



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

MINUTES

AGNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS & MEMBER MEETING

March 21, 2018

Civic Center, 341 West 7th St., Palisade, CO 81526

9:00 am to 1:30 pm

Pledge of allegiance

Call to order and introductions– Chairman, Ray Beck Called the meeting to order at 9:04 am; introductions were made.

Approval of minutes: Cari Hermacinski made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Mike Samson seconded the motion; motion passed.

Financial report: Bonnie Petersen presented the financial report – total funds in checking and savings accounts at the end of February 2018 was \$591,973.05. Income for February exceeded projected budget which is also true for year to date income. February expenses were slightly higher than projected budget for the month due to expenses associated with work on the CEDS project; however, expenses year to date are below projected budget. Grant reimbursements for the CEDS project are pending accounts receivable along with expense reimbursement for DWC and administration payments for contributions projects. Mike Samson moved to approve the financial report; Andy Key seconded the motion; motion passed.

Project and Committee Reports:

Dinosaur Welcome Center – Cheryl provided an update on the DWC which has been open only two weeks. They have seen good visitation and Cheryl expects the new sign will generate an increase in visitation of 15 to 20% this season. The center will be installing a bicycle repair station this season. The Colorado Tourism Office notified Cheryl the afternoon before the last Tourism Board meeting that a recommendation would be forthcoming to begin reducing funding in the next fiscal year and fully eliminate it in three years. Welcome center advocates began spreading the word and, ultimately, the Tourism Board did not accept the recommendation – we should anticipate that there will be future attempts to defund DWC.

Area Agency on Aging - Dave Norman provided an update on AAoA matters. Dave reported that budget issues are looking better now for AAoA. The JBC approved state funds for the organization with an increase in funding of \$4 million statewide. A statewide needs assessment funding is to be identified and county reports for planning over the next four to five years will be required. The next state aging council will be on April 4th and the topic will be senior transportation. Dave will have recommended funding for projects over the next year at the April meeting.

Government Relations – Dianna, Ted and Richard Orf joined via conference call. HB18-1249 regarding the state distribution of Anvil Points funds to be released by the federal government passed the Senate this morning on a vote of 35-0. This bill has been the major focus of the last week and now it needs to get signed by the Governor quickly; it has been a major team effort to get it across the finish line. The Long Bill (the budget bill) will be introduced next week in the house and will be the focus there for the next week so there won't be a lot of attention on other bills. The quarterly economic forecast projects an increase in severance tax revenue for 18/19 of about 77%. FML

revenue is projected to increase 12% for FY 18/19 as well and the state will have fulfilled its obligation for repayment of the leases on the Road Plateau. SB2 passed through the senate and concurrence and is being sent to the Governor's office. More than \$100 million will be pushed toward rural broadband deployment; the FCC definition of broadband as 25X3 was re-established in the bill. There is a concern that rural providers will raise rates on rural services as a result of the bill's passage. SB1 on transportation is working its way through and will likely be on its way to the House soon but it is not likely to be taken up until after the budget is done – the bill's chances in the House are not good. The Governor's office is advocating that increased revenues be used for more funding toward roads next year. The bill to license free-standing emergency rooms passed out of the House committee on a party line vote; opponents raised concerns that this is over regulation for no real reason. The bill has not been heard on the House floor yet – AGNC's position is on of amending the bill. The bill does not stand a good chance in the Senate. Mike Samson thanked everyone for their efforts related to HB18-1249 and raised another issue related to incorrect reporting on assessed valuations – Garfield County Assessor, Jim Yellico is working with Representative Rankin to bring a bill forward to address the situation. Currently, a self-reporting entity can erroneously report on an assessment and then come back later saying the assessment was wrong and receive interest payments from the county.

CEDS Update - Tiffany Pehl updated the group on the progress of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy development.

- Elyse has developed an economic development plan review for the region, it is on the website; if anyone sees anything missing please notify Tiffany.
- An executive summary document is being drafted and will be up on the website – this is a step toward getting the application to become an EDD ready – the application will be submitted ahead of the CEDs, so evaluation can begin.
- As part of the application, operating documents for AGNC are being developed and it is anticipated that they will be presented for review at the April meeting.
- County meetings are being scheduled, Rio Blanco County has already met, and three of the five counties are scheduled.

Colorado Blueprint 2.0 Update – Danielle Landriet from OEDIT provided an update on the Blueprint 2.0 program – AGNC members have been strong recipients of technical assistance through the program. The effort is always evolving and OEDIT is looking for ways to make it better – a survey is being sent out asking about what is going right and what might be helpful, so they can determine what other assistance might be offered. OEDIT would appreciate feedback from the region. The survey link will be sent to Bonnie and she will forward it to members. There are 8 initiatives in the 2018 round of technical assistance programs. They include CRAFT Studio 201, Coworking 101, Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry, Certified Small Business Community, Brand Building for Communities, Film and Major Production Initiative, Creativity Lab of Colorado, Launch a Sector Partnership. Complete information and applications for these initiatives can be found at choosecolorado.com/programs-initiatives/Colorado-blueprint/ Applications opened March 15, 2018 and are due June 1, 2018; awards will be announced July 10.

USDA Programs – Pattie Snidow, Community and Economic Development Specialist Colorado Rural Development, provided an overview of programs available to rural communities through USDA; there are 47 different programs. Pattie noted that part of her role is to raise awareness of plans through presentations to communities and to assist with access to the programs. USDA sends \$400 to \$500 million to Colorado for programs annually. USDA can provide funding for telecommunications and broadband with a match of 15%. USDA can help with affordable housing for communities by subsidizing interest rates to make purchases attainable for low income earners. Additionally, some loans can be funded at 102% of appraised value and home repairs can be funded in senior low-income situations to make homes decent, safe and sanitary through small loans. It is

important that communities stay abreast of changes at USDA, Fruita was about to become ineligible for USDA programs due to the proximity to Grand Junction but they were able to make effective comments that reflected why that was not a good measure and, through that public comment opportunity, the community remains eligible. USDA has business guarantee programs and revolving loan funds that can be intermediary lending programs and seed capital grants are usually \$50,000. Small grants for feasibility studies are available, USDA helped Powderhorn with a business and industry loan for its high-speed lift. Bank loans can be increased when they are working with USDA loans, banks can sell the guaranteed portion on the market to increase its liquidity. USDA funds hospitals, clinics, daycare center and community based non-profit or local governments can also apply. Pattie teaches people how to use the programs available and works with foundations and the EDA. Pattie is also chairing a community planning group as part of the opioid task force; all federal agencies have been tasked with defining how to approach the opioid issue. She encouraged the AGNC board to look at the opioid issue in the CEDS plan as EDA will have to address it – this organization could be ahead of the curve on the issue and may be able to access some funding from federal agencies. Mike Samson thanked Pattie for her assistance in Garfield County and the AGNC region.

ProStar Geocorp – President and CEO, Page Tucker reviewed the background and establishment of this high-tech company located in Grand Junction. Page introduced Carey Wheeler the geospatial officer for the company. ProStar specializes in geospatial intelligence software that provides mapping of utilities and pipelines to a high level. It is estimated that about half the pipelines were put in prior to 1950 and 30 to 40 percent are not on mapping systems; ProStar has designed systems to address the issues. If the 811 bill being considered at the legislature passes, then after 2020 underground utilities will have to be mapped electronically. A demonstration of the system was provided via a video presentation. A lot of documentation is still done on paper as many are concerned about moving into a digital format. The technology developed is based on cloud and mobile technology – Transparent Earth (ProStar’s product) is like Google maps. Pricing varies depending on the size of the organization. ProStar is interested in working with cities and counties to determine what pricing looks like and to make it affordable; there are three entities participating in a pilot. The expectation is that the organization will have a city, county, DOT and 811 streaming into the system with an eye toward adding other entities to create state system for sharing data. Grand Junction is being used as a pilot in a smart city consortium. Microsoft just did a big story on ProStar’s technology and CMU worked with ProStar to map the building so when they put the walls up, the technology can be used to see all the wiring behind the walls in the future. The technology has the same level of security as the Department of Defense.

Anvil Points Update: Mike Samson provided an update on the Anvil Points situation. After many years of trying to get the funds released from the federal government, an administrative solution was found and the DOI notified Colorado’s federal delegates that the funds would be released on March 29, 2018. The news was good and bad in that HB18-1249 had not made it through the state legislature and must be completely through the process before the funds were to be received by the State Treasurer in less than two weeks. HB1249 passed the Colorado Senate this morning and is on it’s way to the Governor, who has supported the effort, for signature. Commissioner Samson noted that thanks are due to many including Senators Gardner and Bennet, Congressman Tipton and all their staff. Representative Rankin was a soldier for the counties; Orf and Orf did a great job as did CCI. Governor Hickenlooper did what was needed in supporting the bill to get the funds to the counties and all that remains is for him to sign the bill. The counties would like the Governor to sign the bill at the Rifle airport if possible working with DOLA and John Swartout to see if that can happen. Special thanks were made to Commissioner Scott McInnis and all the AGNC members that worked on advocating for the release of the funds in Washington, D.C. and those that testified on HB18-1249.

Federal Delegation Updates:

Shannon Wadas from Senator Bennet's office reported that both he and Senator Gardner had sent a letter requesting that Secretary Zinke come to visit Grand Junction. The budget bill passed had some good things included, safe roads to schools (SRS) was funded for two years in the bill and a provision will end "fire borrowing;" going forward, wildfire fighting will be considered a natural disaster and be funded with emergency funds rather than operational funds from land management agencies. Medicare prescriptions will have to be electronic under the provisions of bills dealing with opioids in an effort to avoid over prescription of opioids. Senator Bennet sent a letter to the VA to hold the health agencies accountable for not paying providers for services.

Brian Meinhart provided an update for Congressman Tipton's noting that the Omnibus budget has been the top priority since the continuing resolution expires March 23; Congress is working on the final touches and they are expecting a vote to take place soon. The budget will provide a bump in opioid funding nationwide. New programs are being created and funding is being identified for that. A bill has been passed through the House Finance committee trying to get small community banks out from under the strict rules of Dodd/Frank. The Congressman's office has been working to get a forum scheduled in Western Colorado to discuss the DOI reorganization and the date for that is May 2, 2018. The forum will discuss the reorganization in detail and do a question and answer session for participants. The forum will likely be held at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction or another venue nearby.

Betsy Bair told the group to tentatively hold April 6th open as there is a rumor that a high level DOI member may be coming to Western Colorado to celebrate the success related to Anvil Points. Rifle has been suggested as the location of the event, but details are still being worked out. Senator Gardner has introduced a National Park restoration bill that creates a fund to address the \$11 billion deferred maintenance in our National Parks. It would take a portion of unaccounted for Land and Water Conservation Fund money to do that; it is a bi-partisan effort. Betsy said the Senator would like to thank everyone who comes to Washington, D.C. as it means a great deal to him to have constituents make the effort to make the trip and bring up issues of concern. Betsy noted that the bi-partisan Policy Center gives a legislative action award to senators in their first six years for working across lines to get things done; Senator Gardner was this year's recipient of the award.

WRAP UP:

REDI Grants: Trish Thibodo, 4R Manager for DOLA reminded that the rural economic development grant window closes next week. She provided a follow-up on the consortium of people applying to be part of the Alliance of Rural Initiatives Growing Advanced Manufacturing – Western Colorado is one of the finalists in the initiative. Trish will continue to keep the group updated.

Fair Districts Colorado: There were some outstanding questions about this initiative at the February meeting and answers were provided to the board. Frank McNulty joined the meeting via conference call to clarify any further questions. The initiative provides that at least one member of the commission must be from the west side of the continental divide; it requires a 72-hour review of maps before being vote on; Commissioners are prohibited from doing maps behind closed doors. The commission is made up of 1/3, 1/3 and 1/3 of major political parties. A question was asked about a gift ban for Commissioners, the initiative does not call that out explicitly. There is oversight by the Courts, right now, Courts are drawing the maps and this initiative attempts to remove Courts from that position. In case of an objection to the maps, the Supreme Court will receive a map but will be limited to making changes where there are instances where the constitution is violated – the commission will be required to address the shortcomings. Cari Hermacinski noted that AGNC may not yet be ready to weigh in on this initiative as not everyone understands it well enough that they could explain it to the public. Commissioner Hermacinski moved that AGNC monitor the initiative at this time; Commissioner Samson seconded the motion; motion passed.

Administrative Update: Bonnie Petersen provided an update on the sage grouse plan modifications being considered; the DOI has determined that an EIS will be needed rather than an EA for each of the states and the plan modifications will be due on April 20th. Meetings are being worked on related to the BLM Headquarters move, Congressman Tipton will meet with proponents on March 30th and it is hoped the group will be able to meet with Secretary Zinke or Deputy Secretary Bernhardt soon. Letters of support for the BLM HQ location in Grand Junction are encouraged. 2018 mini-grant presentations will be at the end of the April 25th meeting in Craig.

New Business:

Commissioner Samson noted that Garfield County is hosting a meeting with the 7 County Coalition from Utah on April 4th at the Rifle Administration building. The group will share their objectives and successes in working with regional partners and how we might work together.

David Ludlam noted that the Colorado Energy Office is working with the Utah energy office to market energy resources and are working with CMU to update the Piceance to Pacific white paper. Jordan Cove developers will also meet with Colorado producers next week in Denver to begin procurement discussions.

Next Meeting will be April 25, 2018, Colorado Northwestern Community College, 2801 W. 9th St., Craig, CO 81625

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Attendance:

Mike Samson, Garfield County
JT Romatzke, CPW
Pattie Snidow, USDA Rural Dev.
Betsy Bair, U.S. Senator Gardner
Mathew Mendisco, Town of Hayden
Jeff Comstock, Moffat County
Trish Thibodo, DOLA
Andy Key, Town of Rangely
Duncan McArthur, City of Grand Junction
Jeff Rector, Rio Blanco County
Katelin Cook, Rio Blanco County
Amy Provstgaard, Battlement Mesa Svc. Assoc.
Brian Meinhart, Congressmen Tipton
Ray Beck, Moffat County
Dave Norman, AAoA of NWCO
Tiffany Pehl, AGNC
Bonnie Petersen, AGNC
Art Riddle, Town of New Castle
Karen Harkin, CHFA
John Justman, Mesa County
Roger Granat, Town of Palisade
Michael Gamba, City of Glenwood Springs

Scott McInnis, Mesa County
Stephanie Reecy, Mesa County
David Ludlam, WSCOGA
Rich Sales, Town of Palisade
Ken Kreie, Town of Fruita
Cheryl McDonald, DWC
Danielle Landriet, OEDIT
Brian Barton, 7 County Coalition
Kimberly Bullen, DOLA
Cari Hermacinski, Routt County
Shannon Wadas, Senator Bennet
Trent Hyatt, City of Glenwood Springs

Via Conference Call:

Dianna Orf, Orf & Orf, PC
Richard Orf, Orf & Orf, PC
Frank McNulty, Fair Districts Colorado
Ted Orf, Orf & Orf, PC