



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS  
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

**MINUTES**

**AGNC EDD BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**November 17, 2021**

*CNCC, 2801 W. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Library, Craig, CO 81625*

*9:00 am to 10:00 am*

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

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

Call to order 9:03

Introductions were made Brian Condie serves as Garfield County municipal alternate.

**Approval of Minutes** – Chris Nichols made a motion to approve the August 2021 minutes. Brian Condie seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**NWCO Small Business Development Center Update** – Erin McCuskey, Regional Director provided an overview of the programs the NWCOSBDC has been providing, GJ SBDC has additional programs they can highlight. Core of the SBDC program is the provision of no cost consulting and affordable training for small businesses. Typical SBDC clients have twenty employees or less but most in NW Colorado have five employees or less. – SBDC has a statewide network of more than three hundred consultants to support small business - consultants are paid. Most common business questions are related to access to capital, adding employees, scaling a business. Funding for these services is obtained through SBA grants. The SBDC does have direct funding through OEDIT. Eagle county is the host county for NWCOSBDC and as such SBDC employees work for Eagle County. SBDC was in the spotlight during 2020 and was frontline support for at least eight federal programs including PPP loans, EIDL Advance program and wildfire and disaster assistance. As the only OEDIT representative in NW Colorado, Erin did thirty-two virtual training programs and started doing newsletters. At first the newsletter went to one to two people per week, but the distribution list increased by 15,000 contacts during pandemic. SBDC brought on twelve new consultants during the pandemic, nine are still on board; most of them are former commercial lenders. There is an HR expert who is well versed in state and federal legislative changes, and they have marketing and business generalists to help with online opportunities. SBDC directly supported more than 6,000 businesses during the pandemic; prior to that they had supported about 330 businesses. SBDC hosted seventy-three training workshops in 2019 and did ten workshops; now with the switch to virtual, the platform allows greater impact for businesses – virtual programs have had 676 attendees. People can tap into trainings in other areas as well, the state has had 1,136 training programs. More content is available on demand so business owners can access it on their time schedule which provides small business owners more flexibility in obtaining the assistance they need. During 2021 - 402

individual consulting sessions have been conducted. After every session, SBDC sends out evaluations and they are getting really good response; client satisfaction rating is at 98% for training and 96% for consulting. SBDC will continue to provide services virtually as they are hearing that businesspeople prefer the virtual platform. In person consulting sessions used to have a 30% no show rate – virtually, the no show rate is around 2%. With the virtual platform, they are able to operate more efficiently and offer more specialty programs, i.e., childcare, hemp, manufacturing tracks to name a few. NWCOSBDC is almost on par with metro areas in 2020, as a result they have been provided some additional grant funding. The SBDC role is switching into more of a strategic role, and they will work on a disaster response and resiliency solutions. An SBDC program manager was just hired and is located just outside Steamboat, the manager has experience working with Region10 can provide direct financial support. They have a part time coordinator doing outreach and she will continue to be part of the organization. There are some exciting updates the state is working to develop – particularly in support of rural entrepreneurs – start up loan fund. A program to provide grants for people working on employee ownership opportunities is one project; still working through program specifics to make sure funding goes to the intended recipients. They are working to make sure businesses know about the programs they need to check out the website, many trainings are free, the website is - [www.northwestsbdc.org](http://www.northwestsbdc.org) The SBDC is working to determine contacts by county – they do have the ability now but can't get the information until the end of the year; Erin will be happy to share that information with each county. She said Moffat County is potentially underusing the program and wants to determine how to keep people in the community by starting their own business. The Chamber has some people trained in business consulting so they could be well versed in what is available. Government partners in the region should know about the SBDC. They were not hearing from more rural counties on par with the resort communities but there has been a significant uptick from Yampa Valley for businesses transitioning from coal. Tri-State has been handing out information to employees. SBDC has been looking for new consultants locally for AGNC area as they do not have as many for rural counties but since beginning to do things virtually, it has unlocked great resources across the state for virtual consulting.

EDD Activities: Bonnie provided an overview of AGNC activities for the last quarter. In cooperation with Region 10, an application for the EDA Build Back Better Challenge grant specific for coal impacted areas was submitted by the October deadline. Eight projects across the two regions were included in the application. It is anticipated that notification will be made by mid-December about whether or not the application will be selected as one of the recipients. Guidance was provided to project leads in attendance that they need to be prepared to obtain studies necessary and be prepared to write a specific grant application for their project by March 15, 2022. If the regions are not a recipient of the grant, and the project leads wish to apply for an Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) grant funded by ARPA through EDA, they will need to be prepared to submit that application by December 31, 2021. The timelines are short, and it is important that planning, documentation, matching dollars, and support be pulled together should we need to adjust project requests to other grant opportunities. If deadlines are missed to access ARPA funding, EDA still has its annual allocation for traditional funding requests available, although the match for those funds will remain at the 50/50 rate.

**New Business:** *February 23, 2021, Garfield County Administration Building, Community Room, 195 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Rifle, CO 81650*

Meeting adjourned – 10:03

**Attendance:**

Mike Samson, Garfield County  
Cody Davis, Mesa County Commissioner  
Melody Villard, Moffat County  
Commissioner  
John Bristol, Steamboat Springs Chamber  
of Commerce  
Ken Kreie, Town of Fruita  
Bill Carlson, Town of Palisade  
  
Brian Condie, City of Rifle  
Heather Jones, AAoA  
Margie Joy, CHFA  
Erin McCuskey, NWCOSBDC Regional  
Director  
Grady Hazelton, Town of New Castle  
Dana Hlavac, DOLA  
Carolyn Tucker, CWF  
Keely Ellis, Town of Rangely/CNCC  
  
Matthew Kireker, Senator Bennet's Office  
Tyler Kelly, Rifle Regional EDC  
Tom Kleinschnitz, Moffat County Tourism

Gary Moyer, Rio Blanco County  
Chris Nichols, City of Craig  
Dianna Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.  
  
Richard Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.  
  
Jeff Comstock, Moffat County  
Christina Oxley, Colorado Workforce  
Commission  
Karl Paulson, CWF  
Tiffany Pehl, AGNC  
Bonnie Peterson, AGNC  
Eddie Smercina, Rio Blanco County Natural  
Resource Director  
Adam Massey  
Peter Brixius, Town of Craig  
Ray Beck, Moffat County  
Shannon Scott, Craig Economic  
Development  
Jennifer Holloway, Craig Chamber  
Lisa Jones, President, CNCC