

EAST CENTRAL COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

COLORADO'S CENTRAL PLAINS



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EAST CENTRAL COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 4, 2024

Call to Order

Chairman Chris Richardson called the September 4, 2024, meeting of the ECCOG Board of Directors to order at 7:00PM held at the Hub City Senior Center in Limon, Colorado.

Pledge of Allegiance

The attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Chairman Chris Richardson.

Roll Call and Introductions

Roll call was taken with seven Directors in attendance: Steve Burgess, Ben Ferree, Dave Hornung, Derek Isom, Hal McNerney, Valerie Rhoades, and Chris Richardson. ECCOG Executive Director Candace Payne and Senior & Transit Services Director Sean Vanous were present. Directors who could not attend included: Rhonda Brown, Marc Dettenrieder, Ryan Fulmer, Sherry Jones, Ron Smith, and Megan Vasquez.

Approval of July 3, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes

The Minutes of the July 3, 2024, regular meeting were provided in the board packet. Director Dave Hornung made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Director Hal McNerney seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Financial Report of September 4, 2024

The August 7, 2024 Financial Report was approved by email ballot. The September 4, 2024, Financial Report, was distributed at the meeting. Executive Director Candace Payne and Senior & Transit Services Director Sean Vanous reviewed the fund balances noting payments are after July. Director Hal McNerney made a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented. Director Steve Burgess seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Bills & Payroll

Payroll and bills for August 31, 2024, were provided at the meeting. The August payroll of \$44,128.19 was reviewed with attendees. August 2024 checks totaled \$185,274.85 including taxes, vendors, staff reimbursements, monthly utilities, provider costs, Enterprise Zone contributions, and a bus payment.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

COG Staffing

Senior and Transit Services Director Sean Vanous reported Elbert County needs a replacement for cook's assistant and a food transporter still. Drivers are still needed in Lincoln County and Kit Carson County. Other positions open include Cheyenne Wells senior services coordinator. Limon's senior services coordinator has resigned and advertisements will be run to find her replacement. Executive Director Candace Payne reported the Program Specialist position has ads running to fill the role by the end of September.

5310 & 5311 CDOT

Senior and Transit Services Director Sean Vanous reported a payment to Davey Coach for the Elbert County bus has been made. To date, we have all buses delivered now to Kit Carson and Elbert Counties that were ordered during the pandemic. CDOT has stated that in-kind match is not allowed for CY25 so only cash is eligible for matching funds. CY25 funds were discussed as CDOT sought input from the region on whether to hold over unused funds or to end the contract as usual. Explaining the confusion it creates, Senior and Transit Services Director Sean Vanous stated he plans to end the CY24 funds like normal and begin CY25 funds in January 2025. CDOT staff has worked directly with ECCOG staff on a funding solution to the disallowance

of in-kind match with a special Purchase Order offered in May. At this time, CDOT is overwhelmed and has not able to issue the funds to ECCOG as promised. We will monitor this offer to help us cover the shortfall of matching funds.

ECCOG Policy Manual

Executive Director Candace Payne shared with the Board that she contacted a couple different county human resources departments to learn what they offered for full-time staff in lieu of employee only health insurance premiums for those on Medicare. Her research showed one county offers \$500 per month as a benefit for other insurance premiums, Medicare supplement payments or just additional pay. Other entities did not provide this additional stipend or benefit. After a brief discussion of the impact on current staff, the consensus was to leave the employee policy as it is.

A/R360 Housing Needs Assessment

The Housing Needs Assessment consultants are headed to Colorado's Central Plains next week for focus group meetings. Executive Director Candace Payne reported three sessions will be offered in Burlington, Flagler, and Limon to hear from realtors, school superintendents, town managers/administrators, non-profits and housing authorities on what those people feel is impacting housing growth or development. The sessions are during the day for an hour and a half. The Board is welcome to attend any session. Reimbursement of the \$40,000 for CEDS implementation could take up to two more months. These funds are helping to cover the regional housing needs assessment project.

NEW BUSINESS:

2025 Dues

The draft edition of the 2025 ECCOG Contribution/Dues chart was included in the packet. Executive Director Candace Payne requested an increase of \$.25 per capita for municipalities and \$1,000 for counties. After discussion, an increase of \$1,500 per county was suggested by the Board. Chairman Chris Richardson recommended an additional level for County Dues Formula be added at \$12,000 for population 20,000 and up. The \$8,000 would then cover a population of 10,000 to 19,999. These changes would result in an increase to ECCOG operating fund in 2025 of \$13,629. Director Dave Hornung made a motion to increase the dues as recommended by the Directors. Director Hal McNerney seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The towns and counties will be notified of the 2025 Dues next week for budgeting purposes.

DOLA Regional Roadmap

Executive Director Candace Payne briefly explained current state procurement delays involving CEDS, Roadmap, EZ and CDOT funds. Recent state staff changes involved a new interim director for the Rural Opportunity Office who is now Meridith Marshall. Mrs. Marshall is familiar with the region and has worked for the Office of Economic Development and International Trade previously and she's implementing processes to help get reimbursement caught up. ECCOG is expecting \$5,700 for Roadmap branding work that has been paid. Interim Director Meridith Marshall assures us that the funds are coming but it might take two months for the CEDS funds of \$40,000.

Regional Grant Navigator

Discussion with the state on the Regional Grant Navigator program funding for Year 3 has begun. Suggested use of the funds include grant proposal matching funds and grant writing for IIA and IRA funding. Executive Director Candace Payne shared a conversation held with Stacy Salling recently led to the determination that Year 3 funds might be more impactful as grant support and not contracted staff as Mrs. Salling feels her workload has slowed. There is no promise yet of Year 3 funds so the Board will be kept informed of the state's conversation. The Year 3 funds may be quarterly reimbursements instead of advanced funds in a lump sum.

NTIA Digital Equity Grant

Executive Director Candace Payne recapped the grant application request provided in email earlier in August for digital equity support. Working with AR360 on the housing needs assessment consultants has led to this application for the region. Partners for the application are Morgan Community College, Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium, Eastern Colorado Technology, Kit Carson County Public Health and a Spanish speaking translator. The ideas generated from brainstorming sessions including digital literacy training for all ages with a focus on elderly, devices, internet connectivity at senior centers or community facilities, and Thinker Tinker Trailers to provide 3D printers, computer labs, and sound studio with technology to the communities in a mobile trailer. Hiring digital navigators was another suggested service that could be provided in all four counties. After a discussion, the Board decided it was not the time to apply for the funds.

Other

DOLA has approved the Renewable Energy Impact Study funds for the region. A contract is expected in January 2025.

Executive Director Candace Payne requested the Board share with her soon their interest in serving on the ECCOG in 2025. At this time, no one expects to leave except those who are no longer county commissioners come January.

Rural Philanthropy Days are scheduled in the region for June 2025.

Next Meeting Dates/Locations (1st Wed of each month)

October 2 – In-person for budget approval

November 6 – In-person at Claremont Inn

December 4 – Email ballot

Adjournment

Chairman Chris Richardson ended the meeting at 8:30M.

All handouts and reports are retained in the permanent file of ECCOG Board meetings.