



MINUTES
AGNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS & MEMBER MEETING
June 26, 2024
1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Montrose County Events Center,
1036 N. 7th Street, Montrose, CO 81401

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

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

Pledge of allegiance

Call to order – Chairman Cody Davis called the meeting to order at 1:03pm. Introductions were made.

Approval of minutes – Doug Overton made a motion to approve the May 15, 2024, meeting minutes; Mike Samson seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.

Financial report – Tiffany Dickenson presented the May 2024 financial reports. Profit and Loss was presented noting income from EZ admin fees and that expenses are ordinary. The Balance Sheet was presented with nothing to note out of the ordinary. Accounts Receivable was presented, and she noted that it was mostly cleared up, however, she will still reach out to Jackson County. The Check Register was reviewed, and it was noted that there was a check to CDPHE for meals on wheels reimbursement for AAA received from Grand River Hospital. A motion to approve the financial reports was made by Doug Overton, seconded by Mike Samson, and the motion passed unanimously.

Project and Committee Reports:

Area Agency on Aging – Heather Jones, NW CO AAoA Director provided an overview of AAA efforts. Heather reported that they are wrapping up training for the new ombudsman. She said they held interview for a part time executive director. She said they gave a presentation to Inside Mesa County. She reported that they will be increasing presentations to skilled nursing facilities to give them information for programs that are available outside the facility. She said that Region 11 AAA was selected to participate in a research study that will begin in the fall. She reported on the final numbers for the FY25 budget. She said they received \$35K more than anticipated, so she adjusted the budget accordingly. She said they did not receive as much state funds as expected, due to the state holding back funding for reserves, etc. She said overall the budget is \$256K less than last year. She said some of the cuts included the ombudsman program, the ADRCs, and they did not fund Mesa Senior Transit. Cody Davis asked about solutions to not funding Mesa Senior Transit. Heather said that Hilltop may be able to take on some of these clients, and she said that she would like to see a dedicated senior bus service in Mesa County like Moffat County. She said that she will need to find additional funding for this. She said that she is trying to maintain equity within the counties for the budget. She spoke about the administrative dollars remaining basically the same for the new budget. Mike Samson expressed his appreciation for the work that Heather does on behalf of AAA. A motion to approve the FY25 AAA budget was made by Mike Samson, seconded by Doug Overton, and the motion passed unanimously. Heather’s report is attached as Appendix A.

NCEI Update – Matt Solomon reported and introduced Taylor Stevenson, Cason Carroll and Stephanie Weir. He said they are in town for the JOLT meeting and have helped NCEI. He reported that Dr. Perry was able to finish the survey report for the JOLT meeting. He said that 425 took the survey in northwest Colorado. He said the reports will be printed and available at the AGNC table at the JOLT conference. He read the conclusion paragraph from the report. He said that 88% strongly or somewhat favor the use of nuclear energy. He said the next step is to work with an integrated energy solutions survey that will be done with help from Greg Clough with the School of Mines. He said they want to keep the public engaged. Mike Samson commented that he felt this was encouraging news. Matt said they are making some progress with the state legislators to open nuclear conversations. He reported that the CLEAP grant is underway, and that he has a trip to DC next month for 2 conferences. He reported that he received a call requesting help with electric vehicle laws coming from the state. He said the laws would require all vehicle sales to be electric by 2035. He said they talked about how this will affect multiple industries. He said this may lead to bringing more members into the EDD to create a sector partnership. He spoke about some of the questions around this idea. He said he thinks this is an opportunity to help the region with education and a possible ballot initiative. He said he would like to research the laws and bring more information to the board. Richard Orf reported on the history of the legislation, and he encouraged Matt to push the survey report to the governor's desk. Matt said he would like to come to the different community meetings to make presentations and to keep the communities engaged. Dianna Orf commented on the EV legislation and said that it may take a petition for rulemaking at the air commission. Matt said this started with an executive order from the Governor and that is why this may need a ballot initiative. Dianna said he may want to look at the 2019 roadmap, and that she agrees that the initiative may be the best solution.

CDLE Workforce Update – Carolyn Tucker presented and said that employment is around 4% below for the region. She said the resort communities are up to 7.4%, mostly due to the release of seasonal workers. She said the state still has labor shortages in some key industries, including construction, healthcare, and education. She said there is a focus on apprenticeship programs including electrical and medical. She said they are working hard with OJT for training programs. She said they are also looking at teacher apprenticeships. She said there is also a huge deficit for behavioral health workers. Cody asked what an ideal unemployment rate might be. Carolyn said we have been historically too low. She said that 3.5 to 4% may be a healthy rate. She said that wages are not keeping up with housing costs, so they are working with businesses to make other compensations.

Legislative Update – Richard Orf gave a legislative update and said they have been attending several conferences and it is interesting to see what folks in western Colorado are talking about including utility planning and concerns around grid stability. He spoke about how critical mineral exploration is impacting ideas around resources in Colorado. He said that primary elections are over, and elections will not begin to ramp up. He spoke about the Final Summary document that lists the state legislation that was presented. The Orfs full report is available here: <https://agnc.org/wp-content/uploads/Orfs-Legislative-Update-6.26.24.pdf> He spoke about interim committees that will begin meeting in July. He reported that the state budget forecast shows that funding is spent, and TABOR refunds have been shortened considerably. Richard spoke about ballot initiatives this fall that will affect the budget, as well. Cody Davis asked what the deadline for the initiatives is and Dianna reported that one initiative has already been approved, one has a deadline of July 25 for signatures, and another is in the works, with a lot of interest in property taxes. Mike Samson asked if Richard had an insight into how our 2 US senators feel about the Dolores National Monument. Richard says there have been a lot of listening sessions and the senators may or may not have much influence in what the administration does.

Shoshone Water Rights Update – Amy Moyer with the Colorado River District gave a presentation about the Shoshone Water Rights Preservation. She said the CRD was formed in 1937 to protect west slope water users and safeguard for Colorado all waters of the Colorado river to which the state is entitled. She spoke about Shoshone water rights. She said it is large and a very senior consumptive right on the Colorado river. She said the full Shoshone call can command 1408 cubic feet per second or up to 1.02 MAF per year. She said the rights

benefit the west slope from the headwaters to the state line and statewide. She presented a Shoshone power plant upstream and downstream map. She spoke about the multiple benefits for Colorado and the west slope including clean drinking water, agriculture, environment, and recreation economy. She said that it benefits a 250 mile stretch from the head waters to the state line. She spoke about the 15-mile reach in the grand valley for threatened and endangered fish. She said that recreation is a \$14.6B industry in Colorado. She talked about the Shoshone water right preservation coalition which includes several counties, communities, and additional supporters. She spoke about the timeline including the purchase and sale agreement with Public Service Company of Colorado in December of 2023 for \$99M. She said they are negotiating an instream flow agreement between seller, CRD, and CWCB. They have the successful completion of a change case. She said there is ongoing fundraising with support from local, state and federal partners. They are working for approval from Colorado's Public Utility Commission, and an anticipated closing in 2027. Cody Davis asked about the Water Court Process and Amy said they are working with all parties to move forward. She said they have secured \$54.15M in funding with \$20M from the Colorado River District, \$20M from the State of Colorado and \$14.15M from 19 local partners. She spoke about why there is a push now to acquire the water rights. She said that Xcel is a willing partner, there are a historic amount of funding at the state and federal level, and many impacts to consider including drought. She said they would welcome a letter of support from AGNC. Matt Solomon asked how he can help with whitewater communities. Amy said that broad based support is welcome and that communicating the importance would be helpful. Mike Samson asked if all the municipalities in Garfield County are supporters. Amy said they are working through the process of adding as many municipalities as they can, working through the different town council schedules. Mike said he will make some phone calls to Garfield County communities, as well.

West Springs Psychiatric Hospital Update – Dr. David Conklin presented and spoke about the impacts of AGNC's support. He said they had a conversation with Dr. Griego at HHS and she commented that during a tour of the region she heard unanimously that the hospital is needed in our region. He reported that they have experienced financial difficulties and they have strategized a plan to rebuild trust, fulfil requirements of the conditional license, will reduce costs, decrease legal fees, manage the Medicaid payer mix, establish anchor programs, enhance and streamline employee training, and increase board recruitment and diversity. John Sheehan, CFO, spoke about the difficulties of maintaining financial stability. Dr. Conklin spoke about some background information for the hospital, including not operating at full capacity. He said that they should be seeing more Medicaid patients and that these patients are not being served by their hospital. He also said the state only reimburses about 50% of indigent care, as well. He said in the current state they lose about \$776K per month. He said they cannot fully offset the financial losses without external support. He spoke about their mission statement and its supporting pillars, which include model of excellence across the continuum of care, breakthrough community partner, and community support. John Sheehan said this is a state-of-the-art psychology hospital and is very much needed in the region, and as a community asset is essential. He spoke about the possibility of closing the hospital if the cash runs out. He spoke about the number of Medicaid patients being sent to other facilities. He said that about 5K patients are being sent to the front range without informed consent. He said the front range hospitals only charges about \$900 per day versus \$1700 by West Springs. He said that amount could decrease if they had a higher percentage of filled beds. Heather Jones asked about the geriatric population being served by West Springs. John said that they are not built for geriatric patients due to the increased medical needs. Heather spoke about the need for a geriatric site other than Fort Morgan which is outside of our region.

Dr. Conklin spoke about the different scenarios not being profitable, but they would like to ask the counties for support for indigent care. He presented a slide with proposed funding requests that would be enough for them to cover the shortfall with the hospital. He said they are working to be an employer of choice and improving the culture at the hospital. He said they also want to increase the diversity of the board, as well. Tiffany Dickenson suggested starting an EZ Contribution Project and said she can make the connections with Mesa County for them to pursue that.

Colorado Legislators Updates –

Rep. Meghan Lukens with House District 26 reported via zoom. She said that this was a breakthrough session for K-12 education. She spoke about the school finance act which increases funding by \$700 per pupil. She said they rewrote the school funding formula, which was 30 years old, to make it more fair for all school districts across the state. She said they included costs of living, at risk students, special ed, bilingual, and a rural factor. She said that she worked on a number of bills in the economic prosperity space including HB-0001 for the rural jump start program. She spoke about the opportunity-now program addressing workforce shortages. She spoke about the mountain rail and passenger train bill, with supporting tax credits. She spoke about rural healthcare legislation, the conservation easement tax credit bill, and the agriculture mental health bill.

Rep. Cathy Kipp with House District 52 reported that she served on her local school board before joining the legislature. She spoke about the school finance act including a study to find out what an adequate education costs. She said they authorized two different studies. She said they are in the middle of those studies right now. She said part of the school finance formula re-write included changing the negative factor, which increases school funding. She said that she is hoping to be in the senate next year and would like to bring back the CORA bill, making open records easier to implement. She spoke about the teacher shortage and a new teacher apprenticeship program, a new teacher mentorship program, and teacher stipends for student teachers. She spoke about the adult education cleanup bill, giving more adults the opportunity to get their high school diplomas. She spoke about a new PFAS bill requiring companies to lower the amounts in their products. She also spoke about pilot communities for alternative energies to natural gas. Richard Orf asked about predictions on lodging taxes. Rep. Kipp said they had their first meeting on the Sales & Use Tax Taskforce, which is tasked with simplifying the taxes. She spoke about how the state has so many tax districts that it can be difficult to navigate. She said they are working on a website for references and consolidated information.

Rep. Lukens spoke about HB-1247, the study bill that focuses on coal transition communities. She said this bill looks at all different types of energy options including nuclear, and the extent to which they would work in the coal transition communities. She said that it is a 2-year study looking at the benefits and the negatives of energy facilities. She said that she is committed to supporting the coal transition communities in her region. Emily Nichols with GAIN spoke about the work they are doing with coal communities with support from the DOE. Stephanie Weir with the Idaho National Laboratories spoke and said that GAIN also has a cost study that is available.

Federal Delegate Update –

Hilary Henry with Sen Bennet's office said that Sen. Bennet is in Burlington today doing a hearing on drought for the farm bill, and how the bill can address the needs of western farmers and ranchers. She said the farm bill is still on a one-year extension and that Sen. Bennet is pushing for a five-year reauthorization. She spoke about the proposed Dolores National Monument and said they did receive AGNC's resolution in opposition. She said Sen. Bennet is continuing his listening sessions and roundtables, and he also spoke with ranchers and miners. She said he had a public hearing at the Nucla school, as well. She said he has not taken a position and continues to think about things, including AGNC's resolution. She said they continue to work on postal issues, and they are glad the decision to move the GJ postal center has been delayed. She spoke about the significant staffing challenges for the postal service, and they have asked for staffing reforms. She said the Colorado Broadband Office has released its spending plan and that should make a big difference in western Colorado.

Administrative Update – Tiffany Dickenson reported on the following items:

- As requested by the board, AGNC Resolution 24-2 Requesting a Pause on Wolves Release was presented. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Mike Samson, with a second by Doug Overton, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Nuclear conference in Kennewick WA.
- NCEI received another award from DOE.
- AGNC will be a cooperating agency on the Wolf Creek Reservoir project.
- Presentations were made to BIC, CMA and BRECC.
- CORE-CM is applying for phase 2 and the University of Wyoming has asked for funding for AGNC to be partners with them on this work.
- ED Summit is on August 14th and will focus on services for small businesses. Mike Samson asked if we have contacted the chamber, and Tiffany said she is working through Alicia Gresley with CRVEDP to get the word out. Bonnie Petersen asked if a presentation could be made for the Climber Loan Fund.
- Connections were made with the HHS director and West Springs and she is hopeful they can make some headway. She asked that the communities continue to bring her issues that AGNC can help with.
- Agri-west meeting will be held at the BIC in GJ.
- The website grant is still in limbo and we continue to hear that the procurement office is working on it.
- She spoke about strategic planning and that she feels the EDD could grow significantly.
- She asked Mistalynn Meyeraan to speak about her leadership program. Mistalynn talked about completing her master's degree and that she is required to attend a leadership program in Breckenridge and asked for help with the cost of the program. The board agreed that this would benefit AGNC and was in favor of helping with the costs of the program.

New Business –

Next meeting July 17, 2024, CNCC, Conference Room 185, 2801 W. 9th Street, Craig, CO 81625

Adjournment – meeting was adjourned at 4:44 pm.

Attendance:

IN PERSON	VIA ZOOM
Richard Orf	Lisa Piering
Toni Barrett	Anna Stout
Mistalynn Meyeraan	Lori Malsbury
Matt Solomon	Margie Joy
Tiffany Dickenson	Dianna Orf
Stephanie Weir	Meghan Lukens
Keith Caddy	Hilary Henry
Taylor Stevenson	
Cason Carroll	
Heather Jones	
Mike Samson	
Jennifer O’Hearon	
Doug Overton	
Cindy Dozier	
Sarah Carlisle	
Carolyn Tucker	
Don Coram	
Amy Moyer	
Ray & Dixie Beck	
Cathy Kipp	
Emily Nichols	
Wendell Koontz	
David Conklin	
John Sheehan	

APPENDIX A



Updates from AAA 06/26/2024:

- Our new Long-Term Care Ombudsman will be wrapping up her training this month, with the plan of her being certified in July.
- The Colorado Association of Area Agencies on Aging held interviews for an Executive Director at the end of May. This will be a part-time position to try to bring the association to the next level. We interviewed three candidates. One individual will be moving on in the process and met with the AAA Directors last week.
- On June 13th, the AAA gave a presentation to the “Inside Mesa County” class. The AAA will also be speaking at a Livability Commission Meeting in Fruita this week.
- Health Care Policy and Financing was in Mesa County last week doing presentations at the local nursing facility communities on the Transition Services Program. The goal of the Transition Services program is to help Medicaid individuals residing in skilled nursing facilities transition back into the community setting if that is their wish. Due to Garfield County’s Northwest Options for Long-Term Care reorganization, they will no longer be providing this service. Instead for SFY25, Hilltop’s Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) will be providing this service in the region.
- Region 11 AAA was one of six AAAs across the nation that was selected to participate in a research study to better understand the services and supports available for individuals aging with a disability and how organizations like AAAs work with and across networks to coordinate supports and services. The research study will begin in the fall.
- The AAA received our notice of allocation from the State Unit on Aging. The attached budget reflects a 12% cut for nutrition programs, 13% cut for transportation and caregiver programs and 14% cut for other supportive services. The exceptions are that the AAA is obligated to fully fund the ombudsman programs at the host agencies. ADRCs will be running off of a base staff and less funding for vouchers. Hilltop ADRC will eliminate 1 position that is currently open. St. Mary’s Community Connections provides reassurance, which is not required by the Older Americans Act. Nonetheless, it provides a valuable service and was provided minimal funding. Mesa Senior Transit which is part of the Grand Valley Transit is going out to bid, and it is unclear if the new entity would take on the contract. Additionally, due to a recent review of federal guidelines in the appropriate usage of federally funded buses, Grand Valley Transit felt it could no longer provide the Mesa Senior Transit for shopping and getting individuals to dining sites. The 2024-2025 recommended budget maintains equitable funding across the counties as well as maintaining federal funding priorities for Legal Services, Access Services (Information & Assistance, Case Management and Transportation) and In-Home Services. Overall, we have \$256,222.53 less than last year’s budget.
 - At our AAA Director’s meeting last week, AAAs discussed working on an advocacy plan to continue to work on getting increased funding during the next legislative session.