

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
MARCH 20, 2017
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments met March 20, 2017, 7:00pm, at the High Country Council of Governments Office in Boone. The following members and alternates were present at the meeting: Charles Vines, J.B. Lawrence, Robert L. Johnson, Gary D. Blevins, Rick Miller, Dale Baldwin, William Sands, Tudor Vance, Chris Jones, Valerie Jaynes, Rennie Brantz, Russell Ferree, Mark Evans, Larry Turnbow, and Brenda Lyerly. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Shane Fox, Jeff Hedrick, Keith Deveraux, Julie Wiggins, Tim Holloman, David Graham, and Tanna Greathouse.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairwoman Lyerly thanked everyone for attending and called on Charles Vines to lead the invocation. Chairwoman Lyerly then led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairwoman Lyerly welcomed Commissioner Larry Turnbow, Watauga representative, to the board. Mr. Turnbow spoke about his background and thanked everyone for the welcome. Beech Mountain Mayor Rick Miller introduced his new town manager, Tim Holloman.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Charles Vines made a motion to approve the Executive Board minutes for February 20, 2017. Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

February Financial Highlights

Chairwoman Lyerly called on Executive Director Shane Fox to give details regarding the February financials. Mr. Fox reviewed the Financial Highlights as of February 28, 2017 (Attachment A1). Chris Jones made a motion to approve the February Financial Highlights Report. Robert L. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Report on Fund Balance Percentage History and Policy on Fund Balance Thresholds

Mr. Fox presented the board with a report on the 10-year history of fund balances and unassigned fund balances (Attachment A2). Gary D. Blevins suggested the future policy would outline a range for a minimum and maximum threshold for unassigned fund balances. Mr. Blevins pointed out the balances shown on the report coincided with the recession. When times are good, the COG should set aside monies to help cover operations during periods of reduced funding. Chairwoman Lyerly stated the report is for information only, and there will be discussions on this in the future.

HIGH COUNTRY RPO OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

David Graham, Transportation Planner, presented an overview of the High Country Rural Planning Organization (Attachment B). Mr. Graham announced NCDOT will be increasing RPO funding across the state by 15%, with 80% of that funding coming from NCDOT and 20% from local governments.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Keith Deveraux, Workforce Development Director, updated the Board on current developments and projects in his department. Mr. Deveraux announced Nate Griffin would be joining the Workforce Development Board as a private sector member from Wilkes County. Workforce staff completed their Career Pathways Package and sent that to the state for approval. Workforce staff have received 2 bids for WIOA services, one from Mayland Community College and the other from ResCare Workforce Services. The review process begins soon and recommendations will be made at the April Workforce Development Board meeting. On March 28, Mr. Deveraux will be going to Washington D.C. with other Workforce Directors to meet with Congresswoman Virginia Foxx to discuss workforce issues.

RESOLUTION OPPOSING NC SENATE BILL 94 – ELECTIONS TRANSPARENCY

Chairwoman Lyerly stated the board had voted to have a resolution on the March agenda regarding Senate Bill 94, and felt board members should discuss the resolution further. Gary D. Blevins stated he felt we should table the resolution because the bill only affects municipalities, not the counties. Because the COG represents both counties and municipalities, Mr. Blevins feels it's a mistake for county officials to weigh in on a resolution opposing a Senate Bill that doesn't involve counties. Mr. Blevins suggested we redraft the resolution and frame it in such a way that it's only for municipal representatives on the board.

Charles Vines stated agreement with what municipal members were saying that the issue affects municipalities and not counties. Mr. Vines asked Mr. Fox if any other COGs had drafted a resolution similar to this one and Mr. Fox answered no, HCCOG was the only one he was aware of. Mr. Vines stated if we wanted to have a resolution we should rewrite it to reflect it was from the municipal representatives on the board. As the resolution is written now, it would not make sense to vote on the resolution as it is written.

Gary D. Blevins made a motion to table and rewrite the resolution based on tonight's discussion for action at April's meeting. Larry Turnbow seconded the motion. Chris Jones stated concern with drafting a resolution from the COG and that it might show us in a negative light. Mr. Jones says we may not want to stand out alone on this issue and that municipalities were free to draft their own resolutions. Mr. Blevins stated the NC League of Municipalities could release a statement taking a strong position and use their lobbying power, whereas HCCOG has no lobbying power. If HCCOG is the only COG that states opposition to this bill it may not sit well with legislators.

Robert L. Johnson stated he wished to second the motion Gary D. Blevins had made earlier. Chairwoman Lyerly informed Mr. Johnson we already had a second.

J.B. Lawrence stated he would like to see the draft resolution sent to all the municipal managers to send out from their respective boards.

Chairwoman Lyerly stated we have a motion and a second, and asked if there was any additional discussion to postpone the resolution. Mr. Vines stated he felt this was not a COG problem, it was a municipality problem. He feels all the municipalities should make their own decision as to what to do, therefore taking the COG out of being involved with this issue. Mr. Vines stated Boards of County Commissioners was an arm of state government while Municipal Boards were not.

Chairwoman Lyerly stated we have a motion and a second to table this resolution. Motion carried.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Update on Regional Programs, Projects and Issues

Mr. Fox stated we had a successful Manager's Meeting in February that was well attended. The Advisory Committee will be having their retreat April 7-8, 2017 in Boone.

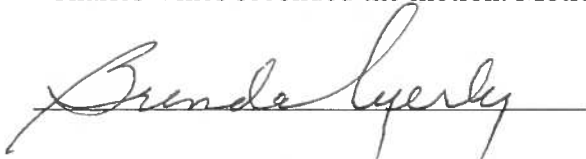
The EDA had a Performance Evaluation and Recommendation Report for our region's Economic Development District (EDD). The report had one recommendation that board meeting minutes should mention actions and progress towards the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) on a more frequent basis.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairwoman Lyerly thanked everyone for attending the meeting and expressed her appreciation for the work our Planning department does on the CEDs.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Robert L. Johnson made a motion to adjourn. Charles Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:54 pm.



Chairwoman, Brenda Lyerly



Clerk to the Board, Tanna Greathouse

Date 4/17/2017

