



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS  
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

MINUTES

**AGNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS & MEMBER MEETING**

**June 16, 2021**

**9:00 am to 1:30 pm**

**ZOOM:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2510562431> **Password:** 2462

**PHONE:** +1 (669) 900-6833 **Meeting ID:** 251 056 2431 **Password:** 2462

**Call to order** – Mike Samson, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. Mike introduced himself and asked everyone on the Zoom call and in the room to do the same.

**Approval of Minutes** – Chris Nichols made a motion to approve the April minutes. Keely Ellis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Financial report:** Bonnie Petersen provided an overview of the financials for May. Income for May was \$82,052.38, ahead of the budget by quite a bit because of the outstanding invoice to Routt County. YTD revenue continues to exceed budget. Expenses for the month were slightly under budget; year to date expenses are substantially below budget. Net income is ahead of budget for the month as well as year to date. Bonnie then reviewed the Balance Sheet, the Checking Account Register, and the A/R Aging Statement.

Mike Samson said that he would contact Routt County if they have not paid their invoice by the next Board meeting.

Cody Davis moved to approve the financial report; Grady Hazelton seconded the motion; the motion passed.

**Project and Committee Reports:**

AAoA - Heather Jones

Heather provided an update that is found as Attachment A to this document. Heather shared that SB-290 passed and gave AAoA \$15M that must be spent by 12/31/22. She will apply for one-time vendor projects. Her contract renewal from SUA (State Unit on Aging) is expected in the next 2 weeks. She expects \$2.5M to support AAoA programs in this region. Our region was selected by the ACL (Administration for Community Living) to participate in the 2021 National Survey of Older Americans. There will be a delay in receiving ARPA funds. SUA is trying to come up with their unanticipated 5% match. Hope to see funds by 9/21 and will have until 9/24 to spend the funds. Her ombudsmen are doing their annual recertifications and getting picture ID badges. Virtual Senior Law Day has had between 40 and 50 participants in each of the 3 sessions. They will finish the program on 6/25/21.

**Annual Audit Review** – Paul Miller, Auditor

Paul Miller reviewed the 2020 audit he recently. Paul said that it is important for small entities like ours to have several sets of eyes on transactions and that internal controls are critical. He said there must be board approval for bank reconciliations. He said that the AGNC process is working well, and we should continue. He did not find anything in our books to cause financials to be misleading.

Paul went through his audit report and explained the various notes and reports on specific pages. He said it is not unusual for us to be over and under budget as long as we can explain it. He said it is difficult with the large amounts of AAOA funds that we administer for us to hit a target. He recommended that we identify budget items in revenue as state or federal in origin. Mike Samson pointed out an incorrect address mistakenly used in the audit. Bill Carlson asked about the difference in numbers for the Dinosaur Welcome Center. It was explained that they closed in May because of the pandemic so that made the actual numbers vary from the budget.

Chris Nichols moved to approve the audit; Cody Davis seconded the motion; the motion passed.

**End-of-Session Update** – Senator Bob Rankin said that a lot happened during this session. There were major bills that changed policy and will impact the state for years to come. There is also an overwhelming amount of money that needs to be spent.

HB-260 – the Transportation Bill – involved much more than roads and bridge funding. A good half of the funding is devoted to environmental impact – fees on diesel fuel, electric vehicle fee, short term rental vehicle fee, and a rise in vehicle registration fee. All the fees essentially raised the TABOR limit by \$200M but enterprises were created to keep the funds out of the TABOR calculation.

The public option Health Care Bill states health care must cut insurance premiums by 15% in 3 years, or the state will come in with a public option. Non-critical care hospitals will be challenged to reduce costs. Some say costs will come down. Others say doctors may leave the state and hospitals will reduce services.

The Bill for Farm Workers' rights passed. It allows workers to unionize and sets a requirement for break times for workers.

HB-1266 concerning Air Quality gives AQCC the ability to pass rules and regulations without accountability. They do not have to take costs into consideration. The bill Senator Rankin ran requiring a cost/benefit analysis on bills was killed. HB1266 is oriented toward environmental issues.

Senator Rankin authored a bill to ensure we have stable funding for Tier 2 programs in DNR if there is excess severance funding. There won't be excess funding so the programs covered under Tier 2 were moved to other stable funding sources and they will receive \$10M to get them through one year. An interim committee was created to study severance taxes – that fund has gone negative. There is no prospect for future funding which could mean ending DOLA mineral impact grants in the future.

An Interim School Finance Committee was set up. Criminal Justice Bills introduced shows clearly that there is a move to be more lenient in bonding. An Income Tax bill has been in the works for some time that makes taxes more progressive. The Senator co-sponsored a bill having to do with property tax; the ballot initiative passed last year left homeowners exposed to increasing property tax, so the bill is trying to provide relief for short-term property owners.

The legislature cut \$3.5B out of the general fund because of the pandemic. They learned in mid-2020 that the forecasts were \$2.6B better than expected so they put the state stimulus funds in reserve. They have spent about \$800M of the stimulus funds. They expect \$4B in federal funding. The Governor spent \$1.7B of the CARES Act funds. There are committees for Mental Health, Housing, and Economic Development & Recovery that will write reports and submit them in September. It will be one-time money that will have to be spent by the end of 2024. He would like to see a new detox center in Glenwood Springs and said we need to lobby for this during the interim.

Senator Rankin asked AGNC to pick some targets and work towards those targets with the ARPA funds.

Bill Carlson requested assistance with asbestos removal at East Grand Valley Clinic. Sen. Rankin said he needs a strategic list of projects like this with a budget and a plan. He believes this is good use of ARPA funds.

Gary Moyer requested assistance for the Wolf Creek Water Storage Facility. Sen. Rankin said there are some restrictions in the ARPA funding, but we might be able to use state stimulus dollars for this. The reservoir is in the application process via NEPA.

Cody Davis brought up Dredge and Fill – redefinition of waters of Colorado. Sen. Rankin said he is quite concerned about this issue. Dianna Orf asked about what the criteria was for supplemental funding. Sen. Rankin said it had to be an unforeseen emergency.

Betsy Bair asked about the 3 interim committees and who is on the committees. Sen. Rankin said to get him the priority lists or to work through local representatives. He also said to not neglect lobbying local representatives.

Sen. Rankin wrapped up by saying that the situation with the money is so fluid. \$1.7B is sitting there waiting for grants. He said to not overlook these opportunities. He said that they put \$15M this year into coal mining communities with Just Transition.

### **2021 Legislative Overview – Orf & Orf**

The Orfs gave their report for this Spring’s Legislative Session. There were 623 Bills introduced: they evaluated 111 Bills and AGNC took positions on 94.

SB200 is a Climate Bill trying to assess a fee on greenhouse gases, including carbon and methane, which has never been done. The Public Option Healthcare Bill requires a 15% premium reduction on health insurance after 3 years or the state will impose cost caps. We need to keep communication open with rural hospitals to get information regarding insurance costs. There is concern about doctors leaving the state because of this. Important members stay in touch with local health care personnel to gather actual data points. This issue is not going away.

The Energy and Climate Bills have moved to climate change and will touch every facet of the state economy. 1296 tried to set a benchmark for what emissions should be from heating and cooling. The Transportation Bill is also an Environmental Bill.

Economic Development was a big deal at the legislature this year. REDI and Jump Start are seeing real money: grants through OEDIT and DOLA. SB241 and 248 put cash in the hands of businesses to get restarted. HB1290 funds Just Transition with \$15M.

There were a wide variety of Criminal and Social Justice Bills. The ACLU is pushing to decriminalize many things, including property crimes. The jails were emptied due to COVID. The move toward trying to solve issues of criminal justice creates havoc on victims’ rights. SB135, the Traveling Animal Act, eliminated activities that are not natural. There was a concern about its impact to rodeos, county fairs, etc.

There was some Broadband funding introduced to improve service across that state. COVID shined a light on the lack of broadband in the state. Bills focused on unserved areas and low-income students. We will have to fight for funding because now it is now set to go to urban areas where people cannot afford the service rather than have a lack of access to service.

There were a handful of bills on taxes. In the wake of Gallagher, we will be dealing with property tax classifications. SB281 is a reassessment of severance tax and will fund LEAP from utility bills.

Richard Orf encouraged everyone to fight for grant requests and go after the funding. He suggested we tell local chambers and businesses that money is available.

The water quality division is trying to develop a permitting program for any time you move dirt. It is referred to as Dredge and Fill and we will see it next year.

### **Regional Broadband Discussion Review – Michelle Haynes & Virgil Turner, Region 10**

Virgil reviewed the Region 10 Broadband Project and talked about how they are placing fiber along I-70. He said that relationships are key when developing broadband service, and he spoke about the wide range of options available. Their network is a middle mile network, and their goal has been to provide an abundant, affordable, redundant network for the entire region. They set up Carrier Neutral Locations (CNLs) or Meet-me centers. Virgil expects that funding will now be put into the last mile network by the legislature. Region 10 worked with CDOT to acquire fiber at lower rates. The route being worked on now is Grand Junction to Rifle to Glenwood Springs to Denver. They have seen a very positive economic impact as they have implemented their Middle Mile Broadband. It is a lot of risk but has been very rewarding. Bonnie and Mike suggested that everyone go back to their communities and discuss concerns related to broadband and we will revisit the issue and potential role for AGNC at future meetings.

### **Federal Delegation Updates**

Janet Stangle, with Senator Hickenlooper's office, said they have been working on the first bill for small business intended to assist minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

Alyssa Logan, with Senator Bennet's office, said that the Bridge Act was reintroduced as broadband infrastructure to provide over \$40B to provide affordable and accessible broadband. Sen. Bennet introduced the SHRED act which will retain fees from ski areas in the local area to help with local improvements.

Hogan Peterson, with Representative Boebert's office, was in Meeker with Rep. Boebert. They were working on the BLM retention effort, and he thanked Bonnie for her participation at Rep. Boebert's Round Table Meeting. Hogan said that Rep. Boebert is introducing a bill to encourage proactive management of forests to help reduce fires across the state.

### **Administrative Update**

Representative Perry Will shared a few thoughts about the recent legislative session. He said it was a rough session. He said there were 3 gun bills – HB256 allows local governments to pass their own gun laws; HB1298 was related to background checks; HB1299 established the office of gun violence. There were aggressive Energy and Environment bills, good Ag livestock and water bills, and good bills on drought resiliency, forest management, and fire mitigation. Rep. Will was a sponsor of Rural Jump Start. He was encouraged by the new Medicaid reimbursement for pharmacists because it will help independent rural pharmacists. Rep. Will spoke of a Search and Recovery Bill that will help first responders with mental health support and worker's compensation. He was pleased about a Water Technology Bill that will help with water management. He was also pleased to have passed the wolf funding bill so that sportsmen will not have to pay for the wolf re-introduction. He felt like overall the session was successful for the people of Colorado, the Western Slope, District 57. He complimented the Orf's on the excellent job that they do.

Bonnie Petersen reported quickly that we are doing our CEDS update with county meetings for Garfield, Rio Blanco, Moffat, Mesa, and Routt. Our Final Wrap-up Meeting will be on July 29.

She also said we are continuing involvement in the Wolf Reintroduction process. Commissioner Broom is a part of the stakeholder group and Commissioner Linke is part of the technical advisory group.

**New Business:** *Next Meeting July 21, 2021, The Hayden Center, West Building, 495 W. Jefferson Ave., Hayden, CO 81639*

**Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 1:41 pm.**

**Attendance:**

Betsy Bair, Community Hospital  
Kevin Batcheler, Garfield County  
Ray Beck, Moffat County  
Tony Bohrer, Moffat County  
John Bristol, Steamboat Springs Chamber  
of Commerce  
Cory Bryndal, Region 10 Broadband  
Coordinator  
Bill Carlson, Town of Palisade  
Jake Clark, Sen. Rankin’s Office  
Jeff Comstock, Moffat County  
Cody Davis, Mesa County

Keely Ellis, Town of Rangely  
Michelle Haynes, Region 10 Director  
Laura Kay Houser, AGNC  
Heather Jones, AAoA

Margie Joy, CHFA  
Drew Kramer, Tri-State Energy Co-op  
Ken Kreie, City of Fruita  
Alyssa Logan, Sen. Bennet’s office  
Melanie Matarozzo, Town of Collbran

Paul Miller, Auditor  
Gary Moyer, Rio Blanco County

Chris Nichols, City of Craig  
Dianna Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.  
Richard Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.  
Ted Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.  
Karl Paulsen, CWF

Tiffany Pehl, AGNC

Bonnie Petersen, AGNC  
Hogan Peterson, Rep. Boebert’s office  
Lisa Piering, Town of Rangely  
Amy Provstgaard, Town of Battlement  
Mesa

Bob Rankin, Senator  
Christian Reece, Club 20  
Mike Samson, Garfield County  
Shannon Scott, Craig Economic  
Development

Eddie Smercina, Rio Blanco County  
Janeth Stangle, Sen. Hickenlooper’s office  
Anna Stout, City of Grand Junction  
Carly Thomson, Rio Blanco County  
Virgil Turner, Region 10 Director of  
Broadband

Perry Will, State Representative  
Tari Williams, Garfield County

ATTACHMENT A



**Updates from AAA 6/16/2021:**

- SB-290 passed
  - \$15 million from the General Fund for AAA Grant Program
  - The State Unit on Aging (SUA) has to establish policies & procedures, and application by October 31, 2021
  - Awarded funds have to be used by December 31, 2022
  
- The AAA contract renewal should be coming from the SUA this week or next week.
  
- Region 11 AAA was selected by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to participate in the 2021 National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants.
  - 9 other Colorado AAAs were selected
  
- The SUA has informed AAAs that there will be a delay in distributing the American Rescue Plan funds
  - The SUA needs to come up with their unanticipated required match
  - The SUA hopes to get these funds out in September 2021
  - These funds will not need to be spent until September 30, 2024
  
- Ombudsman across the region will be finishing their annual recertification 6/17

- The State Ombudsman will be issuing new picture ID badges
- Virtual Senior Law Day 5/21: 52 registered, 5/28: 45 registered, 6/4: 43 registered