

**Minutes**  
**Western Piedmont Council of Governments**  
**Bimonthly Policy Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, January 24, 2017**  
**Burke County Higher Education Center**

**Members Present:**

George Holleman, Chairman  
Barbara Pennell, Vice-Chair  
Bob Floyd, Jr., Treasurer  
Robert Smyre, Past Chair  
Kitty Barnes, At-Large  
Chip Black, At-Large  
Wayne Abele, At-Large  
Johnny Berry, At-Large  
Colleen Anderson, Alternate  
Dale Sherrill  
Joie Fulbright  
Kyle Hayman, Alternate  
Dr. Caryl Burns  
Jill Patton  
Barbara Lowman  
Larry Chapman  
Ben Willis  
Vernon Moyer  
Forrest Fleming  
Ronnie Thompson, Alternate  
Jerry Hodge  
Gary McClure  
Wayne Annas  
Mary Bess Lawing  
Nicky Setzer  
Tommy Luckadoo  
Larry Yoder  
Helen Chestnut  
Amparo Alfaro

**Members Absent:**

Josh Lail  
Vacant  
Cheryl Pritchard  
Mike Labrose  
Benny Orders

**Local Government/Agency:**

Taylorsville  
Gamewell  
Cedar Rock  
Maiden  
Catawba County  
Valdese  
Burke County  
Connelly Springs  
Catawba  
Claremont  
Conover  
Conover  
Granite Falls  
Hickory  
Hildebran  
Hudson  
Lenoir  
Long View  
Morganton  
Morganton  
Newton  
Rutherford College  
Rutherford College  
Appointed  
Appointed  
Appointed  
Appointed  
Appointed  
Appointed

Alexander County  
Brookford  
Cajah's Mountain  
Caldwell County  
Drexel

**Members Absent (Continued):**

Jimmy Wakeford	Glen Alpine
Rick Justice	Rhodhiss
Keith Warren	Sawmills
Pat Hatley	Appointed

**Guests/Others Present:**

Catherine Renbarger, Claremont  
Tamara Brooks, Connelly Springs  
Joe Gibbons, Lenoir  
Scott Hildebran, Lenoir  
Seth Eckard, Valdese  
Kenneth Geathers, Rutherford College  
Mary Carter, Gamewell  
Christopher Todd, Sawmills  
Sherri Bradshaw, Drexel  
Jeff Brittain, Burke  
Maynard Taylor, Burke  
Bryan Steen, Burke

**WPCOG Staff Present:**

Anthony Starr, Executive Director  
Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director/Community & Economic Development Director  
Ashley Bolick, Director of Administrative Services and Human Resources  
Stephanie Hanvey, Director of Regional Housing Authority  
Averi Ritchie, Planning Technician  
Erin Schotte, Community & Regional Planner  
Leslie Meadows, Community & Regional Planner  
Scott Miller, Director of IT/GIS  
Tom Bell, Data Analyst  
Trey Schweitzer, GPS Technician  
Leah Martin, Senior Planner, Infrastructure & Economic Development

**Call to Order/Welcome**

A regular meeting of the WPCOG Policy Board was called to order at 6:45 pm by Chairman George Holleman. Chairman Holleman thanked Burke County for hosting the meeting. Board Commissioner, Wayne Abele welcomed everyone to Burke County.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting were considered. Mr. Larry Chapman made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Nicky Setzer offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Unfinished Business/Reports**

There was no unfinished business.

## **New Business**

### Kidonomics Presentation

Chairman Holleman welcomed Dr. Patrick Cronin, Assistant Director for Policy & Programs at the Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) at N.C. State University. The Institute for Emerging Issues, a non-partisan public policy organization, exists to enhance North Carolina's long-term prosperity. IEI connects North Carolinians across sectors, regions, and perspectives for collaborative work on key emerging issues affecting our state's future economic competitiveness. As a unit of North Carolina State University, IEI advances the University's research, service, and outreach contributions statewide.

The IEI is focusing this year on the impact of early childhood investments in North Carolina. This work will examine the connections between early childhood investments, North Carolina's economy, and the development of a well-trained workforce. Dr. Cronin presented information about this issue.

### Welcome New Board Members

Chairman Holleman welcomed three new board members and presented them with a certificate of appreciation for their willingness to serve on the WPCOG Policy Board.

Josh Lail – Alexander County

Keith Warren – Town of Sawmills

Helen Chestnut – Appointed Delegate from Alexander County

### Regional Housing Administrative Plan Change

Stephanie Hanvey, Director of Regional Housing Authority, presented information concerning an administrative plan change for the Regional Housing Authority (RHA) that would add a new homeless preference. Each year the RHA is required to send to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) an annual plan with any amendments from the previous year. The board was provided, via their agenda packets, the complete summary of the staff recommended amendments for board approval. The required public hearing was duly advertised and notice was given to clients. The required public hearing was held at 9:00 am on Monday, January 23, 2017. The Annual Plan is due to HUD by April 15, 2017, however staff would like for this plan to become effective as of February 15, 2017 due to changes in the plan that affect the application period beginning February 20, 2017 with a new homeless preference.

Staff requests that the Policy Board approve the Section 8 Housing Administration Plan Amendment so that HUD can receive a copy of the Annual Plan by February 1, 2017. Staff requests that the board approve the new Administration Plan to become effective February 15, 2017.

Mr. Joie Fulbright made a motion that the board approve the Section 8 Administrative Plan Amendments as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bob Smyre. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Regional Housing Applications Intake/Waiting List

Stephanie Hanvey, Director of Regional Housing Authority, presented a request to the board to open the Section 8 application waiting list beginning February 20, 2017. The WPCOG Regional Housing Program will exhaust its waiting list as of February 1, 2017. Staff would like to begin accepting new application for the rental housing program so that a new list can be started. Notice will be published in the local newspapers of the region at least 10 days prior to the date applications will be accepted. Notice will also be published on the WPCOG's website at least 4 weeks prior to the date applications will be accepted. Notice will be posted in the county Department of Social Services offices as well. WPCOG plans to accept new applications beginning February 20, 2017. At this time, the application period will remain open until further notice.

Staff requests that the Policy Board approve the accepting of new Section 8 applications to start a new waiting list beginning February 20, 2017. This list will remain open until further notice.

Mr. Chip Black made a motion that the board approve the accepting of new Section 8 applications to start a new waiting list beginning February 20, 2017. The motion was seconded by Mr. Larry Yoder. The motion passed unanimously.

#### WPCOG FY 17-18 Dues Assessments

WPCOG Executive Director, Anthony Starr presented information about the 2017-2017 dues assessment. Each year, the WPCOG assesses dues to its local governments at a rate of \$0.50 per capita. The per capita rate has not increased in many years. The assessments also include the dues for MPO (RPO merged into MPO) per federal and state requirements. The table shows all the assessments including the Water Resources dues and optional dues for Sister Cities and the Alliance for Innovation. The proposed assessments table includes an increase in MPO dues to provide for an additional staff position to meet federal administration requirements.

As directed by the WPCOG Policy Board, Member Dues and Special Program Assessments are calculated using 2015 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 50 cents per capita. Dues for municipalities are also calculated at 50 cents per capita based on their total population.

MPO assessments are based on the 2010 census 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 the percentage of the city/county population within the urbanized area. These matching funds are 20 percent of the total PL funds in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the MPO for FY 2017-18. The MPO planning function is a federally mandated activity to maintain highway funds eligibility. The MPO column now includes the dues that formerly were in the RPO. Since the RPO was merged into the MPO, this is now one column.

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 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; and development and maintenance of partnerships at the local, state and federal level to support these efforts.

Note: Participation in the following programs 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. The WPSCA is hoping to develop an additional partnership and continues to encourage member governments to pursue their own sister city. Please let us know if your local government would like to join us as a new member.

The Alliance for Innovation (formerly Carolinas Innovation Group) is a research, data and training group for local governments. The Alliance provides information on innovative ideas and products of interest to local governments, as well as training and a forum for networking with other local government officials. Municipalities and counties have the opportunity to be included in a regional membership and take advantage of a group discount rate. The Alliance for Innovation column on the attachment lists the calculated dues for all local governments. This year includes a modest increase but still represents only 35% of the cost if a local government joined the Alliance for Innovation individually. Municipalities and counties have an option as to whether they wish to participate. Please let us know if your local government is interested in joining.

The assessment table located in the agenda packet represents all the amounts that will be requested by WPCOG, unless local governments agree to add other programs. A separate letter will be mailed regarding amounts for any contracts your local government has with the WPCOG for technical assistance or grant administration.

Mr. Vernon Moyer made a motion that the Board approve the assessments as presented. Ms. Kitty Barnes offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

#### FY 16-17 Budget Amendments

Anthony Starr, Executive Director, presented information on the proposed 4<sup>th</sup> budget amendment of the 2016-2017 Budget. The proposed budget amendment reflects a total budget of \$15,699,812 and an operating budget of \$5,549,913, which represents an increase of the total budget from the November 22, 2016 budget amendment of \$75,030.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the 2016-2017 Budget includes:

- A decrease of \$15,000 in Environmental Protection due to environmental assessment salaries being reallocated to community development projects.
- Community Development increased by \$6,859 due to the addition of the new Valdese Meridian IDF project.
- Community and Regional Planning increased by \$5,400 to reflect additional revenue from the new Glen Alpine zoning plan project and the Drexel recreation plan project.
- An increase of \$72,519 in Economic Development due to additional revenue from several new building reuse grants.
- An increase of \$4,581 in Aging due to additional revenue added to the ACAP conference and MIPPA grant.
- Compensated absences, incentives and retirement were all increased due to annual salary increases.
- Contingency and reserve for future expenditures increased \$57,810 in Economic Development and Community and Regional Planning due to increased funding from new projects.
- Advertising/subscriptions increased \$5,112 due to an increase from the MIPPA program.
- All other changes to the expenditure lines reflect normal program needs.

Mr. Chip Black made a motion that the board approve the 4<sup>th</sup> amendment of the 2016 -2017 Budget as proposed. Mr. Wayne Abele offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

#### NADO Award Presentations

Chairman George Holleman presented information as well as Awards to various WPCOG Staff whose work had recently been recognized by the National Association of Development Organizations' (NADO). 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 Innovation 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 2016 Annual Training Conference, held October 15-18 in San Antonio, TX.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments was honored at the 2016 NADO Conference with two awards. "Maiden NC Multi-Utility GIS Project" was submitted by WPCOG GIS Analyst, Tom Bell. In 2015, the Town of Maiden contracted with WPCOG, to locate all its infrastructure components, including water, wastewater, storm water and electric features. In addition to creating an inventory of these items, WPCOG created a Geographic Information System (GIS) which allows Town Public Works staff to query, view and update the information. By June 2016, over 15,500 features of infrastructure were collected. These included water meters, water lines, hydrants, sewer lines, storm water flows, power

poles, transformers, and primary- and secondary-power lines, among others. To facilitate access of the inventory in the field by Town staff, WPCOG IT/GIS Team members developed two secure web-applications that leverage ArcGIS Online.

City of Newton and COG staff facilitated four public forums to generate action items on Economic Development, Infrastructure, Transportation/Parks and Recreation, and Public Safety. The “City of Newton 2015 Strategic Growth Plan” was submitted by WPCOG Director of Planning, Transportation & Environmental Programs, John Marshall and Data Analyst, Taylor Dellinger. After the four meetings WPCOG staff created the 135-page final report which contained a total of 65 figures/graphics, 25 maps, and 12 data tables. Newton City Council approved the Newton Strategic Plan in July 2015.

Additionally, in the summer of 2016 WPCOG was recognized at the National Regional Transportation Conference in Chattanooga, TN for the “Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan” submitted by WPCOG Director of Planning, Transportation & Environmental Programs, John Marshall. This plan provides a clear framework within Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties for the development of new facilities, programs and policies that will support safe and efficient bicycling throughout the region.

#### Closed Session – Pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11

##### (a) (5) – Real Property Acquisition

The Policy Board went into closed session pursuant to NC General Statute 143-318.11(a) (5) to instruct staff concerning the potential acquisition of real property. The motion was made by Mr. Bob Smyre and seconded by Ms. Collen Anderson.

The regular meeting was reconvened by motion made by Ms. Kitty Barnes, seconded by Ms. Collen Anderson.

Mr. Joie Fulbright made a motion that the board authorize the Board Chair and Executive Director to execute the purchase of the land at a price of \$131,000 using cash reserves. Mr. Jerry Hodge offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Staff Updates

Mr. Anthony Starr updated the board on the process of the CEDS Committee. Staff recently had a meeting with the Committee Chair and Vice Chair and the first meeting of the entire committee has been scheduled for February 1.

WPCOG hosted the first regional meeting to discuss vacant and substandard housing in the region on January 31. The meeting was well attended.

Mr. Starr passed out a flyer announcing the new Financial Administration Services being offered by the WPCOG finance department. A few local governments are already in discussions with WPCOG about this service.

Mr. Scott Miller, WPCOG Director of IT/GIS reported that the GIS department are hard at work collecting storm water and water and sewer data for various local governments. Mr. Miller has also been called on to help with a few Downtown Wi-Fi projects. WPCOG staff have been busy implementing the new document management software.

Ms. Sherry Long reported that the Community Development staff have helped area local governments with over 5.4 million in projects.

#### Other Business

Mr. Holleman reminded the board that the next scheduled meeting would be on Tuesday, March 28 and would be hosted by the Town of Gamewell.

#### Adjournment

Mr. Larry Yoder made a motion that the meeting adjourn at 7:20 pm and the motion was seconded by Mr. Larry Chapman. The motion passed unanimously.