Shuford YMCA. The goal of this initiative is to strengthen families, promote fellowship, and help resolve the sense of isolation by providing support and encouragement for families. Additionally, grandparents gain coping strategies and the opportunity of sharing their experiences with one another

and most importantly, meet new friends on the same journey. Also, the children are making new friends while enjoying their supervised playtime together.

WPCOG Code Compliance Program

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments created a regional code compliance program in July 2018 to serve its 24 local municipalities in the four county region of Alexander, Caldwell, Catawba, and Burke. This program incorporates municipal code enforcement, ADA compliance for local governments under Title II (US Access Board, DOJ, and NW Regional ADA), and Stormwater & Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination process under NCDEQ and EPA. WPCOG designed the program goals, wrote the model ordinances, developed educational materials, created a special code compliance application, brought on thirteen municipalities, and hired a code compliance manager, a code compliance officer, an ADA coordinator, and a stormwater specialist.

This program has been running for approximately a year and has surpassed all expectations. Since January 2019 over five hundred notice of violations have been issued in the participating municipalities and have resolved over 35 percent of these violations following the model ordinances and utilizing WPCOG's in-house GIS web application. Vacant/dilapidated houses, manufactured homes, abandoned junk, motor vehicles, trash, debris, junk and other issues have been removed from properties improving the health and property values in each municipality.

Workforce Development Board Appointment

Ms. Wendy Johnson, Workforce Development Director, shared a letter of recommendation for Gabrielle Sinclair along with her biography. Staff requests the Policy Board appoint Gabrielle Sinclair to the Workforce Development Board membership for a two-year term, beginning January 1, 2020.

Mr. Larry Yoder made a motion that the Policy Board approve Ms. Sinclair. Mr. George Holleman offered a second. The motion was passed unanimously.

Financial Impact of Regional Code Enforcement Program

Ms. Alison Adams, Director of Community & Regional Planning presented a summary of the financial impact of the code enforcement program. In December of 2017, the Executive Committee directed staff to explore the creation of a regional code enforcement service for its local governments. In July of 2018, code enforcement services were initiated for Hudson, Cedar Rock, Maiden, Drexel, Hildebran and Rhodhiss. In July of 2019, Catawba, Cahah's Mountain, Brookford and Valdese contracted with the COG for code enforcement services.

Staff Updates

Mr. Anthony Starr reviewed the Executive Director's Report outlining both current and upcoming projects by department.

Adjournment

Mr. Joie Fulbright made a motion that the meeting adjourn at 8:16 pm and the motion was seconded by Mr. Larry Yoder. The motion passed unanimously.