

Minutes
Western Piedmont Council of Governments
Bimonthly Policy Board Meeting
Tuesday, January 27, 2015
Old Rock School, Valdese

Members Present:

Robert Smyre, Chairman
George Holleman, Vice-Chairman
Larry Yoder, Secretary
Mary Bess Lawing, Treasurer
Chip Black, Past Chairman
Kitty Barnes, At-Large
Bob Floyd, Jr., At-Large
Wayne Abele, Sr., At-Large
Nicky Setzer
Tim Lowrance, Alternate
Johnny Berry
Joie Fulbright
Kyle Hayman, Alternate
Benny Orders
Christine Abernathy
Barbara Lowman
Larry Chapman
Ben Willis
Vernon Moyer
Forrest Fleming
Rick Justice
Gary McClure
Wayne Annas, Alternate
Trena Kirby
Amparo Alfaro
Tommy Luckadoo
Merlin Perry
Pat Hatley
Deborah Ashley-Smith

Local Government/Affiliation:

Maiden
Taylorsville
Alexander County
Newton
Valdese
Catawba County
Cedar Rock
Burke County
Claremont
Claremont
Connelly Springs
Conover
Conover
Drexel
Glen Alpine
Hildebran
Hudson
Lenoir
Long View
Morganton
Rhodhiss
Rutherford College
Rutherford College
Sawmills
Non-Elected
Non-Elected
Non-Elected
Non-Elected
Non-Elected

Members Absent:

Barbara Pennell, At-Large
Mike Labrose
Cheryl Pritchard
Sue Noblitt
Jeff Hendren
Bruce Meisner
Charles Taylor
Jerry Hodge

Gamewell
Caldwell County
Cajah's Mountain
Brookford
Catawba
Hickory
Non-Elected
Non-Elected

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Guests/Others Present:

Thelda Rhoney, Valdese Town Clerk
Rebecca Bentley, Hudson Town Manager
Frances Hildebran, Valdese Town Councilperson
Susan Stevenson, Valdese Mayor Pro-Tem
Seth Eckard, Sawmills Town Manager
Jeff Morse, Valdese Town Manager
Kim Clarke

Staff Present:

Anthony Starr, Executive Director
Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director
Wendy Johnson, Workforce Development Director
Stephanie Hanvey, Section 8 Housing Director
John Marshall, Planning Director
Scott Miller, Data Services/GIS Manager
Tina Miller, Aging Specialist
Dana Roberts, Administrative Services Manager

Call to Order/Welcome

A regular meeting of the WPCOG Policy Board was called to order at 6:50 pm by Chairman Bob Smyre. Susan Stevenson, Valdese Mayor Pro-Tem, welcomed the Board to the Town.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes of the November meetings and they were unanimously approved on motion by Mr. Chapman and second by Mr. Abele.

Unfinished Business

There was no business.

New Business

Audit Presentation

Cindy Randolph with Lowdermilk Church and Company presented highlights from the FY 2013-14 audit. She noted that the audit indicates that the General Fund balance increased by \$17,385. The Workforce Investment Act and Aging Funds maintain nominal balances per state and federal program requirements. The Section 8 Housing Fund balance decreased by \$201,190 as a result of the recent federal policy reducing all public housing authority reserves to approximately one month's average expenses.

Second Revision of FY 2014-15 Budget

Mr. Starr reviewed a proposed revision to the FY 2014-15 budget which increases the total budget by \$277,479 for a total budget of \$15,793,884. The proposed operating budget is \$4,912,654. Mr. Starr indicated that the revision increases revenues and expenditures to accommodate several new projects.

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Other key elements in the proposed revision include 1) lower salary amounts due to recent and anticipated staff retirements, 2) an increase caused by a few large payouts for vacation leave balances of retiring employees, 3) increases due to grant administration for a NCDOT grant for Claremont and the Burke County single-family housing rehab grant, and 4) increased planning assistance revenues and expenditures associated with the extending the Alexander County planning contract to three days, and a strategic plan for the City of Newton.

Following brief discussion, the proposed revision was approved unanimously on motion by Mr. Setzer and second by Mr. Abele.

Updated Urgent Repair Program Assistance Policy

Sherry Long spoke about the impact this program can have with as little as \$5000 and shared with Board members an example of a successful Urgent Repair project in Caldwell County that totally transformed a bathroom for a disabled person.

Ms. Long said an urgent repair assistance policy was approved in July 2014 that stated "No roofs would be completed for double wide mobile homes." Ms. Long said staff would like to amend that policy to state "Roofs for double wide mobile homes will be considered on a case by case basis after inspection by Community Development staff."

Mr. Holleman made a motion to approve the proposed amendment to the Urgent Repair Assistance Policy as proposed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Yoder and approved unanimously.

Transportation Planning Update

John Marshall provided an overview of key projects in the draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for this region. The MPO and RPO establish regional rankings for transportation projects and those rankings help shape the plan and schedule for which transportation projects are completed. Public input meetings will be held in March and April.

Mr. Marshall also spoke about a travel behavior survey. NCDOT and MPO staff have been discussing development of the next long range transportation plan which includes an update of the travel demand model. They believe the MPO should invest in a travel behavior survey as part of the upcoming update so the model can be developed using local data, rather than borrowed data as in past years. The travel survey would cost approximately \$300,000, including \$240,000 from federal funds and \$60,000 local match. The local match would be divided among the local governments based on population, the same formula used to calculate annual MPO dues. Mr. Marshall added that the survey is critical for several reasons including air quality conformity analysis and continued federal funding for transportation projects in our region.

FY 2015-16 WPCOG Assessments for Local Governments

Mr. Starr reviewed a proposed assessments chart for FY 2015-16. He stated that local government dues are calculated at \$0.50 per capita, a rate that has been in effect for 17 years. The assessment chart also includes dues for MPO and RPO, water resources, and optional dues for membership in the Sister Cities program and the Alliance for Innovation. Mr. Starr noted that the chart also includes additional funds associated with the travel behavior survey explained by Mr. Marshall.

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There was brief discussion and a motion was made by Mr. Holleman to approve the assessments chart as proposed. Mr. Fulbright seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Staff Updates

Mr. Starr welcomed the new Manager of the City of Claremont, Catherine Renbarger. He mentioned that Chairman Smyre had appointed a building career to help guide relocation or renovation of the Catawba Career Center. Members include Chairman Smyre, Tommy Luckadoo, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Workforce Development Board, and Dee Blackwell. He said the WPCOG would lease the property from the prospective landlord.

Mr. Starr announced that the employment of one or more new positions would be necessary to accommodate additional work associated with new planning projects. Other personnel issues include the retirement of Aging Director Sheila Weeks and Finance Director Doug Laffon. Tina Miller, current Aging Specialist, was chosen to succeed Ms. Weeks.

Mr. Starr reported that he had accepted an appointment to the ARC Board for District Directors and to SERDI, the Southeastern Regional Directors Institute. In conclusion he reported that since the beginning of 2011, 32 external entities have used conference rooms with more than 500 people in attendance.

Ms. Long gave a Section 8 program update, noting there are 798 families on the waiting list, 148 vouchers currently outstanding, 968 units of 1074 leased and Section 8 staff continues to process applications. Community Development staff recently submitted a building reuse grant application for Claremont, a single-family rehab application for Burke County, and urgent repair applications for all four counties.

Ms. Long mentioned a CDBG program workshop February 11 at 9 am in Valdese. She encouraged elected officials to help fight for a fair share of CDBG funds in this region. A map indicating grant recipients indicates most of the CDBG money is going to the eastern part of the State.

Ms. Long a group of 12 traveled to Charlotte this day to visit the Charlotte Works site to see their innovative approach. She noted that one interesting thing about their program is they consider themselves a talent agency and their mission to aid employers in finding the right person for each job.

Other Business

Bimonthly Financial Report

Chairman Smyre said the bimonthly financial report is for information only.

Next Meeting

Chairman Smyre announced that Rutherford College will host the next meeting on Tuesday, March 24.

Adjournment

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 pm.