



Bi-Monthly Policy Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 26, 2021—6 PM

Remote Participation Meeting

Agenda Item	Presenter	Action Requested
Call to Order/Welcome	Chairman Bob Floyd, Jr.	
Roll Call	Ashley Bolick	
Minutes of Previous Meetings	Chairman Floyd	Yes
Recognition of New Board Members	Chairman Floyd	No
Audit Presentation	Ko Tang Cha-Moses	Yes
4th Amendment of FY 2020-2021 Budget	Andrea Roper	Yes
FY 21-22 Dues Assessments	Anthony Starr	Yes
Decrease in RHA Applicable Payment Standards	Stephanie Hanvey	No
Other Business		
Executive Director's and Staff Reports		
Next Meeting - Tuesday, March 23, 2021		
Adjournment		

Notes: Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the January 26, 2021 Policy Board meeting will be conducted electronically via Zoom and will be live streamed to the WPCOG Facebook page. Board members are asked to join the meeting by using the login information provided by email. Persons needing special assistance should contact Ashley Bolick at 828-485-4221 prior to the meeting.

**Minutes
Western Piedmont Council of Governments
Bimonthly Policy Board Meeting
Tuesday, November 24, 2020
Video/Conference Call Meeting**

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
Joie Fulbright
Kyle Hayman, Alternate
Dennis Anthony
Dr. Caryl Burns
Ben Honeycutt
Larry Chapman
Marla Thompson
Chris Jernigan
Ronnie Thompson, Alternate
Jerry Hodge
Allen Spencer
Gary McClure
Amparo Alfaro
Tommy Luckadoo
Helen Chestnut
Randy Burns
Jeanna Price

Local Government/Agency:

Cedar Rock
Hickory
Connelly Springs
Taylorsville
Gamewell
Valdese
Burke County
Lenoir
Alexander County
Burke County
Cajah's Mountain
Conover
Conover
Drexel
Granite Falls
Hildebran
Hudson
Long View
Morganton
Morganton
Newton
Rhodhiss
Rutherford College
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed

In-person/Remote Participation

Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
In-person at WPCOG
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
In Person at WPCOG
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote
Remote

Members Absent:

Kitty Barnes, At-Large
James Weaver
Mike Labrose
Donald Robinson
Dale Sherrill
Sheila Perkins
Ronnie Williams

Catawba County
Brookford
Caldwell County
Catawba
Claremont
Glen Alpine
Maiden

Keith Warren	Sawmills
Malla Vue	Appointed
Casey Pope	Appointed

Guests/Others Present:

Chris Wall, NC Association of Regional Councils of Government, Remote
Scott Hildebran, Lenoir, Remote
Donald Duncan, Conover, Remote

WPCOG Staff Present:

Anthony Starr, Executive Director, In-person at WPCOG
Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director, In-person at WPCOG
Ashley Bolick, Director of Administrative Services and Human Resources, In-person at WPCOG
Andrea Roper, Finance Director, In-person at WPCOG
Jason Toney, Communications Specialist, In-person at WPCOG
Stephanie Hanvey, Director of Regional Housing Authority, In-person at WPCOG
Alison Adams, Community & Regional Planning Director
Duncan Cavanaugh, Transportation Planner/Data Technician, Remote
Averi Ritchie, Transportation Planner/ADA Administrator, Remote
Todd Stroup, GIS Analyst, Remote

Call to Order/Welcome and Roll Call

A regular meeting of the WPCOG Policy Board was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Bob Floyd. Chair Floyd thanked the board for joining the remote meeting. Chair Floyd asked the board clerk for a roll call. The roll call was completed and names recorded for the meeting minutes. Chair Floyd said that he would ask for a motion for all items requiring board approval at the nominating committee presentation.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were considered. There were no corrections or questions.

Unfinished Business/Reports

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

NADO Awards Recognition

Mr. Anthony Starr, WPCOG Executive Director provided an overview of three award winning projects as well as staff whom worked on the projects. The National Association of Development Organizations' (NADO) is a Washington, DC-based association that promotes programs and policies that strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery, and comprehensive strategies. The association's Aliceann Wohbruck Impact Awards program recognizes regional development organizations and partnering organizations for improving the economic and community competitiveness of our nation's regions and local communities. Award-winning projects were honored during NADO's 2020 Virtual Annual Training Conference, held online October 20-22.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments was honored during the 2020 NADO Conference for the following three awards.

Henry Fork and Jacob Fork Watershed Conservation Plan

On Friday, Feb. 28, the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) and Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina completed the Henry Fork and Jacob Fork Watershed Conservation Plan. The plan, developed by WPCOG over a nine-month research period, ultimately aims to conserve these two aquatic resources while also creating access points for river recreation. With funding support from the N.C. Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Catawba County, Foothills Conservancy, Beaver Foundation and Duke Energy (Piedmont Natural Gas) Foundation, the WPCOG administered the planning, performed detailed analyses of resources and gathered input from stakeholder partners to create the final plan. The planning area covers both rivers' watersheds in eastern Burke and western Catawba counties, between N.C. Highway 18 and the exit for N.C. Highway 10 along U.S. 321. The Henry Fork and Jacob Fork Watershed Conservation Plan, with its priorities and goals, along with the future implementation efforts, will go a long way toward achieving water quality benefits. The identification of priority parcels for conservation and recreation will reduce surface water pollution associated with erosion and stream sedimentation and provide future access for recreational corridors. This plan is not only beneficial for the natural environment, but also for the City of Newton's drinking water intake on the Jacob Fork River near U.S. 321.

Foothills Conservancy and its partners in Catawba County formulated the preliminary study goals which included engaging stakeholders, identifying small focus areas in the study watersheds, compiling data on water quality and natural/historical/cultural resources, reviewing existing public recreation assets in the area, and mapping areas best suited to voluntary conservation activities, like trails and paddling access points.

Stormwater Planning & Administration

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality enforces any municipality of a certain size to manage any stormwater runoff within their boundaries. This requirement is based off of a 1972 permit developed under the Clean Water Act, enforced by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. The management of stormwater is needed to protect our streams that supply our drinking water, ensure environmental health, and work as a major draw for North Carolina's tourism. The correct management of stormwater helps prevent flooding, prevents pollutants from entering our states water bodies, and prevents erosion from damaging one of our most valuable natural resources.

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) Stormwater Partnership began in 2010, and conducted education programs on behalf of a few local governments in the region to fulfill the Outreach/Education required in their MS4 Stormwater Permits. As of July 2019 the WPCOG has expanded their Stormwater program beyond the education & outreach programs it started with. In response to stricter DEQ regulations on stormwater runoff management, our program is now designed to fulfill all of the criteria. This program is designed to allow municipalities to comply with DEQ requirements as well as ensure the quality of their local waterways at a very reasonable cost. Currently we are contracted to administer full stormwater programs for all of the municipalities in Caldwell County; including Lenoir, Granite Falls, Hudson, Gamewell, Sawmills, and Cahah's Mountain, as well as Valdese in Burke County, and Conover and Newton in Catawba County. The WPCOG also continues to conduct the outreach and education to the City of Hickory, City of Morganton, Town of Maiden, and the Town of Rutherford College.

The WPCOG stormwater program focuses on the measures required by EPA municipal stormwater permits (NPDES MS4): Education and outreach on stormwater issues, illicit discharge monitoring and enforcement, permitting and inspection of stormwater control structures for new and existing developments, and the

management of good housekeeping procedures to ensure our municipalities themselves are following valuable environmental practices. We want to enable our municipalities to enjoy the benefits of cleaner drinking water, satisfy federal requirements, and reduce the erosion of their waterways.

Hickory Trail Economic Impact Analysis

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) worked with City of Hickory staff to determine the economic and demographic potential for the Hickory Trail Project. The resulting Hickory Trail Economic Impact Analysis determined the potential private investment, job growth, new housing development, and population increase that the Hickory Trail system could bring to the City of Hickory over the next 15 years. The Hickory Trail is one of the Crafting Hickory projects that has the potential to transform the city. Following a significant decline in manufacturing jobs and a reduction in the young adult population, the community collaborated on a plan to revitalize and reestablish Hickory as an economic leader of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) region of 350,000 residents. The strategy, developed with its citizens and businesses, is based on the successes of similar cities and consists of four major components, which include: the City Walk, Streetscapes and Gateways, Riverwalk, and a Class A advanced manufacturing park, now known as Trivium Corporate Center. The project further develops diverse businesses and professional jobs in the City's Central Business District and has already had a positive impact, with a major company headquarters located along its route. The path will also create connectivity to shopping, dining, educational, and medical services for Lenoir-Rhyne University students, residents, and employees.

Chair Floyd congratulated and thanked staff for all their hard work on these and other projects.

Workforce Development Board New Appointments

Ms. Wendy Johnson, Director of Workforce Development requested that the Policy Board appoint Jennifer Nicholes, Human Resource Manager at Siegwirk (Burke County), and Krista Bridgwood, Human Resource Manager at Bemis Manufacturing Company (Caldwell County) to the workforce development board in order to meet the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) board member private sector requirements. Both new board appointments would be for a two-year term beginning July 2020.

Chair Floyd asked for questions, there were none.

Federal/State Post-Election Update

Mr. Chris Wall provided a Federal and State post-election update to the board. Mr. Wall is the lobbyist and advocate for the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments. Mr. Wall is also a partner and principal with EQV Strategic (eqvstrategic.com). Chris provided his insight about the state of affairs and how it will impact local governments and Councils of Governments in the state. Priorities at both the federal and state level will continue to be education and continued COVID relief. Additionally, at the state and COG association level DOT and transportation issues and project remain high on the priority list. Infrastructure needs in NC are great and DOT has been hit hard recently. With more oversight at the board level, things look hopeful.

Chair Floyd asked for additional questions, there were none.

EDA Cares Act Grant Story Book Mapping

Ms. Alison Adams, Director of Community and Regional Planning, presented a work plan for a regional story book mapping project funded by EDA Cares Act. A portion of the funds obtained by WPCOG through the EDA Cares Act

Grant will be used to develop a mapping application over the next year-and-a-half, that displays recreational experiences, places of interest, agriculture opportunities and gathering spots throughout Alexander, Burke Caldwell, and Catawba counties. This application will utilize ESRI GIS software and its ArcGIS Online platform to create the Storybook. The Storybook is a combination of text, interactive maps, and other multimedia content. Destinations and pedestrian amenities will be selectable items throughout the map. Each selection will include a write-up as well as pictures, drone footage or plans. Information for proposed destinations will include information such as but not limited to— contacts, webpage, hours, future project information, amenities and updates. The legend will make it clear to users as to which destinations are existing and which are proposed. The goal is to show opportunities for citizens (current and future) and tourists to exercise and experience recreational opportunities, events, places to visit to buy fresh produce, beer, wine and experiences within the region. This application will serve as a tool for future funding opportunities, local municipality land-use and transportation planning, as well as citizen and tourist engagement. Improving quality of life will coincide with economic development and business recruitment goals. This may also serve as a tool to bring additional features/ opportunities to the region by pointing out gaps or ideal locations.

WPCOG has plans to collaborate with partners throughout the region to collection information, obtain input and buy-in, as well as branding/marketing the tool. The next steps are to engage partners throughout the region in the specific categories below. The schedule is as follows:

Recreation (January 2021)

- Existing parks, sports fields, trails, trailheads
- Future parks and trails

Places of interest (May 2021)

- Landmarks, historic sites, other
- Local arts, museums, libraries
- Downtowns
- Locations of major events, fairs, festivals

Agriculture (September 2021)

- Family farms, produce stands, local growers, markets

Gathering spots (January 2022)

- Dining areas, galleries, breweries/wineries, outfitters/bike shops

A mid-project and final project presentation will be made to the policy board.

Landlord Incentives

Ms. Stephanie Hanvey, WPCOG Regional Housing Authority Director, presented a new landlord incentive program that will be used for a limited time during first quarter of 2021 to hopefully increase the number of landlords participating in the RHA programs. During this difficult time of COVID, HUD awarded housing authorities extra administrative funding to help with the increased costs of administering housing programs. With the NC Governor's moratorium on evictions, many tenants believe that they are not required to pay their portion of the rents even if no income has been lost. This is definitely not the case, but it has caused tenants to not pay their rent portions and landlords are struggling to make their mortgage payments on their units. The consequence to the RHA is that many landlords are no longer wanting to be landlords at all because this has caused a financial hardship for them.

In an effort to increase the number of participating landlords, the RHA plans to implement a Landlord Incentive Program using the extra administrative funding beginning January-March 2021 and wants to make the policy board aware of the program.

The RHA will be giving \$500.00 to any new landlord willing to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) program. Referral incentive of \$50.00 will also be given to any current landlord who refers a new landlord to the program.

Landlord Incentive – January, February, March 2021

- Beginning January 1 to run through March 31, 2021
- \$500.00 for new landlords
- Landlords must complete RFTA, pass inspection and be willing to complete a 1 year contract.
- New landlords can only receive the 500.00 incentive one time.
- Projected spending \$4,500.00 – \$9,000.00 for all three months

Referral Incentive for Current Landlords – January, February, March 2021

- Beginning January 1 to run through March 31, 2021
- \$50.00 for any current landlord who refers a new landlord to our program
- Current and new landlords must both sign an agreement attesting to the referral
- To receive the referral funds, the new landlord has to complete the entire process – complete RFTA, pass inspection, sign contract and be willingly to participate through the first year contract.
- Projected spending \$300.00 – \$900.00

Staff wants to make the board aware of the Landlord Incentive Program that is plan for implementation beginning January-March 2021. No board action is necessary.

3rd Amendment of the FY 2020-2021 Budget

Ms. Andrea Roper, Finance Director, presented the 3rd Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget reflecting a total budget of \$21,931,966 and an operating budget of \$8,061,248 which represents an increase of \$17,031 from the September 22, 2020 budget amendment.

The 3rd Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget include:

- Environmental Protection decreased \$15,196 to reflect actual FY21 expected expenditures.
- Community and Regional Planning increased \$11,923 due to the addition of two new projects.
- An increase of \$22,567 in Economic Development due to the addition of a new building reuse project and additional EDA CARES expenses.
- Group insurance increased \$33,934 to reflect additional costs due to the added positions for the new environmental health partnership.
- The rent/lease-building expense line increased \$162,700 due to the environmental health partnership lease with Caldwell County and the reallocation of the Conover Station lease payments.
- Mortgage/Occupancy costs decreased \$92,700 due to the reallocation of the Conover Station lease payments to the rent/lease-building expense line.
- Supplies increased \$20,340 due to the purchase of supplies and new computers for the environmental health partnership positions.

- An increase in advertising/subscriptions due to the renewal and purchase of software for the environmental health partnership.
- Capital Outlay-Equipment increased \$12,941 due to the anticipated purchase of a vehicle for the environmental health partnership.
- Contingency decreased \$114,386 due to funds being reallocated to other expense lines and to better align with actual costs in the current fiscal year.
- OPEB Trust Allocation decreased \$36,056 due to increased fringe benefit costs.
- All other changes to the expenditure lines reflect normal program needs.

Staff requests Policy Board to review and approve the third Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget.

Chair Floyd asked for questions, there was none. Chair Floyd asked if there was a motion on the previous board items.

Catawba Career Center Lease Renewal – Conover Station

Mr. Anthony Starr, WPCOG Executive Director, presented lease renewal agreement to the board for the Catawba Career Center – Conover Station. In 2015, the Policy Board approved leasing a portion of Conover Station to locate the NCWorks Career Center for Catawba County. The lease included 6,888 square feet of space for exclusive use for our Workforce Development program for the operation of an NCWorks Career Center. The lease also included non-exclusive space such as the hallways, restrooms, large meeting spaces, parking, etc.

The lease term was for an initial period of five years with an option to renew the lease for an additional five years. The current lease cost is \$7,725 per month or \$13.45 per square foot annually. The lease agreement may be renewed at the option of the WPCOG for at a monthly rate of \$8,311 per month or \$14.48 per square foot annually. The renewal option must be exercised 90 days prior to expiration of the first 5-year term. The term ends on March 18th, 2021 and notice of renewal must be given by mid-December, 2020. Staff consulted with a real estate professional who indicated the lease rate is on the low end of market rates for this class of space.

Earlier this year, the Executive Committee discussed the idea of creating a regional career center on the main campus of the WPCOG. Some initial work was done but the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted WPCOG operations and much seems uncertain about the future needs of office space. The pandemic revealed the operation of a regional career center is certainly feasible. However, more time is needed to determine the availability of state funding to pay for the debt service for a new regional career center and first acquiring a mobile workforce development vehicle is recommended.

If the WPCOG decides to move ahead with building a regional career center, the terms of the lease provide for a one-year notice of cancellation due to funding issues. It seems this clause in the agreement applies to the funding situation of the Workforce Development program.

Staff and the Executive Committee recommend approval of the lease extension.

Nominating Committee Report

Nominating Committee Chair, Wayne Abele presented the nominating committee report to the board. Committee Chair Abele was appointed by board Chair Bob Floyd at the September 22 Policy Board meeting to serve as Nominating Committee Chair for 2020. The purpose of this committee was to recommend officers and appointed

delegates for 2021. The committee included representatives from each county, two representing cities and two representing counties. Mr. Abele represented Burke County, Kitty Barnes, represented Catawba County, Larry Chapman from Hudson, and Mayor George Holleman from Taylorsville. The committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the following persons for positions beginning January 1, 2021. They include:

Chair: Bob Floyd	At-Large: Wayne Abele
Vice Chair: Jill Patton	At-Large: Kitty Barnes
Secretary: Johnny Berry	At-Large: Chip Black
Treasurer: George Holleman	At-Large: Joe Gibbons
Past Chair: Barbara Pennell	

Appointed Policy Board Delegates:
 Erisha Lipford, Term ends December 2022
 Tommy Luckadoo, Term ends December 2022
 Helen Chestnut, Term ends December 2022
 Amparo Alfaro, Term ends December 2022

Forum Representative: Wayne Abele
 Alternate Forum Representative: Kitty Barnes

Committee Chair Abele submitted the proposed slate of officers and appointments to the board on behalf of the Nominating Committee.

Chair Floyd thanked Mr. Abele and the members of the Nominating Committee for their work. Board Chair Floyd asked for questions before asking for a motion from the board. There were no questions.

Ms. Jill Patton made a motion that the board approve and adopt the minutes from the September 22, 2020 meeting, 3rd Amendment of the FY 2020-2021 Budget, Catawba Career Center Lease Renewal and the nominations as presented by the Nominating Committee. Mr. Joe Gibbons offered a second. A roll call vote was called by Chair Floyd.

Larry Yoder	Yes	Bob Floyd	Yes	Jill Patton	Yes
George Holleman	Yes	Barbara Pennell	Yes	Marla Thompson	Yes
Wayne Abele	Yes	Dr. Caryl Burns	Yes	Ronnie Williams	Not Present
Johnny Berry	Yes	Larry Chapman	Yes	Jerry Hodge	Yes
Dennis Anthony	Yes	Joseph L. Gibbons	Yes	Casey Pope	Not Present
Sheila Perkins	Not Present	Allen Spencer	Yes	Helen Chestnut	Yes
Ben Honeycutt	Yes	Keith Warren	Not Present	Amparo Alfaro	Yes
Chris Jernigan	Yes	Kitty Barnes	Not Present	Tommy Luckadoo	Yes
Gary McClure	Yes	James Weaver	Not Present	Randy Burns	Yes
John "Chip" Black, Jr.	Yes	Donald Robinson	Not Present	Jeanna Price	Yes
Mike Labrose	Not Present	Dale Sherrill	Not Present	Malla Vue	Not Present
Ronnie Setzer	Yes	Joie Fulbright	Yes		

The motion passed.

Outgoing Board Member Recognition

Chair Floyd took a moment to thank appointed delegate Casey Pope for her service over the last two years.

Staff Updates

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

- The WPCOG office remains closed to the public except by appointment.
- Some staff continue to telework but all staff work at least two days per week in the office.
- AAA had 472 attend an Adult Children of aging Parents (ACAP) virtual caregiver symposium featuring Teepa Snow.
- Ombudsmen continue to work with facilities, county health departments, residents and families on COVID outbreaks in facilities.
- Community and Economic Development staff are currently administering 68 grants for local governments.
- The Community & Regional Planning department is currently doing 160-D rewrites for Cajah's Mountain, Gamewell and Rutherford College.
- Final fieldwork continues for the FY19-20 WPCOG audit.
- On November 17, HUD awarded an additional 75 mainstream vouchers to the WPCOG. Since November of 2018, WPCOG has been awarded a total of 246 Mainstream Vouchers. The new total of vouchers is 1,330.

Adjournment

Chair Floyd reminded the board of the next meeting scheduled for January 26, 2021 then he adjourned the meeting at 7:00 pm.

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 26, 2021

SUBJECT: Recognition of New Board Members

PRESENTERS: Bob Floyd, Board Chair

ATTACHMENTS: None

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Welcome new board member listed below:

Erisha Lipford, Appointed Delegate

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: For informational purposes only. No action required.

Suggested Motion: *None.*

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 26, 2021

SUBJECT: FY 2019-2020 Audit Presentation

PRESENTER: Ko Tang Cha-Moses, Senior Manager, Martin Starnes & Associates,
CPAs, P.A.

ATTACHMENTS: Audit Highlights

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: The independent auditor will present a report to the Board regarding the financial audit of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. The audit is required by State Law and various regulation of funding entities.

The auditor has provided the attached highlights and will be at the meeting to review their observations and report.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Staff requests Policy Board to review the attached audit information.

Suggested Motion: *I move that the Board accept the audit report as presented.*

WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

JUNE 30, 2020

GENERAL FUND

Total Assets	\$ 2,413,952
Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows	660,239
Fund Balance	1,753,713
Total Revenues	6,138,097
Total Expenditures	6,132,184
Total Transfers	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	5,913

WIOA

Total Assets	\$ 216,289
Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows	209,750
Fund Balance	6,539
Total Revenues	1,242,161
Total Expenditures	1,240,781
Total Transfers	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	1,380

SECTION 8

Total Assets	\$ 1,020,438
Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows	370,601
Fund Balance	649,837
Total Revenues	5,264,593
Total Expenditures	5,146,123
Total Transfers	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	118,470

AGENCY FUNDS

	CASH
FUTURE FORWARD	\$ 149,918
SISTER CITIES	30,271
SE4A	9,986
NC4A	14,953
	<u>\$ 205,128</u>

BUILDING GENERATOR PROJECT

Total Assets	\$ 10,328
Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows	-
Fund Balance	10,328
Total Revenues	-
Total Expenditures	63,462
Total Transfers	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	(63,462)

AGING

Total Assets	\$ 787,348
Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows	776,274
Fund Balance	11,074
Total Revenues	2,993,616
Total Expenditures	2,993,361
Total Transfers	-
Net Change in Fund Balance	255

OPEB PENSION TRUST

Total Assets	\$ 90,019
Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows	-
Net position	90,019
Total Revenues *	90,019
<i>* employer contributions</i>	
Net Change in Fund Balance	90,019

MARTIN•STARNES
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.

**Western Piedmont Council of
Governments**

2020 AUDITED
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Audit Highlights

- ❑ Unmodified Opinion
- ❑ Cooperative Staff

MARTIN•STARNES
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.



General Fund Highlights

Balance Sheet

□ Total Assets	\$2,413,952
□ Less Total Liabilities & Inflows	<u>(660,239)</u>
□ Fund Balance	\$1,753,713



General Fund Highlights

Income Statement

□ Revenues	\$6,138,097
□ Less Expenditures	<u>(6,132,184)</u>
□ Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ 5,913

Special Revenue Fund - WIOA

Balance Sheet

□ Total Assets	\$216,289
□ Total Liabilities	
& Inflows	<u>(209,750)</u>
□ Fund Balance	\$ 6,539

Income Statement

□ Total Revenues	\$1,242,161
□ Total Expenditures	<u>(1,240,781)</u>
□ Net Change in	
Fund Balances	\$ 1,380

Special Revenue Fund - Aging

Balance Sheet

□ Total Assets	\$787,348
□ Total Liabilities	
& Inflows	<u>(776,274)</u>
□ Fund Balance	\$ 11,074

Income Statement

□ Total Revenues	\$2,993,616
□ Total Expenditures	<u>(2,993,361)</u>
□ Net Change in	
Fund Balances	\$ 255

Special Revenue Fund - Section 8

Balance Sheet

□ Total Assets	\$1,020,438
□ Total Liabilities	
& Inflows	<u>(370,601)</u>
□ Fund Balance	\$ 649,837

Income Statement

□ Total Revenues	\$5,264,593
□ Total Expenditures	<u>(5,146,123)</u>
□ Net Change in	
Fund Balances	\$ 118,470

Building Generator Project

Balance Sheet

□ Total Assets	\$10,328
□ Total Liabilities &	
Inflows	<u>0</u>
□ Fund Balance	\$10,328

Building Generator Project Cont.

Income Statement

□ Total Revenues	\$ -0-
□ Total Expenditures	<u>(63,462)</u>
□ Net Change in Fund Balance	(\$63,462)

OPEB Pension Trust

Balance Sheet

□ Total Assets	\$90,019
□ Total Liabilities	<u>0</u>
□ Net Position	\$90,019

Income Statement

□ Total Revenues	\$90,019
□ Total Expenditures	<u>0</u>
□ Net Change	\$90,019



Agency Funds – Assets (Cash)

□ Future Forward	\$149,918
□ Sister Cities	30,271
□ SE4A	9,986
□ NC4A	<u>14,953</u>
Total Assets	\$205,128



Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Discussion & Questions

MARTIN • STARNES
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 26, 2021

SUBJECT: 4th Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget

PRESENTER: Andrea Roper, Finance Director

ATTACHMENTS: Budget Summary Sheets

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: The attached 4th Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget reflects a total budget of \$21,504,659 and an operating budget of \$7,633,941 which represents decrease of \$427,307 from the November 24, 2020 budget amendment.

The 4th Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget includes:

- Transportation and Environmental Protection decreased \$48,430 and \$373,535, respectively, due to the delay of the environmental health partnership. The project is expected to begin next fiscal year.
- Community and Regional Planning decreased \$11,002 due to the delay of a drone project.
- Salaries, retirement and group insurance decreased due mainly to the delay of the environmental health partnership.
- Contractual increased \$55,859 in order to cover a temporary contract employee to assist with the additional CARES Act work in the Area Agency on Aging Department.
- Travel decreased due to the reduction in travel because of the pandemic.
- The rent/lease-building expense line decreased \$70,000 due to the delayed environmental health partnership lease with Caldwell County.
- Supplies decreased \$44,546 due to the delay of the environmental health partnership and to help offset the cost of the temporary contract employee in the aging department.
- Capital Outlay-Equipment decreased \$18,067 as a result of the delay to purchase a vehicle for the environmental health partnership.
- Contingency decreased \$34,893 due to funds being reallocated to other expense lines and to better align with actual costs in the current fiscal year.
- OPEB Trust Allocation decreased \$35,777 due to the loss of fringe funding because of the reduction in salaries.
- All other changes to the expenditure lines reflect normal program needs.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Staff requests Policy Board to review and approve the Fourth Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget.

Suggested Motion: *I move that the Board approve the 4th Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget as proposed.*



**WESTERN PIEDMONT
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**
2020-2021 BUDGET
4th Amendment of the Budget
January 26, 2021



WPCOG REVENUE BUDGET FY 2020-2021 1/26/2021	01/26/21 PROPOSED BUDGET	11/24/20 CURRENT BUDGET *	VARIANCE
WPCOG ASSESSMENTS	297,186	297,186	0
INTEREST	400	400	0
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	335	335	0
ANNUAL MEETING CONTRIBUTION	9,000	9,000	0
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
FIN. ADMIN, COMM.SRV	48,157	48,157	0
TRANSPORTATION			
MPO (FHWA & FTA) & PASS. SAMPLING	1,142,180	1,190,610	(48,430)
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION			
WATER RESOURCES, EPA 205(j) PROJECTS, AND ARC WATERSHED	277,666	651,201	(373,535)
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			
CDBG, HOUSING COUNSELING, & MPP	1,472,021	1,472,021	0
COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PLANNING			
PLANNING, DATA SERVICES, GIS	541,631	552,633	(11,002)
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
ECON DEV GRANTS & BUILDING REUSE	501,458	501,458	0
GIS SERVICES			
GIS SERVICES	0	0	0
REGIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING			
SECTION 8 HOUSING VOUCHERS	1,040,608	1,040,608	0
AREA AGENCY ON AGING SERVICES			
AGING ADMINISTRATION & SERVICES	1,351,550	1,351,550	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT	934,450	928,790	5,660
FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED			
FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED	17,299	17,299	0
SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS (PASS THROUGH)			
AGING	4,452,596	4,452,596	0
SECTION 8 HOUSING	6,485,205	6,485,205	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	2,932,917	2,932,917	0
TOTAL	21,504,659	21,931,966	(427,307)

WPCOG EXPENSE BUDGET FY 2020-2021 1/26/2021	01/26/21 PROPOSED BUDGET	11/24/20 CURRENT BUDGET *	VARIANCE
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
ARC-LDD, FFEA, & EDA	86,172	86,172	0
TRANSPORTATION			
MPO (FHWA & FTA) & PASS. SAMPLING	1,142,180	1,190,610	(48,430)
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION			
WATER RESOURCES, EPA 205(j) PROJECTS, AND ARC WATERSHED	277,666	651,201	(373,535)
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			
CDBG, BLDG REUSE, COUNSELING, MPP	1,472,021	1,472,021	0
COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PLANNING			
PLANNING, DATA SERVICES, GIS	573,266	584,268	(11,002)
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
ECON DEV GRANTS	689,147	689,147	0
GIS SERVICES			
GIS/IT SERVICES	0	0	0
REGIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING			
SECTION 8 HOUSING VOUCHERS	1,040,608	1,040,608	0
AGING AGENCY SERVICES			
AGING	1,418,431	1,418,431	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT	934,450	928,790	5,660
SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS (PASS THROUGH)			
AGING	4,452,596	4,452,596	0
SECTION 8 HOUSING	6,485,205	6,485,205	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	2,932,917	2,932,917	0
TOTAL	21,504,659	21,931,966	(427,307)

* The amounts used for the Current Budget are from the adoption of the 2020-2021 Budget presented on November 24, 2020.
The Proposed Operating Budget is: **\$7,633,941**

WPCOG EXPENSE BUDGET FY 2020-2021 1/26/2021	01/26/21	11/24/20	VARIANCE
	PROPOSED BUDGET	CURRENT BUDGET *	
CHARGEABLE SALARIES	3,255,169	3,430,213	(175,044)
COMPENSATED ABSENCES	205,002	200,161	4,841
INCENTIVE	4,500	1,700	2,800
LONGEVITY	44,000	44,000	0
RETIREMENT	639,254	669,972	(30,718)
GROUP INSURANCE	498,413	527,782	(29,369)
WORKERS' COMPENSATION	18,000	18,000	0
UNEMPLOYMENT COSTS	36,720	36,720	0
CONTRACTUAL	1,075,025	1,019,166	55,859
TRAVEL-SUBSISTENCE/REGIST.	75,779	90,928	(15,149)
TRAVEL-TRANSPORTATION	99,422	113,147	(13,725)
FUEL	1,100	4,600	(3,500)
TELEPHONE	38,872	43,074	(4,202)
POSTAGE	24,667	25,117	(450)
PRINTING	15,170	19,236	(4,066)
UTILITIES	44,000	44,000	0
RENT - EQUIPMENT	31,000	31,000	0
RENT/LEASE - BUILDING	92,700	162,700	(70,000)
MORTGAGE/OCCUPANCY COST	133,000	133,000	0
SUPPLIES	615,465	660,011	(44,546)
AUDIT	37,000	37,000	0
DUES	27,753	28,556	(803)
ADVERTISING/SUBSCRIPTIONS	57,371	63,278	(5,907)
MAINTENANCE-EQUIPMENT	42,007	42,007	0
MAINTENANCE-VEHICLES	1,009	1,800	(791)
MAINTENANCE-BLDG/GROUNDS	51,000	51,000	0
CONTENTS/LIABILITY INSURANCE	20,424	21,519	(1,095)
ANNUAL MEETING	18,000	18,000	0
LEGAL FEES	11,852	10,777	1,075
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE	10,810	14,590	(3,780)
CAPITAL OUTLAY-EQUIPMENT	57,306	75,373	(18,067)
CONTINGENCY	232,112	267,005	(34,893)
RESERVE FOR FUTURE EXP.	1	1	0
OWNER IMPROVEMENTS	0	0	0
INTERNET SERVICE	10,140	10,140	0
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT	298	298	0
SECTION 8 PORTABLE ADMIN	5,000	5,000	0
OPEB TRUST ALLOCATION	104,600	140,377	(35,777)
ALLOCATED FUND BALANCE	0	0	0
SR - AGING FEES & SERVICES	4,452,596	4,452,596	0
SR - SECTION 8 FEES & SERVICES	6,485,205	6,485,205	0
SR - WIA FEES & SERVICES	2,932,917	2,932,917	0
TOTAL	21,504,659	21,931,966	(427,307)

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 26th, 2021

SUBJECT: FY2021-22 WPCOG Assessments for Local Governments

PRESENTER: Anthony W. Starr, Executive Director

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Proposed Assessments Table
2. Narrative (Descriptions of Assessments)

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Each year, the WPCOG assesses dues to its local governments per its charter and bylaws. The proposed assessments for FY22 reflect a 0.5% increase in population and a total increase of required assessments of 5.45%. The total increase is primarily attributed to the required match increase for MPO federal funds.

The general assessments rate is increased from 80 to 81 cents per capita to adjust for annual inflation. With the population increase, this generates an increase of \$5,316.19.

The assessments also include the required match for the MPO per federal and state requirements. The federal funding for the MPO is increasing 15.9% for FY21-22 and thus increases the required match for local governments (an increase of \$21,445 from the current fiscal year). Significant increases in work for the MPO make the increase justified and necessary. See the attached narrative for further details.

The attached table shows all the assessments including the required Water Resources dues (no increase) and optional dues for Sister Cities.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Staff requests Policy Board review and approve the FY2021-22 assessments.

Suggested Motion: *I move that the Board approve the assessments as presented.*



Western Piedmont Council of Governments

Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

DRAFT FISCAL YEAR 2021 - 2022 ASSESSMENTS									
Local Government	2019 State Planning Population *	Assesments X .81 Per Capita	2019 MPO Population **	MPO PL	MPO FTA	2021-22 Water Resources ***	TOTAL WPCOG ASSESSMENTS	Sister Cities	TOTAL WITH NON-WPCOG OPTIONS
Alexander County	36,239	\$29,353.59	36,239	\$14,542.80	\$652.57	\$5,655.75	\$50,204.71	\$500.00	\$50,704.71
Taylorsville	2,125	\$1,721.25	2,125	\$852.77	\$38.27	\$331.64	\$2,943.93	\$500.00	\$3,443.93
Burke County	60,074	\$48,659.94	60,074	\$24,107.84	\$1,081.77	\$9,375.63	\$83,225.18		\$83,225.18
Connelly Springs	1,681	\$1,361.61	1,681	\$674.59	\$30.26	\$262.35	\$2,328.81		\$2,328.81
Drexel	1,834	\$1,485.54	1,834	\$735.99	\$33.03	\$286.23	\$2,540.79		\$2,540.79
Glen Alpine	1,575	\$1,275.75	1,575	\$632.05	\$28.36	\$245.81	\$2,181.97		\$2,181.97
Hildebran	2,001	\$1,620.81	2,001	\$803.01	\$36.03	\$312.29	\$2,772.14		\$2,772.14
Morganton	16,996	\$13,766.76	16,996	\$6,820.54	\$306.05	\$2,652.53	\$23,545.88	\$500.00	\$24,045.88
Rutherford College	1,402	\$1,135.62	1,402	\$562.63	\$25.25	\$218.81	\$1,942.31		\$1,942.31
Valdese	4,526	\$3,666.06	4,526	\$1,816.29	\$81.50	\$706.36	\$6,270.21		\$6,270.21
Caldwell County	44,609	\$36,133.29	44,609	\$17,901.70	\$803.29	\$6,962.04	\$61,800.32		\$61,800.32
Cajah's Mountain	2,737	\$2,216.97	2,737	\$1,098.36	\$49.29	\$427.16	\$3,791.78		\$3,791.78
Cedar Rock	292	\$236.52	292	\$117.18	\$5.26	\$45.57	\$404.53		\$404.53
Gamewell	4,072	\$3,298.32	4,072	\$1,634.10	\$73.33	\$635.51	\$5,641.26		\$5,641.26
Granite Falls	4,734	\$3,834.54	4,734	\$1,899.77	\$85.25	\$738.83	\$6,558.39		\$6,558.39
Hudson	4,011	\$3,248.91	4,011	\$1,609.62	\$72.23	\$625.99	\$5,556.75		\$5,556.75
Lenoir	17,741	\$14,370.21	17,741	\$7,119.51	\$319.47	\$2,768.80	\$24,577.99		\$24,577.99
Rhodhiss	1,108	\$897.48	1,108	\$444.64	\$19.95	\$172.92	\$1,534.99		\$1,534.99
Sawmills	5,237	\$4,241.97	5,237	\$2,101.62	\$94.30	\$817.33	\$7,255.22		\$7,255.22
Catawba County	86,692	\$70,220.52	86,692	\$34,789.71	\$1,561.09	\$13,529.85	\$120,101.17	\$500.00	\$120,601.17
Brookford	376	\$304.56	376	\$150.89	\$6.77	\$58.68	\$520.90		\$520.90
Catawba	610	\$494.10	610	\$244.79	\$10.98	\$95.20	\$845.07		\$845.07
Claremont	1,495	\$1,210.95	1,495	\$599.95	\$26.92	\$233.32	\$2,071.14		\$2,071.14
Conover	8,541	\$6,918.21	8,541	\$3,427.52	\$153.80	\$1,332.98	\$11,832.51		\$11,832.51
Hickory	41,407	\$33,539.67	41,407	\$16,616.73	\$745.63	\$6,462.31	\$57,364.34	\$500.00	\$57,864.34
Long View	4,865	\$3,940.65	4,865	\$1,952.34	\$87.61	\$759.27	\$6,739.87		\$6,739.87
Maiden	3,420	\$2,770.20	3,420	\$1,372.45	\$61.59	\$533.75	\$4,737.99		\$4,737.99
Newton	13,059	\$10,577.79	13,059	\$5,240.61	\$235.15	\$2,038.09	\$18,091.64		\$18,091.64
TOTALS	373,459	\$302,501.79	373,459	\$149,870.00	\$6,725.00	\$58,285.00	\$517,381.79	\$2,500.00	\$519,881.79

* Dues Per Capita are based on population figures from the NC Office of State Planning for 2019.

** Dues for the MPO are based on population figures from the NC Office of State Planning for 2019.

*** Water Resources Dues are shared between our regional local governments based on population figures from the NC Office of State Planning for 2019.

\$519,881.79



FY 2021-22 WPCOG Local Government Assessments Narrative

As directed by the WPCOG Policy Board, member dues and special program assessments are calculated using July 2019 population estimates from the NC Office of State Planning. Municipal population is subtracted from the county's total population, and counties pay the remainder or non-municipal portion based on 81 cents per capita. Dues for municipalities are also calculated at 81 cents per capita based on their total population.

MPO assessments are based on the July 2019 population estimates from the NC Office of State Planning which determines the urbanized and non-urbanized areas.

MPO-PL column is the matching requirement for local governments within the Greater Hickory MPO Planning Boundary, based on 2019 city, town, or unincorporated county population estimates. These matching funds are a minimum of 20 percent of the total PL funds in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the MPO for FY 2021-22. The MPO planning function is a federally mandated activity to maintain highway funds eligibility. PL federal funds in FY2021-22 will significantly increase compared to FY2020-21. This increase is necessary to fulfill the required update to the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) in light of the following factors:

- FY2021-2022 is the most work-intensive year for the 2050 update, due to the extensive outreach and data collection done at the beginning of a Plan update.
- The NCDOT funding crisis has forced a re-prioritization of existing needs, when past updates largely could expand upon already funded needs.
- With tighter funding comes tougher choices, which requires more surveying and analysis to help inform tough decisions.
- Our recent Federal Certification strongly recommended the next MTP update expand its resiliency considerations and environmental justice analysis.
- Travel demand model inputs must be updated from the 2020 Census and decide transportation analysis zone changes.

The **MPO-FTA** column represents matching funds for public transit planning for the entire area of the Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir MSA. These funds are 10 percent of the total costs for transit elements within the UPWP, which includes planning for the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority.

The **Water Resources** program focuses on protecting the integrity of our region's water resources to meet the needs of current and future generations. The Western Piedmont Water Resources Committee serves an advisory role for the region's local governments and the

WPCOG Dues Assessments Narrative FY 2021-22

Western Piedmont Council of Government's Policy Board. Assessments support staff involvement in activities that include but are not limited to: oversight for water resource programs, grants and projects; watershed planning; regulatory compliance; technical support related to legislation and water policy; water education and outreach such as providing support to the annual WNC Water Quality Conference; and development and maintenance of partnerships at the local, state and federal level to support these efforts.

Note: Participation in the following program is on a voluntary basis.

Sister Cities. All cities and counties are eligible to participate in this program. Annual dues of \$500 are used to host visitors and other activities related to exchanges with a Sister Region in Altenburg, Germany. Each member government appoints two representatives to the Western Piedmont Sister Cities Association. The WPSCA sponsors events with German food and entertainment to celebrate the region's German heritage. The most recent project involved an exchange of government officials and educators who came to the region to promote student and faculty exchanges between several schools in this area and schools in Altenburg. There is discussion about a visit to Altenburg related to green technology and an upcoming musical exchange. Other exchanges have involved the Hickory Museum of Art, Catawba Science Center, educators, physicians, government staff, business leaders, musicians, youth soccer teams, etc. Please let us know if your local government would like to join us as a new member.

The attached table of funding requests represents all the amounts that will be requested by WPCOG, unless local governments agree to add other programs. A separate communication will be transmitted regarding amounts for any contracts your local government has with the WPCOG for technical assistance or grant administration.

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: January 26, 2021

SUBJECT: Decrease in Applicable Payment Standards

PRESENTER: Stephanie Hanvey, Regional Housing Authority Director

ATTACHMENTS: 1. RHA Decrease in Applicable Payment Standards

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The Public Housing Program with HUD determines the amount of assistance provided to clients through publishing a schedule of fair market rent rates based on the housing type. Those rates directly affect the payment standards that housing authorities use for providing rental voucher assistance. In October 2020, HUD published a decrease in the new fair market rent rates for our region for 2021. Those rates were to take effect in October 2020. Typically, fair market rents increase each year. However, this year, they decreased. This decrease caused our current payment standards for one and two bedroom units to be higher than the HUD fair market rent rates allowable percentages. HUD regulations require the WPCOG to lower its one and two bedroom payment standards. See the attached information that shows the changes in the payment standards for assisting WPCOG clients.

RHA staff and many other housing authorities across the country felt that lowering the payment standards for our tenants would create a burden on new and existing tenants by lowering the amount of rental assistance provided. The RHA requested a re-evaluation of our fair market rents and HUD granted an extension of three months. This allowed us to continue using the 2020 payment standards while we evaluated options for our new and current tenant population.

HUD allows housing authorities the option to do surveys to amend the fair market rent rates. These surveys typically cost approximately \$60,000.00 to \$75,000.00 and often not enough information is collected to produce a favorable result. RHA staff is considering dividing our jurisdiction into several small area fair market rent areas by zip codes. This would allow us to use different payment standards in different zip codes based on the fair market rent for that area.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Staff wants to make the board aware that we are now being required by HUD to decrease our payment standards to the 2021 rates governed by the fair market rent rates that were published in October 2020. HUD regulations allow housing authorities ninety days to begin using updated payment standards. Therefore, these payment standards were effective January 1, 2021. RHA staff continues to work with HUD regarding the possibility of utilizing Small Area Fair Market Rents in some of our zip codes to help make the decrease less burdensome to our tenants.

Suggested Motion: None. This item is for informational purposes only.

APPLICABLE PAYMENT STANDARDS							
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	Voucher Size	0	1	2	3	4	5
Effective 01/01/2021	Payment Standard	\$597	\$616	\$762	\$964	\$1,015	\$1,167
	% of Fair Market Rent	107%	110%	110%	107%	99%	99%

2020 FAIR MARKET RENTS							
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Effective 10/1/2020	Voucher Size	0	1	2	3	4	5
	HUD Fair Market Rent	\$557	\$560	\$693	\$899	\$1,029	\$1,183

Changes	Old	New	Difference
1 Bedroom	\$630	\$616	\$ 14.00
2 Bedroom	\$783	\$762	\$ 21.00



Executive Director's Report

January 26th, 2021

This report is intended to provide details about current operations of the WPCOG and issues that may be of interest to board members. The updates are grouped according to each department.

Administration

- The WPCOG office remains closed to the public except by appointment. We are encouraging the public to communicate with us through phone and email in lieu of office visits whenever possible. Because most of our foot traffic to the office consists of people attending meetings and our public housing clients, this arrangement has worked well. There are very few in-person meetings and we have assisted our public housing clients' needs effectively and even more efficiently.
- Some staff continue to telework but all staff work at least four days per week in the office.
- Safety of staff continues to be a priority along with service delivery to our local governments. To-date there has been no employee-to-employee transmission of COVID at the WPCOG office building.
- The entire Administration team has begun work on this year's WPCOG Annual Meeting preparations. While it may look different from previous years, it is sure to be an event worth attending. Mark your calendars for Thursday, April 22. More details to come.
- Communications is also working on delivering the January Newsletter, updates to the WPCOG website's mobile site and submittal of proposed website design work for Lumber River Council of Governments.
- Communications has several upcoming projects including the Annual Report, Annual Meeting preparations and accompanying marketing materials, design of a Statewide Impact Report, and redesign of the **Long View** Police Departments web space on the **Long View** Website.
- Our various committees and boards continue to meet virtually and in compliance with state law and recommendations.
- Staff are initiating a cyber-security assessment for the WPCOG. The study will identify areas that we can improve our security and enhance protections from cyber-attacks.
- We recently experienced a premature failure of one of our HVAC units for the building. It appears that most of the HVAC units will fail within the next couple of years due to the problems experienced when we moved into the building in 2012. To replace the entire system would cost in excess of \$200,000. Staff is considering options and plans for the eventual replacement of the other 8 units and the control system. More information will be provided at a future date.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

- Through 12/31, the AAA served 841 older adults and caregivers in direct service with CARES funding.

- Through 12/31, the AAA processed 907 intakes from older adults or their caregivers for CARES assistance.
- Through 12/31, the AAA utilized \$161,307.43 in direct service to older adults and caregivers with CARES funding.
- The AAA has used all CARES Act funding for **Alexander County** and it is expected that funds for **Caldwell County** will be exhausted by the end of January.
- Ombudsmen continue to work with facilities, county health departments, residents, and families on COVID-19 outbreaks in facilities. Very few facilities are able to offer indoor visits at this time.
- Ombudsmen have been allowed to return to in-person visits (when possible) to handle resident complaints.
- AAA staff continue to make presentations on a variety of topics to groups via Zoom or Go To Meeting.
- AAA is working daily to provide direct service to older adults and caregivers utilizing CARES Act funds to purchase supplies/groceries.

Community & Economic Development (CED)

- Community and Economic Development staff are currently administering 72 grants for local governments.
- The NC Department of Commerce funded two (2) Building Reuse Grant applications in December. **Burke County** received \$100,000 for East Cost Bedding LLC. The project will create 19 jobs and leverage \$2.3 M in private investment. The City of **Claremont** received \$450,000 for Project Firestorm. The project will create 60 jobs and leverage \$40 M in private investment.
- The City of **Conover** received \$523,500 from the Golden LEAF Foundation to construct a roadway for an industrial campus. This project will create 144 jobs and leverage \$17 million in private investment.
- 5 houses are currently being rehabilitated and 6 homes are receiving urgent repairs so the homeowners may remain in their home.
- Fifteen homeowners received foreclosure prevention counseling.

Community & Regional Planning

Planning:

- Currently, 160-D rewrites for **Drexel** (finished), **Cajah's Mountain**, **Hildebran**, **Gamewell** and **Rutherford College** are being conducted this month.
- The **Drexel** Comp Plan and Granite Falls Comprehensive Plans continue.
- **Alexander County**, **Claremont**, and **Catawba** 160-D rewrites will begin in January.

Natural Resources:

- The Annual WNC Air Quality Conference was held on December 11th, 2020 in partnership with Lenoir-Rhyne University. The virtual format operated smoothly with over 126 attendees. The Water Quality Conference held in September gained an additional 230 attendees for a total of 356 persons trained by the events.
- Held a meeting in **Gamewell** for possible partnership and grant opportunity.
- Began providing supervision and hiring of vacant positions for **Caldwell County** Environmental Health.
- Ongoing planning for Stormwater outreach and permitting.

Data Center:

- Assisted **Catawba County Public Health** with demographics and employment data to determine COVID-19 vaccine distribution.
- Updated data tables for the Appalachian Regional Commission 2020 grant application.
- Completed Catawba County low-moderate income analysis for YMCA grant.
- Gave employment data at **Future of Catawba County Summit** (estimated 600 attendees).
- Assisted in completing a SWOT analysis at December Workforce Development Board Meeting.
- Assisted Community & Economic Development Department with low-moderate income assessment for **Maiden** Recreation Department grant application.
- Completed the **Hickory** Equity and Economic Data Report and the presentation to City Council.
- Completed the Winter 2020 Economic Indicators Newsletter.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS):

- General ArcGIS Online and mapping support continued for **Claremont, Maiden, and Valdese**.
- Assisted with **Rutherford College** with wastewater field data collection.
- Field captured potential Catawba River Trail routes for Lake Rhodhiss-Duke Power FERC License map.
- Worked with **Valdese** to update their water meters that are being replaced.

Code Compliance:

- Working in conjunction with 160-D ordinance revisions to package with code enforcement ordinance updates.
- American with Disabilities Act inventory and transition plans were presented to the **Conover** City Council.
- Staff is finishing up the ADA draft plan for **Granite Falls**.
- Staff plans to begin the American Disability Act inventory for WPCOG office building and parking area February 2021.

Transportation:

- Test-drove each of the new and revised turns and travel time for **Catawba** Transit Re-Route Project.
- Developed new subway-style graphic maps for the **Catawba** County transit fixed routes.
- Presented Re-Route scenario and survey to **Greenway Transit** Advisory Board.
- The MPO Technical Coordinating Committee and the Transportation Advisory Committee continue to meet virtually.
- Staff developed the work plan for the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan that is required by federal law.
- Staff also developed the draft Unified Program Working Plan for Fiscal Year 2022.

Finance

- Staff Continue to administer financial services for **Town of Catawba, Caldwell Chamber & Cajah's Mountain**.
- The **Caldwell County Chamber** audit is underway. Fieldwork for this audit started this week.
- Final fieldwork is completed for the FY19-20 WPCOG audit. Analytics have been completed. The Schedule of Federal and State Award (SEFA) reconciliation is also completed. The audit draft is being prepared and will be complete soon. The LGC extended the deadline to January 31st, 2021 for all local governments to complete their audit due to the pandemic.

- Finance staff continue working with the auditor on the FY19-20 audit for **Town of Catawba**. All requested items have been given to their auditor. Review of the audit draft should happen this week or early next week.

Regional Housing Authority (RHA)

- The RHA is beginning to see an increase in tenants beginning to go back to work and housing assistance payments for the RHA are beginning to decrease. This is a change in circumstance and good news since COVID began in March 2020.
- The RHA will begin leasing the 75 additional awarded Mainstream Vouchers in March 2021. Currently, the RHA has 166 out of 171 available MainStream Vouchers leased.
- The RHA has approximately 1200 families on the waiting list.
- The RHA will begin leasing the 10 new VASH-Veteran vouchers awarded in February 2021.
- With the addition of the new vouchers, the total for our jurisdiction will be 1330. Since 2018, the RHA has increased its voucher capacity from 1074 to 1330, which is an increase of 256 vouchers or 23.8%.

Workforce Development

- The NCWorks Career Centers opened to the public on October 5. So far that is still going well with light foot traffic. *Reminder: NCWorks Career Centers do not process unemployment insurance claims.*
- Workforce Development staff (Leslie Farris and Matthew Xiong) are still doing a great job helping create Virtual Job Fairs for employers. Virtual workshops are planned monthly and job fairs as needed/requested. We are partnering with the City of Hickory to post our workshops and job fair information on their website and in their newsletters. Since July 2020 – December 2020 we have provided 14 virtual job fairs.
- NC Department of Commerce, Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) created an Unemployment Insurance Claims Dashboard that can provide information by County, and Workforce Board. September numbers are now available by clicking [here](#).
- Since beginning the fiscal year (July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020) we have provided 100 scholarships. There are currently over 8,000 job opening across the WPCOG region.
- The Workforce Development Boards, Workforce Intelligence Sub-committee is working on a three phase State of the Workforce Report to include a “pull-out” section that can be used the K-12 and other workforce/career advising partners to help students and job-seekers know what training and career opportunities exist across the four counties.