

Minutes
Western Piedmont Council of Governments
Bimonthly Policy Board Meeting
Tuesday, November 28, 2023
MSC II, Conover

Members Present

Jill Patton, Chair
Joseph L. Gibbons, Vice-Chair
George Holleman, Treasurer
Larry Chapman, Secretary
Bob Floyd, Past Chair
Larry Yoder, At-Large
Randy Burns, At-Large
Cole Setzer, At-Large
Marla Thompson, At-Large
Ronnie Setzer
Mike LaBrose
Dale Sherrill
Joie Fulbright
Jim Green, Alternate
Dennis Anthony
Dr. Caryl Burns
Charlotte Williams, Alternate
Ben Honeycutt
Ralph Prestwood, Alternate
Phyllis Pennington, Alternate
Chris Jernigan
Jerry Hodge
Beverly Danner, Alternate
Allen Spencer
Erisha Lipford
Helen Chestnut
Tonia Stephenson
Tommy Luckadoo

Members Absent

Josh Lail, Alternate
Kelvin Gregory
Johnnie Carswell, Alternate
Lloyd Robbins, Alternate
Robbie Wilkie, Alternate
Donald Robinson
Carroll Yount, Alternate
Barbara Beatty, Alternate
Ramona Duncan

Local Government/Agency

Hickory
Lenoir
Taylorsville
Hudson
Town of Cedar Rock
Alexander County
Burke County
Catawba County
Long View
Cajah's Mountain
Caldwell County
Claremont
Conover
Conover
Drexel
Granite Falls
Hickory
Hildebran
Lenoir
Long View
Morganton
Newton
Newton
Rhodhiss
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed

Alexander County
Brookford
Burke County
Cajah's Mountain
Caldwell County
Catawba
Catawba
Catawba County
Connelly Springs

Steve Smart, Alternate	Connelly Springs
Barbara Pennell	Gamewell
Ron Lackey, Alternate	Gamewell
Sheila Perkins	Glen Alpine
Tracy Townsend, Alternate	Granite Falls
Mike Smith, Alternate	Hildebran
Jim Engelman, Alternate	Hudson
Ronnie Williams, Alternate	Maiden
Ronnie Thompson, Alternate	Morganton
Kendra Edwards, Alternate	Rhodhiss
Wayne Annas	Rutherford College
Yates Jensen, Alternate	Rutherford College
Bobby Mosteller	Sawmills
Joe Wesson, Alternate	Sawmills
Jack Simms, Alternate	Taylorville
Charlie Watts	Valdese
Rexanna Lowman, Alternate	Valdese
Amparo R. Alfaro	Appointed
Malla Vue	Appointed

Guests/Others Present

Alan Glines	Burke County
Randy Feierabend	Cajah's Mountain
Donald Duncan	Caldwell County
Kyle Hayman	Conover
Tom Hart	Conover
Brenda Powell	Conover
Mark Canrobert	Conover
Sherri Bradshaw	Drexel
Scott Hildebran	Lenoir
Rick Justice	Rhodhiss

WPCOG Staff Present

Anthony Starr, Executive Director
Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director
David Pugh, Director of Administrative Services and Human Resources
Andrea Roper, Director of Finance
Ben Willis, Director of Community and Economic Development
Alison Adams, Director of Community and Regional Planning
Tina Miller, Director of Area Agency on Aging
Jason Toney, Communications Manager
Elizabeth Hilliard, Executive Administrative Assistant
Mary Mitchell, Administrator of the Family Caregiver Support Program

Taylor Dellinger, Senior Data Analyst/GIS Manager
Duncan Cavanaugh, Senior Planner/Project Management

Call to Order/Welcome

A regular meeting of the WPCOG Policy Board was called to order at 6:45 pm by Chair Patton. Chair Patton thanked the City of Conover for hosting. The City of Conover Mayor, Kyle Hayman, welcomed the Policy Board to Conover.

Introductions

Introductions were made by everyone in attendance.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were considered. Mr. Joie Fulbright made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 26, 2023 meeting and Mr. Larry Chapman offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business/Reports

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Retaining and Recruiting Local Government Managers

Mr. Anthony Starr, Executive Director, stated as the nation's workforce continues to decrease, local governments struggle to fill vacancies. Employers in both the private sector and public sector continue to adjust their compensation, work practices, and benefits to attract the best talent in challenging conditions. The position of local government manager is not immune to these market forces. Fewer professionals seek to enter the local government management profession with retirements increasing.

The following items were discussed:

- Goals for this presentation.
- Understand the employment landscape.
- How to retain your manager.
- When parting ways with a manager.
- How to attract a new manager.
- Recruiting process for a new manager.

Using observations and feedback from local government managers across the state, this presentation provided useful information for elected officials.

Staff requested the Policy Board review the information and discuss the strategies. No action was required.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Overview / Family Caregiver Month

Ms. Tina Miller, Director of the Area Agency on Aging, presented an overview of programs and services offered by the Area Agency on Aging.

The following items were discussed:

- What is the Area Agency on Aging?
- Area Agency on Aging services.
- Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG).
- HCCBG services funded in Region E (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties).
- HCCBG funding allocations for fiscal year 2024.
- HCCBG service totals for 2022.
- Additional funding allocations due to COVID.
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Programs.
- Health promotions programs.
- Regional Ombudsman Program.
- Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty).

Ms. Mary Mitchell, Administrator of the Family Caregiver Support Program, presented an overview of the family caregiver support program and special services and support available to assist those who are family caregivers in our region. She reviewed the eligibility requirements along with the various programs offered. Governor Roy Cooper proclaimed November 2023 as “Family Caregiver Month” in North Carolina and commend its observance to all citizens.

Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA)

Ms. Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director, stated the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) is entered between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS), and the Workforce Board Directors’ Council for the purpose of setting out each parties’ obligations and responsibilities related to infrastructure cost-sharing for one-stop career centers located throughout North Carolina.

One-stop partners, including human services programs, must enter into an MOU with the local workforce board relating to the operation of the one-stop centers.

The IFA sets forth (1) the infrastructure costs and other shared costs that contribute to support the career centers in the State from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, (2) how funds will be allocated to local workforce development boards and (3) the role DWS will play in the administration and distribution of funds.

Staff requested the Policy Board approve the Infrastructure Funding Agreement that details the operational and service costs and how the system will be funded.

Mr. Randy Burns made a motion that the Policy Board approve the Infrastructure Funding Agreement and Mr. Larry Chapman offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

NADO Awards and NCAPA Marvin Collins Award Recognition

Mr. Anthony Starr, Executive Director, stated 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 recognized during NADO's 2023 Annual Training Conference in Cleveland, OH on November 7th – 10th. Western Piedmont Council of Governments received the Aliceann Wohbruck Impact Award for the Western Piedmont Housing Growth Toolkit at the conference. WPCOG also received an award in the Economic Development-Data-Workforce Development category for the Economic Indicators Newsletter (EIN). Mr. Taylor Dellinger, Senior Data Analyst/GIS Manager, and Jason Toney, Communications Manager, were recognized at the Policy Board meeting for their work on the EIN.

At the annual North Carolina American Planning Association Conference in October, the Western Piedmont Council of Governments was presented with a Marvin Collins Award for the Western Piedmont Housing Growth Toolkit. The highly competitive Marvin Collins Award recognizes the places, people, and planning projects that represent the highest level of achievement in North Carolina. Nominations are rigorously evaluated by a panel of independent planners throughout North Carolina. Ms. Alison Adams, Director of Community and Regional Planning, and Mr. Duncan Cavanaugh, Senior Planner/Project Manager, were recognized at the Policy Board meeting for their work on the Western Piedmont Housing Growth Toolkit.

Western Piedmont Housing Growth Toolkit

The Housing Growth Toolkit collects a broad range of both technical policy recommendations and general design best practices for encouraging and thoughtfully regulating a variety of housing types, including everything from single-family homes to mid-rise apartment buildings. The toolkit places the recommendations in context and explains the economic and equity implications for allowing more types of housing, and the fiscal efficiencies that can be gained by increasing densities. Images and examples in the document are largely taken directly from the region's cities and counties, providing local "proof" that these housing types are already present and integrated into existing neighborhoods. This combination of fiscal, design, equity, and economic arguments, combined with a focus on local provision and local examples, provides a unique visioning document for the region as well as a collection of concrete policy options for code amendments.

This item was for informational purposes only.

2nd Amendment of the FY 2023-2024 Budget

Ms. Andrea Roper, Director of Finance, stated the 2nd Amendment of the FY2023-24 budget reflects a total budget of \$26,384,487 and an operating budget of \$10,175,143 which represents an increase of the total budget from the September 26, 2023, budget adoption of \$138,588.

The 2nd Amendment of the 2023-2024 Budget includes:

- An increase in Community Development mainly due to the addition of contractual work for urgent repair and single-family rehabilitation projects. Various housing project amounts were adjusted to reflect current fiscal year expected expenditures.
- Community and Regional Planning increased \$1,450 to reflect the addition of a new planning project.
- Regional Public Housing increased to adjust for additional service fee funds earned.
- Chargeable salaries, retirement & group insurance decreased due to personnel changes.
- Contractual increased due to the addition of construction work for urgent repair and single-family rehabilitation projects.
- Contingency decreased due to those funds being utilized in the Community Development and Regional Housing Authority budgets.
- Service fees increased to reflect additional funding provided for emergency housing vouchers and mainstream vouchers.
- Compensated Absence Liability decreased due to the decrease in fringe funds generated by chargeable salaries.
- Transfer to Capital Reserve Fund decreased due to the decrease in indirect funds generated by chargeable salaries.
- Regional Housing Authority Special Revenue Funds increased to reflect additional funding for service fees.
- Capital Reserve Fund decreased due to a reduction in transfers from the general fund.
- All other changes reflect normal programmatic needs.

Staff requested that the Policy Board review and approve the Second Amendment of the 2023-2024 Budget.

Mr. George Holleman made a motion that the Policy Board approve the Second Amendment of the 2023-2024 Budget as proposed and Mr. Joie Fulbright offered a second. The motion was passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee Report, Officer Elections and Appointment

Chair Jill Patton stated each year, the Board Chair appoints a nominating committee for the purpose of recommending persons for the Officers, Executive Committee and Appointed Delegates of the Policy Board. Chair Patton appointed Chris Jernigan (Morganton), Larry Yoder (Alexander County), and Mike LaBrose (Caldwell County) to serve as members of the 2023 Nominating Committee.

Committee Chair Patton presented the recommendations from the Nominating Committee listed below:

Position	Recommendation	Term Ends
Chair	Joe Gibbon	Dec. 2024
Vice Chair	Randy Burns	Dec. 2024
Secretary	Larry Chapman	Dec. 2024
Treasurer	George Holleman	Dec. 2024

Immediate Past Chair	Jill Patton	Dec. 2024
Executive Committee At-Large	Mike LaBrose	Dec. 2024
Executive Committee At-Large	Cole Setzer	Dec. 2024
Executive Committee At-Large	Marla Thompson	Dec. 2024
Executive Committee At-Large	Larry Yoder	Dec. 2024
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Tonia Stephenson	Dec. 2025
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Mark Transou	Dec. 2025
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Malla Vue	Dec. 2025
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Amparo Alfaro	Dec. 2024
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Erisha Lipford	Dec. 2024
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Tommy Luckadoo	Dec. 2024
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Helen Chestnut	Dec. 2024
Forum Representative	Marla Thompson	Dec. 2024
Alternate Forum Representative	Larry Yoder	Dec. 2024

The Policy Board was requested to elect the Officers, Executive Committee members, and Appointed Delegates for 2024.

Mr. Larry Yoder motioned the Policy Board approve the nominations as presented by the Nominating Committee and Mr. Larry Chapman offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Recognition of Outgoing Chair

Vice Chair Joseph Gibbons presented Chair Patton a plaque and a gift for her outstanding leadership from 2022 – 2023. He stated it has been an honor to serve with Chair Patton.

Other Business

Executive Director’s and Staff Reports

Administration

- The WPCOG continues the search process for the Granite Falls Town Manager position, which is due to be complete in 2024. The Drexel Town Manager position search has been completed and the new manager begins in December.
- Work continues for the design of the WPCOG office expansion. New cost estimates are expected in the coming weeks.
- Communications staff are working on a new website for the Homelessness Response Team and a total update to the WPCOG website is planned.

Community and Economic Development (CED)

- The Homelessness Response Team added the fifth and final member to the team. Collectively they bring a variety of expertise in mental health, mobile crisis, SUDs (substance use disorder), domestic abuse, housing, workforce development, and public health. The team continues to develop standard operation procedures and has already started to perform outreach with WPCOG Code Enforcement in several communities that we serve. One of the key objectives between now and the end of the year is to assist with the preparations of the Point in Time (PIT)

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Count that will take place on January 31 in our region and throughout the country. Additionally, the Homeless Response Team was awarded \$10,000 from Community Foundation of Burke County and \$10,000 from Burke Charitable Properties to help with HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) training for nonprofits who work with homeless populations in Burke and McDowell Counties.

- The NC Housing Finance Agency awarded the WPCOG \$264,000 for Alexander, Burke and Caldwell Counties and \$124,000 for Catawba County to fund their Urgent Repair Programs. The WPCOG was also awarded \$147,129 from Dogwood Trust and \$100,000 from ARC for Capacity Building within the CED Department.
- ARC awarded **Caldwell County** \$513,425 for the Evergreene Industrial Park Sewer and Water Expansion Project and **Valdese Old Rock School** for \$60,000 for equipment purchases for the Old Rock School Entrepreneurship Center.

Community and Regional Planning

- The Caldwell EDC tool was completed with groupings of parcels that are ready for industrial development, as well as individual parcels that are large enough to accommodate development with existing or nearby utilities.
- We are re-branding the Data Center to better communicate its purpose and resources. The new name will be the WPCOG Center for Research and Data Analytics. An update to our website and further details are forthcoming.
- Placer AI data service will begin after December 1. Staff are already receiving requests for the new data.

Finance

- The FY23 audit final fieldwork is completed for the WPCOG. The statements are currently being prepared by the auditors. WPCOG staff will review the statements and approve them for submission.
- The FY23 audit is complete for the Town of Catawba. The auditor is scheduled to present the audit at the November council meeting.
- The FY23 audit is complete for the Hickory Metro Convention Center and Visitors Bureau. The auditors are scheduled to present the audit presentation at the December board meeting.
- The Caldwell Chamber audit draft for FY23 financial statements have been reviewed and were presented at the October board meeting.

Regional Housing Authority (RHA)

- Beginning in November 2023, the RHA is being awarded an additional 10 VASH vouchers for our veteran community to utilize. This will bring our total VASH award to 30 available vouchers. The RHA has now leased 16 veterans with housing assistance. Two other veterans have a pending voucher at this time and continue to search for housing.
- The RHA has approximately 870 families on its regular housing choice voucher waiting list. Movement continues to be slow because the regular Housing Choice Voucher program is currently close to full capacity. The VASH Program will continue to accept referrals from the Veterans Administration.

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- The RHA Annual Landlord Meeting was held Wednesday, November 15, 2023. This workshop is marketed toward any current or interested landlords that would like to attend. It is a great opportunity to learn more about the Housing Choice Voucher Program's policies and procedures. About 36 landlords attended the meeting to receive information about our program. Most of the attendees will be new participants in our program and this increases the number of homes available for our housing clients.

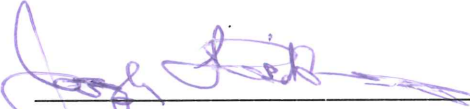
Next Meeting

The next Policy Board meeting is scheduled for January 23, 2024 and will be hosted by the Town of Taylorsville and Alexander County.


Adjournment

Chair Patton adjourned the meeting at 7:51 pm. Mr. Larry Chapman made a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Larry Yoder offered a second. The motion was unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe Gibbons
Chair



Larry Chapman
Secretary