



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS  
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

MINUTES

**AGNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS & MEMBER MEETING**

**March 17, 2021**

**9:00 am to 1:00 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 9:11 am. Mike introduced himself and asked everyone in the room and on the Zoom call to do the same.

**Approval of Minutes** – Mike Samson noted that the February minutes did not include the discussion regarding approval of the interim Executive Committee. The February minutes will be amended to reflect that Grady Hazelton moved to approve the interim committee and Tony Bohrer seconded the motion which passed. Cody Davis moved to approve the February minutes as amended; Keely Ellis seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**Financial report:** Bonnie Petersen provided an overview of the financials for February. Income was \$17,418, which was slightly less than budget for the month. YTD revenue exceeds budget. Expenses for the month were \$44,723 which exceeded budget for the month largely due to a government relations payment being made early for the month of March.

It is expected that we will have less membership revenue than projected for the year as Routt County has decided they would like to move their membership to Region 12. It appears they are set to request a planning region realignment to include the county in Region 12. Regardless of a move or realignment, AGNC will plan bill the county for administration costs for Enterprise Zone and Economic Development District.

Current assets total \$883,672; \$94,345 is deferred revenue, \$322,853.62 will pass through to AAoA, and \$100,000 has been advanced for the CARES Act grant as reflected on the balance sheet. Invoices are being received and paid from the \$100,000 now.

In review of the A/R Aging Report, Glenwood Springs has not paid their dues. Staff contacted them and they said they lost the invoice; invoice was resent to them, and they assured us it would be taken care of.

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 met with the Routt County Board of Commissioners and representatives from Region 12. The outcome from the meeting is that Routt County intends to move their AAoA services to Region 12. Heather said that the main difference in the way that the 2 regions operate is that Region 12 operates 40% of their services internally and Region 11 contracts all of their services to various local contractors. Heather said that the state and feds may change their funding formula which will divert \$290,000 to Region 12 for Routt County

services. The RFPs for new providers ended March 12. AAoA had about \$3 million in funding requests. They have 3 new providers asking to provide services. They also have new guidelines for indoor visitations. They are waiting for Colorado Public Health to release their recommendations regarding visitation. 70% have received vaccinations and they have not seen issues with cognitive decline, poor hygiene, or severe weight loss like has been seen in other regions.

They have begun discussions with the State Unit on Aging to collect data for area plans. It is due in early 2023. There is \$88,000 in carryover funds that will, hopefully, be available by the end of June. The Joint Budget Committee is working to restore \$7 million to the Homestead Act, out of which they will receive \$3 million the first 2 years and \$1 million the 3<sup>rd</sup> year. This will result in our region receiving \$160,000.

The American Rescue Plan gives \$21 million to AAoA and gives \$1 million to our region by September 2022. Heather is trying to decide what will make the most impact, but she does not know the restrictions. Bonnie asked if any of the funds could go to seniors to assist with housing costs; Heather will investigate that.

### Legislative Update – Orf & Orf

The Orfs thanked everyone who participated in the testimonies regarding SB21-105. Everyone was very eloquent, and it was an eye opener for the committee. The amendment was adopted calling for input from counties in the planning stages; the bill was ultimately postponed indefinitely, though, so it is dead. HB21-1040 was killed in anticipation of a new funding bill coming forward. This afternoon several members are testifying on HB21-1023 which deals with the ability of an assessor to reclassify land. The bill addresses concerns about ag land being used for solar projects in Moffat County without a change in the assessment for a non-ag use. Diana mentioned a bill killed regarding consumer's rights to use gas and propane and a bill for bridge upgrades. They are now in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of the Legislative Session and hope for the Session to adjourn by June 12. There is a lot of activity regarding social justice and equity and worker's rights. Friday the Economic Forecast will be announced, and they believe that funding for DNR grants will be pulled back until 2024 or 2025 in order to fund Core programs.

### CEDS Update – Tiffany Pehl

Tiffany noted that AGNC received the Economic Development District designation in November of 2019. At that time, we did a complete Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that we were told would be good for 5 years. The EDA has decided that the entire state needs to update their CEDS by September 30, 2021, which means we would have to have the AGNC CEDS update completed by 7/31/21 to allow for a 30-day public comment. Hopefully, the EDA will move the due date to 1/31/22 to allow for 2020 Census data to be included. We will have to conduct County and Regional meetings; they will likely be hybrid meetings using Zoom and in person meetings. We need to have a broad stakeholder input with SWOT Analysis.

Our speaker next month is going to discuss the Census. Cody David asked why we wanted to be an Economic Development District (EDD). Bonnie replied that it opens up the ability for us to go for federal grants, an opportunity that we otherwise would not have access to if we were not an EDD.

### **30 x 30 Conservation Effort – Margaret Byfield, American Stewards of Liberty**

Margaret provided a power point presentation, and her 3 handouts are attached to these minutes. The website to download more information is [fight30x30.americanstewards.us/download](https://fight30x30.americanstewards.us/download).

Margaret noted that Garfield County has already passed a resolution opposing this effort. President Biden signed an Executive Order directing the Secretary of the Interior to provide a study on the 30 X 30 effort; it has been pushed by environmental groups and some Senators for several years. Vice President Harris sponsored it in the Senate and Secretary Haaland in the House.

The program is a worldwide effort to protect 30% of land and 30% of water by 2030. There are no real details from the current administration, but a Department of Interior fact sheet filled in a few blanks. The report is that 12% of our land is now permanently protected in its natural state in the form of National Parks, Conservation Easements, and National Monuments, to name a few. More than 30% of Colorado is federal land but those lands are, apparently, not considered “permanently protected” so there will be more efforts to reduce access and likely take in more private lands. The federal government is moving forward without stating science or authority for implementation. Counties have no information.

Secretary Haaland does not see this as a land grab but wants to work with owners. Private lands seem to be a target. Information on websites of environmental organizations indicate that the real target is 50% by 2050.

The Nebraska Governor officially opposed the program. Garfield County passed the 1<sup>st</sup> oppositional resolution. A meeting with the Department of the Interior has been requested. Counties passing similar resolutions have been sending them to American Stewards of Liberty who then pass them on to key members of the House and Senate. Rep. Boebert put forth an amendment to stop the program.

Moffat County has also passed a resolution opposing the program. Sen. Hickenlooper came out in support of the program. Sen. Bennet also supports it but believes it should not be federally mandated.

Nancy Fishing mentioned a concern regarding water rights, especially considering wildfire mitigation.

The AGNC Resolution to Oppose the 30 x 30 plan was approved. Melody Villard moved to approve it; Grady Hazelton seconded; the motion passed unanimously. Rio Blanco County intends to put together a Resolution to oppose the 30 x 30 plan also. Rio Blanco also recently passed a resolution declaring themselves a wolf sanctuary county.

### **Review of AGNC Website – Laura Kay Houser**

Laura Kay reviewed the updates she made to the AGNC website and requested corrections, more pictures, and updates from everyone.

### **Federal Delegation Updates**

Alyssa Logan, with Senator Bennet’s office, said that Sen. Bennet is the Chair of the Senate Committee on Conservation Forestry and Natural Resources. As part of the American Rescue Plan Act, Sen. Bennet wrote a letter encouraging prioritization of small meat packers. This levels the playing field with larger meat packers and gives great resilience in the food supply chain. Sen. Bennet reintroduced the HUBS for Veterans Act which will streamline access for veterans and their families and help them navigate to the resources available to them. Also, as part of the American Rescue Plan Act, Sen. Bennet has seen increased funding to local and state Health Departments, adding 100,000 more jobs. A real concern is Mental Health with children separated from schools. There will be an expansion of the Child Tax Credit: \$3000 for children 6 to 18 and \$3600 for children under 6. This is projected to cut childhood poverty in half. They plan to give a monthly stipend throughout the year.

Sarah McCarthy, Western Colorado Regional Director for Senator Hickenlooper, said they are still building their team. She also said that Sen. Hickenlooper’s highest priority is the American Rescue Plan Act. They are doing supercharged vaccine distribution. They are putting \$20 billion into the effort for distribution, data collection, testing, and contract tracing. \$1.75 billion will be invested to do genomic tracing on variances. \$1.2 billion will be invested in improving ventilation systems and hiring counselors for schools. \$495 million will be invested in Higher Ed to prevent hunger and homelessness. \$60 billion

will be invested in grants and loans for small businesses -- \$25 billion to those hardest hit and \$25 billion for restaurant revitalization.

Hogan Peterson, with Rep. Boebert's office, emphasized that Rep. Boebert is prioritizing work against the 30 x 30 bill. She is introducing legislation to oppose it. She is offering 20 amendments to the Wilderness Bill – wants locals to have jurisdiction over land use, forest health, fire mitigation, water shed wealth, water rights, etc. She wants to conserve native species and wildlife. She is also proposing the Water Security Act that will prevent transfer of water rights to the federal government in exchange for federal permits for land use. She wants Colorado to retain sovereignty over water rights. Rep. Boebert is assisting in the push to keep the BLM HQ in Grand Junction. There is a new Secretary of the Interior, Senator Hickenlooper, and Rep. Boebert have both invited the new Secretary to visit Grand Junction before deciding to move HQ back to D.C. Rep. Boebert also plans to reintroduce Senator Gardner's previous bill to make it statutory that the BLM Headquarters be in 1 of 8 Western US states.

Mike Samson thanked Rep. Boebert for her opposition to the DeGette bill.

John Swartout, Executive Director of CCI, thanked Senator Bennet's office for direct distribution of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act. We will rely on our delegates to make sure the distribution happens the way it was intended to happen.

### **Administrative Update**

Bonnie Petersen provided an Administrative Update on the following topics:

- Kimberly Bullen has left DOLA and is now working in Fruita. Her position is open, and we should let interested persons know.
- Routt County plans to make a request to the Governor to move the county into Planning Region 12. We will continue to administer their Enterprise Zone and Economic Development District and will invoice them for this administrative work.
- We had a good number of representatives testify concerning SB21-105 Amendment. We got our point across but do not feel we yet have a voice in the process. We are now working on a request to the Wildlife Commission to create a local government advisory group. AGNC county members also need to send in their applications requesting a position on the 16-person Stakeholder Advisory Group.
- There are several people from our organization testifying this afternoon on HB21-1023 regarding reclassifying land in Moffat County that is agriculture land and will be used for a solar project. The bill would allow the counties in this situation to tax the land at a higher rate than the agriculture designation.
- We will discuss a Redistricting Resolution at the April meeting.

**New Business:** *Next Meeting April 21, 2021, Fairfield Community Center, 200 Main Street, Meeker, CO 81641*

**Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 1:07 pm.**

### **Attendance:**

Kevin Batchelder, Garfield County  
Ray Beck, Moffat County  
Scott Braden, Western Slope Conservation  
Center

Sarah McCarthy, Sen. Hickenlooper's office  
Gary Moyer, Rio Blanco County  
Dianne Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.

John Bristol, Steamboat Springs Chamber  
of Commerce  
Ken Brownlee, Mesa County  
Margaret Byfield, American Stewards of  
Liberty  
Jeannie Caldwell, Town of Rangely  
Bill Carlson, Town of Palisade  
Jeff Comstock, Moffat County  
Cody Davis, Mesa County  
Cindy Dozier, Club 20  
Keely Ellis, Town of Rangely  
Nancy Fishering, Club 20  
Ty Gates, Rio Blanco County  
Grady Hazelton, Town of New Castle  
Laura Kay Houser, AGNC  
Fred Jarman, Garfield County  
Heather Jones, AAoA  
Margie Joy, CHFA  
Tyler Kelly, Rifle EDC  
Drew Kramer, Tri-State Energy Co-op  
Gwen Lachelt, Western Leaders Network  
Alyssa Logan, Sen. Bennet's office  
Crystal Mariscal, Town of New Castle

Richard Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.  
Ted Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.  
Christina Oxley, CWF  
Jessica Pace, Western Leaders Network  
Tiffany Pehl, AGNC  
Bonnie Petersen, AGNC  
Hogan Peterson, Rep. Boebert's office  
Lisa Piering, Town of Rangely  
Priscilla Rahn  
Michael Ritter, Rep. Boebert's office  
Mike Samson, Garfield County  
Paula Stepp, City of Glenwood Springs  
John Swartout, CCI  
Carly Thomson, Rio Blanco County  
Derrick Toledo, Western Leaders Network  
Carolyn Tucker, CWF  
Jessica Valand, CWF  
Melody Villard, Moffat County  
Kyle Wagener  
Aaron Weiss, Center for Western Priorities  
Tari Williams, City of Glenwood Springs

ATTACHMENT A



**Updates from AAA:**

- Routt County Update
- The Request for Proposals for new providers and contract renewals ended last Friday, March 12.
  - Over \$3 million in requests
- CMS has released new guidance for indoor visitation in facilities
- Provider Survey Performance Measures due 3/17
- The State Unit on Aging and the AAAs have begun discussing how we will gather data for our Area plans which will be due towards the beginning of 2023

**Funding Updates:**

- The State Unit on Aging is unsure when AAA's will be receiving our carryover funds.
- The Joint Budget Committee recommended to restore \$7 million balance in the Older Coloradans Cash Fund (along with the remaining three years of spending authority)
- \$21 million to come to Colorado AAAs from the American Rescue Plan Act that was just signed.
  - Approximately \$1,050,000 would come into Region 11.
  - These funds would need to be spent by September 30, 2022