



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

MINUTES

AGNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS & MEMBER MEETING

February 19, 2020

*Garfield County Administration Building, Community Room,
195 W. 14th Street, Rifle, CO 81650*

9:00 am to 1:30 pm

Pledge of allegiance

Call to order – Ray Beck, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:06 am. Introductions were made.

Approval of Minutes – Doug Monger made a motion to approve the minutes; Roger Granat seconded the motion, motion passed.

Financial report: Bonnie Petersen reviewed financials for end of year 2019 and January 2020. The budget projection for 2019 net income was a negative \$31,136.00 but the actual net income was positive in the amount of \$2,451.50. Expenses for the year were lower than budgeted and revenues were higher than budgeted resulting in a positive net income for the year. The balance sheet reflects a total asset position of \$784,172.90, \$440,160.41 of that amount belonged to AAoA.

Financials for January 2020 reflected a revenue position of \$16,483.80, which was slightly more than the budget revenue amount of \$16,423.33. Actual expenses were \$24,043.55, which was less than the budgeted expense of \$39,727.38. Net income for the month was negative \$7,559.75 which was better than the budgeted net income for the month of negative \$23,304.05.

Tim Redmond moved that the financial reports for year end 2019 and January 2020 be accepted and approved; Andy Key seconded the motion, motion passed.

Project and Committee Reports:

AAoA - Heather Jones reported that AAoA had \$159,000 in carry over funds from the federal government and she had two (2) weeks to notify the state about how the region will use the funds. This is the earliest that AAoA has been notified that there would be carry over in funds; Heather provided a spreadsheet of her recommended allocation of the carry over funds. She indicated that if an entity did not receive funds it was because they had not spent previously allocated funds. Funds that are not utilized at the end of a fiscal year go back to the federal government and are reallocated based on formula. The allocation criteria is based on the needs of the entities and their ability to spend the funds by July 30th. Legal services providers need continuing education credits; the funds will allow for that in all counties of the region. There were no funds allocated for home delivered meals - dining was just a little over \$2,000 - most carry over funds came through the ombudsman services which can't use for nutrition programs. 2020 online program just went live – Heather did a webinar for training; she is staying in office to answer questions. After the new program is stable, she plans to travel throughout the region. State will be in the region for their audit again in the May timeframe. Region on average is spending 3 or 4 dollars per meal which is low when compared to the rest of the state – although it

does not provide meals in Moffat County. AAoA receives additional grants in Mesa County for the meal program. Heather's 4-year plan addresses keeping the region's core plan in place - nutrition services have increased - dining sites are decreasing but there is an increase in home delivered meals. It is anticipated that meal services will see an 11-12 % increase in next 4 years. Transportation, ombudsman and legal services, and wellness-based programs are the core services. Heather would like to add behavioral health to core programs in the future. Heather received certification in January to be the lead ombudsman for the region. This designation allows her the ability to cover visits for other ombudsmen - an audit in November resulted in her being notified that the region is in full compliance with program. February 12th an audit of legal services program will be conducted; Heather doesn't expect any compliance issues with that program. Surveys being done of participants in programs. AAoA is looking for a 90% outcome on the survey to see if services are providing the ability for seniors to stay home. She is working with the state to review survey questions, new questions will give us better answers and will begin next year.

Dinosaur Welcome Center - Cheryl McDonald is at work preparing the Center for the 2020 opening to take place on March 1, 2020. There was no written report for this month.

Legislative report –Diana Orf joined the meeting via conference call and provided an overview of what's happening at the legislature. We are at the point of legislature where the JBC is working on figure setting for various departments looking for funding to address the state's priorities. Diana provided an overview of SB168 introduced to eliminate the coal exemption related to severance tax for the first amounts of coal produced. If they do that to coal it makes sense to keep tax resources locally rather than subsidizing renewable. Interested in the justification of taking severance tax revenues from impacted communities and giving them to non-impacted communities. There is a hearing today on a bill that would not allow employers to fire employees who test positive for marijuana. An employer is liable for employees so there will be an outpouring of businesses regarding that bill. Pesticide bills are coming along – one has been introduced, one is in the drafting process to protect bees and pollinators. PFAST bill still in process getting amendments to it – the hearing was pushed off another week in the future. There was not written update provided for this month.

Announcements: Ray Beck notified the group that a just transition effort now has a director – the JT board did not have any say in terms of that Director hire - Wade Buchanan will become full time director the first part of March. The group must determine what are they going to do for impacted communities – the group must provide a draft document by July 1st; there are 4 subcommittees working on report. The group still does not know what the funding will be or where it will come from especially considering the Long bill is \$140 million short in funding other state programs, etc. The state hired the Keystone Policy center to aide with the drafting of the JT report; they are organizing meetings on March 4, 5 and 6 in NW Colorado.

2020 Census Update – Brian Meinhart, Senior Partnership Specialist, provided an update on the 2020 census - April 1, 2020 is census day. If census information is not reported by August 1, 2020, then it won't be counted. The census managers are trying to encourage people to complete census forms online. If people don't want to do that, they can call an enumerator. There are legal reasons for all the questions asked on census. Mostly directed at avoiding gerrymandering. Census workers and forms will NEVER ask about social security numbers, donations, banking/credit card information or political party information. The Census can compile stats with information collected, that is all that can be done by law; information cannot be shared with anyone else not even law enforcement. In terms of filling positions needed for the census, we

are doing pretty well recruiting in most AGNC areas - Routt is at about 50% filled - need to push for people to apply. Census will work with employees to be flexible with scheduling. Most AGNC counties have established complete count committees which is a formalized group of partners helping to get information out to the community. There will be an increased use of social media, etc. trying to reach hard to count populations. People living remotely, language barriers, legal concerns. There are a lot of immigrant and migrant workers that we need to be sure are counted. Committees help to mobilize people to complete the questionnaire. Brian will connect us with chairs of committees if needed. The power point presentation Brin provided was sent to AGNC membership.

Taking Advantage of an Opportunity Zone – Chelsea Rosty, Montrose Director of Business Innovation and Tourism provided a presentation regarding the benefits of Opportunity Zones (OZ) - why they matter, etc. OZ's are designed to help those with money to do good while they are doing well. The idea was to get capital out of the 5 major markets and into distressed communities. She provided a tutorial on how OZ's work to bring capital into the community. An OZ can bring funds into local government for capital investment like police stations or early childhood development projects. It helps to start conversations about development priorities in the community. Intelligent Development - Colorado is hot right now - (tell the money where to go). She shared the Montrose story and how the first Forbes article written about OZs featured Montrose. The community invited investors out – OEDIT helped the community create a prospectus and a video; they got it all up and running quickly. When early investors started asking Colorado where to invest - Montrose came to the surface. The community already had some projects going so one of first rural investments made by OZ investors was made there. The community had identified 3 projects to tell money where to go. On the River front, investors loved the project. Also, a focus was on downtown; there was a big empty building that needed to be done. Now the big building is under contract – at first it was an OZ idea but now it's just a normal investment project for the developer. If you want to see what Montrose put together for a prospectus, etc. to go [City of Montrose.org/oz](http://CityofMontrose.org/oz) – Chelsea encouraged attendees to copy their template for the local community. Marketing community - OZs have gotten bad press - help market in a different way - show blighted areas as opportunities.

Federal Delegation Updates

Betsy Bair provided an update from Senator Gardner's office. Senator Gardner was the first sponsor of the Opportunity zones legislation and they are seeing some great uses of it. This Saturday, the Senator will celebrate the HUD partnership with Community Hospital in the refinance of their debt down to 2.5% - this is the first time government money has gone into an OZ – the refinance will save the hospital a great deal of money. Also Saturday the Senator will be meeting with PRAXIS about doing some affordable housing in Grand Junction. Fifth Third bank announced \$100million investment fund for OZ's. Montrose was highlighted on the West Slope. Bureau of labor force noted that investments in OZ communities had annualized wages gains of 8%. The Senator had great couple of weeks - he will be in the West Slope this week; the Home care for senior's act was introduced; the bill allows providers to use HSA for qualified home care services. Tuesday, he introduced the VA readiness program - when vets come home nobody is ready to receive them. CMU has 300 students that are vets and going to school; he met with several about their experiences. Veterans have zero experience when transitioning to civilian life, President Trump signed into law a bill that provides funds for veterans to access STEM programs – it is one of nine bills introduced. Kate McGregor passed out of committee as nominee for the

position of Deputy Secretary of the Interior. She is very familiar with the West Slope. Colorado received \$1.5 million for housing almost every county received some funds from grants. The Senate is working on Judge nominations constantly - 5 were confirmed on senate floor last week. Have seen some reform bills on EAJA but there is no political will in house for reform. Ray noted the Tri-State closure announcement and asked if there is any discussion about funding for coal impacted communities. Betsy said that when the community has a plan, bring it forward. Many agencies may have some funding, but the first question is always, does the community have plan. The re-write of NEPA is targeted toward providing local governments a say in how lands are managed in their back yard, members need to be supportive of the rewrite. At the hearing last week in Denver attendees numbered 10 to 1 in opposing, it was a surprise that the Ute Mountain Utes spoke in favor of the rewrite. Every other tribe voiced opposition to rewrite. Ft. Collins spoke in favor of the changes and GJ Chamber did as well. Protestors had big opportunity to speak and turned out – the agency did only 4 or 5 hearings across the nation. The deadline is closing soon for comments. A link was sent to members regarding the rewrite and rules and to encourage comments to be made.

Brandon Bainer provided an update for Congressman Tipton's office. Brandon said George getting closer to walking on her own. He provided an update on the guest worker modernization act. - amnesty is not in the bill. The bill simplifies the process for workers who are here legally to come back each year. Water rights protection act went through house last session still pressing to protect water for ranchers, rec., etc. As a reminder, the need for the bill was demonstrated when the permit renewal at Powderhorn required the owner to sign water rights over to federal government in exchange for the permit renewal. The trade bill supported by the Congressman helps Western Colorado communities. The Congressman has Co-sponsored the public land renewable act which would help subsidize development of renewables on public lands. The GMUG forest will deliver the 2020 Christmas Tree for the White House. Members noted that desperately need a functional guest worker program if any producers want to grow.

JT ROMATZKE, Northwestern Regional Manager for CPW was in attendance and asked if he would like to provide an update for that organization. He noted that wolves are the most polarizing topic of the year, he noted that the meeting in Craig was amazing event. Legislation is being crafted and discussed regarding wolves and CPW has acknowledged that a pack of wolves in NW Colorado has been identified. Expect to see some meetings on mountain lion planning; there has been no management plans on lions in 10 years. Every time the group tries to change mountain lion management it is meet with opposition. There are several lions in Glenwood Springs and Edwards; a young boy was attacked by a lion in Basalt. CPW is trying to reduce lions in special districts in the Eagle area; the agency is trying to identify a prudent path forward. There is a lot of criticism about bear management - Colorado has more bears and lions than ever before. The state and communities will have problems if the state should lose the ability to hunt these species – the state will have huge consequences. A bobcat hunting petition was denied last year, now CPW has a petition to ban all live traps in Colorado. Cameo has been getting ramped up and usage is blowing the roof off things; 3 or 4 businesses have relocated to GJ because of facility. A significant event is moving from Texas to Cameo - Girls with a Gun – the event will take place April/May. Probably more than 8,000 shooters will visit the facility by the end of this year. The AGNC sage grouse habitat maps have finally been adopted by BLM after 4 years. CPW is delivering them to COGCC - make up of permanent commission is

major change in the state. It was asked if it is against federal law to introduce wolves where an established population exists. USFWS is doing a range wide rulemaking now - 1.2 million comments were received in the last few months opposing de-listing of the wolf. In order to be declared an existing population, the state would have to have 2 reproducing groups of wolves for 2 consecutive years. There has been discussion about the need for a state management plan for this species but nobody since 2005 has been willing to have a management plan; there are consequences on every aspect of these plans. State law says we can't reintroduce a species where there is an existing population as well.

Administrative Update

Bonnie Petersen provided an Administrative Update on the following topics:

- CCI sent a letter regarding statewide transportation with a request that AGNC sign on to it for the purpose of raising the level of discussion regarding transportation with the legislature. Doug Monger made a motion that AGNC sign on to the CCI letter; Gary Moyer seconded the motion, motion passed.
- Partnership planning grant with EDA submitted by deadline of January 31, 2020. Received some questions from EDA – will answer those. We may hear by April 1, 2020, if the grant is awarded.
- Mini-grant program will be available for 2020; we are working on the application and working through some matters with DOLA.
- We will have Thursday legislative call; there are too many items to effectively do them during the board meeting.
- Just transition team will visit Northwest Colorado March 4, 5, and 6, to conduct a series of meetings throughout the region.

New Business: *Next Meeting March 18, 2020; Palisade Town Hall, 341 W 7th St., Palisade, CO 81526*

Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 1:33 pm.

Attendance:

Ray Beck, Moffat County
Mike Samson, Garfield County
Gary Moyer, Rio Blanco County
Andy Key, Town of Rangely
Chris Nichols, City of Craig
Keely Ellis, CNCC
Brandon Bainer, Congressman Tipton's Ofc.
Tiffany Pehl, AGNC
John Justman, Mesa County
Chelsea Rosty, Town of Montrose
Kris Melnikoff, Town of Collbran
Makala Barton, Rio Blanco ED
Amy Provstgaard, Battlement Mesa
Doug Monger, Routt County
Matt Nunez, City of Glenwood Springs
Paula Stepp, City of Glenwood Springs

Lisa Piering, Town of Rangely
David Reynolds, Town of New Castle
Sheila McIntyre, Town of Silt
Bonnie Petersen, AGNC
JT Romatzke, NW Regional Mgr. CPW
Katie Mackley, Rifle Regional EDC
Betsy Bair, Senator Gardner's Office
Jeannie Caldwell, Town of Rangely
Konnie Billgren, Rangely Chamber
Carly Thomson, Rio Blanco ED
Roger Granat, Town of Palisade
Heather Jones, AAoA
Carolyn Tucker, Colorado Workforce Cntr.
Scott Hahn, City of Rifle
Marie Granat, Palisade Resident
Tim Redmond, Town of Hayden

Via Conference Call:
Diana Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.