



ASSOCIATED GOVERNMENTS  
OF NORTHWEST COLORADO

MINUTES

**AGNC BOARD OF DIRECTORS & MEMBER MEETING**

**February 21, 2018**

***Grand River Hospital, 501 Airport Rd., Rifle, CO***

***9:00 am to 2:00 pm***

Pledge of allegiance

**Call to order and introductions**– Chairman, Ray Beck Called the meeting to order at 9:00 am; introductions were made.

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

**Financial report:** Bonnie Petersen presented the financial report for end of year 2017 and January 2018. After making budget adjustments approved by the Board in November 2017 and before any audit adjustments that may be identified, the actual net income for 2017 is \$57,002.08 as compared to an adjusted budgeted net income of \$9,309.52. January 2018 net income is \$5,826.08 compared to a budgeted net income for the month of -\$8,330.51. As of January 31, 2018, total AGNC cash in checking and savings accounts is \$559,877.81. Mike Samson moved to approve the financial report; Roger Granat seconded the motion; motion passed.

**Proposed By-Law Amendments:** Bonnie Petersen presented the proposed by-law amendments referred from the AGNC Executive Committee. The amendments restated the location of the official AGNC office location and amended the term of AGNC officers to be two (2) years rather than one year. Mike Samson moved to approve the recommended by-law changes; Jeff Rector seconded the motion; motion passed.

**Project and Committee Reports:**

Dinosaur Welcome Center – The DWC is closed from December 1 through March 1 so there was no report from Cheryl McDonald at this meeting.

Area Agency on Aging - Dave Norman provided an update on AAoA matters. AAoA is still operating on state funds and the state has not received federal funds. The State will not advance funds going forward unless it has been awarded federal funds according to a statement by the state controller. AAoA has recommended that the controller rescind the decision as a funding decision is anticipated in federal budget in March. The organizations are waiting to hear but continuing to operate. May will bring the annual review of the application for the agency. The SAPGA is trying to move forward on the action plan on aging need but they need to renew the purchase of the data. They have approved a grant to do a statewide assessment on the statewide aging population and the readiness of state to serve those individuals; the assessment will be done in August. The State put out for bid the for the database and contracted with Pierpoint so they are in process of changing the database over. Hopefully everything will be settled by August. Dave needs to start thinking about retirement and will talk to Bonnie; he will ask for volunteers to sit on a committee to discuss the transition. The AAoA Board meets in March; the

group meets monthly and AAoA goes to every county during the year. There are 3 delegates from each county and 3 alternates for each county plus a member at large from local government on the council.

Government Relations – Dianna, Ted and Richard Orf joined via conference call. It was noted that we are one-third through the session and the legislators had Monday off. The CPW bill is now in senate appropriations; the ANS bill, HB1008, is in house appropriations and seems to be doing fairly well. HB1122 – Orf and Orf sent out information regarding changes suggested by AGNC members. They met with the sponsor and she said that she expects 2 of the three conservation easement bills to die but is hopeful 1122 will pass. Today there are partial maps reflecting conservation easements in counties but no centralized record of them, nothing for people to determine where easements are which is making it difficult for policy makers who don't have a full picture of the locations of the easements. Since 2000, \$1 billion in state tax credits have been given for these easements and more than 800 have been denied but there is no comprehensive mapping. Sponsor hopes to have the general fund pay for mapping. A question was asked if GOCO funds could be used. A suggestion was made that perhaps they could pick counties that have a large public land nexus rather than do all 64 counties at once. Concerns about private property owner information were raised; the mapping will only use information that is currently public. Only county clerk and recorder records would be used, if it's not there, it won't be used. Ray Beck noted that, of the three easement bills being considered, HB1122 could be worded to be acceptable. The easement bills are up on 3-15-18. Another 811 dial in bill is on calendar for Thursday this week - CML had meeting yesterday about it – there are some concerns from big utilities anticipating that they will have increased number of calls and concerned about the cost of compliance. There is a federal requirement to have a program protecting underground infrastructure and the Colorado program is out of compliance. The Routt County road and bridge department thinks this bill is a good idea. CCI is opposed unless the bill is amended due to routine maintenance concerns. Routine grading could be problematic if a locate is required every time a county has to do routine shoulder work. Representative Rankin's bill, HB1201, would allow the state to keep severance tax above TABOR limits but only as long as the state does not reduce the funds to be distributed to local government. The bill would be a referred measure to the voters and, as such, would require 2/3 vote in house to pass which will most likely be hard to get through. HB1201 is calendared for April 9th. Roger Granat brought up HB1092 which is a bill to allow home delivery of marijuana as a pilot program; it's in committee and opposed by state patrol. SB144 would allow bicyclists to ride and not have to abide traffic rules; it is moving through the Senate and is up on 3rd reading this am. HB1067, the "right to rest" bill has been put off not much has changed and it will be flagged if something changes. A question was raised about the marijuana pilot program and how sales tax be redistributed; Orf and Orf will get answer.

#### **CEDS Update:**

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

- A Regional SWOT meeting has been conducted and a "Mind Map" completed
- The CEDS core committee has been seated and county meeting dates are being set up
- The EDD application is being prepared and will be submitted to EDA prior to completion of the CEDS
- Patrick at EDA says we are on track and he seemed pleased with the data gathered and the direction the project is headed

- According to the data, two counties qualify, one is on the cusp of qualification and two census tracts in a fourth county qualify so we are optimistic about getting the EDD designation

### **Fair Districts Colorado Initiative:**

Frank McNulty, former speaker of the House in Colorado, made a presentation about the Fair Districts Colorado effort. The Fair Districts Colorado group plan to put an initiative on the ballot providing for a redistricting commission made up of an equal number of Republicans, Democrats and Independents to be selected by retired or senior judges. Should the initiative pass, non-partisan professional staff would draw initial maps that will protect communities of interest including minorities and rural communities. A super-majority, including two of the independent members, would be required to pass any maps; in the event a super-majority could not be achieved, the maps default to the initial maps drawn by the non-partisan professional staff. Commissioners would be subject to Sunshine laws; all communication of the commission is subject to open records requests; no backroom deals not subject to the public process can result in maps being drafted behind closed doors and all meeting would be held in public forums. The effort has strong bi-partisan support.

A motion was made and seconded for AGNC to support the Fair Districts initiative but was withdrawn after discussion raised several questions.

- How can we guarantee that there is representation on the commission from the Western Slope?
- What is to prevent this group from doing the same thing the legislature has done in the past?
- If the districts are unacceptable, is there a course of action to challenge them?
- Clarification is needed regarding how the people serving on the commission get selected?
- Does the group make-up change with the voter base?

### **Federal Transportation Bill Update:**

Betsy Bair with Senator Gardner's office outlined provisions in President Trump's 2019 budget for infrastructure funding. The infrastructure guidelines include many facets of infrastructure beyond simply highways, broadband, airports and water are some of the items mentioned. Go to the White House website to see a full list. Some of the issues being addressed are the improving environmental performance and streamlining the review and permitting process. Moving the BLM headquarters and setting review agencies up in a structure that would have all key review agencies in pods is being considered. Rules that prohibit transmission lines from crossing federal lands are being reviewed. Now is the time that the Senator's office is taking input regarding infrastructure needs. Senator Gardner is at the table in the budget planning, so it is important that specific needs members have in their communities be sent to Betsy, so she can forward them to the Senator. It is anticipated that legislation will likely be produced in March so sooner rather than later is best for providing input.

### **Foreign Trade Zone Update:**

Diane Schwenke from the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce provided an update on efforts to establish a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ). The effort was begun about three years ago and, if successful, would provide beneficial tariff treatment for businesses that import materials to be used in products for export. We must become a user fee port of entry (the GJ Regional airport qualifies) and petition customs to place an official at the site; the FTZ must pay that officer. Efforts are underway to find space at the GJ airport, looking for about 1,500 square feet. It is uncertain if customs will approve an office of this size but there is precedent to do so. An FTZ can cover a region 60 miles or 90 minutes drive from the FTZ location. The FTZ consultant will be verifying how far that many communities that may include this spring; the boundaries of the zone need to be as large as possible. The GJ airport board voted to approve the establishment of an FTZ and will send a letter requesting the designation. The airport will need help with construction costs to develop the FTZ space to begin

with then a customer base will need to be established to pay the ongoing fee in order for the zone to become self-sustaining. The initial estimate is that the FTZ will cost about \$350,000 per year - \$200,000 can be picked up by the airport, if they are amenable, leaving \$150,000 - \$200,000 per year. There has been an increasing demand in the region from manufacturing companies for access to an FTZ – one company went to Utah citing the FTZ as the deciding factor. The Dept. of Commerce application can take up to 12 months; it is expected that the facility will be build out concurrent with the application. Partners need to be identified; so far, Grand Junction, Mesa County, Fruita, Grand Junction Economic Partnership and the GJ Chamber are founding partners, it is hoped that Garfield County will join that group. The organizing group wants to identify additional public partnerships in making the FTZ a reality and want to get as many public entities involved as possible. They have looked at funding sources that include, state funds, severance taxes, FML as possibilities. Hosting an FTZ in the region would enhance the position of communities in attracting jobs and would help existing and new employers in the area.

### **Federal Delegation Updates:**

Noah Koerper and Patrick Donovan with Senator Bennet's office provided an update – Patrick is the senator's natural resources legislative aide from Washington, D.C. They provided an overview of the 2019 White House budget. Some positives include full funding of PILT, although, there is zero funding for secure rural schools. There is strong bi-partisan support for a two-year extension of the secure rural school program. The Omnibus budget is up March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Senator would like to find ways to get funding to rural area more rapidly. There is a huge appetite for an infrastructure package in Congress and the Senator is interested in hearing from constituents regarding their needs and trying to determine if there are regional projects the government can support. The senator's office is talking to DOI about the reorganization proposal, the Senator wants to see that it comes with better service and resources. There is a concern about the broader reorganization – there seems to be some validity from a management perspective on reorganizing around watersheds as long as that brings about better customer service. Looking at the national district maps, NW Colorado could be based out of Phoenix or New Mexico – the Western Governor's Association wrote a letter to Secretary Zinke saying the watershed reorganization idea is not workable. The Secretary did not work with the county and it was asked that Senators Bennet and Gardner let the Secretary know that it is critical to have counties involved in the discussion. It was reported that there appears to be some urgency about identifying hubs as soon as late 2018.

George Rossman provided an update for Congressman Tipton's noting that the continuing resolution expires March 23 and the office is looking at the 2019 budget as well. Get your wish list to the delegates and quickly as possible. The House is looking at DACA legislation. Staff is getting information from farmers in the area regarding agriculture needs.

Betsy Bair noted that there were some announced fee increases for National Park Service properties. Dinosaur National Monument was not one that would be impacted; there is a concern that local communities were not contacted about the increases and the impacts. Colorado has the largest tour operator who brings in foreign visitors and will be hard hit with fee increases; there is a significant impact on small tours. Senator Gardner's office is looking for some input. AGNC and many counties have given input and support for the relocation of BLM headquarters which the Senator supports going to Grand Junction.

Noah noted that the Anvil Points money is close to getting released. Patrick has been digging a lot in D.C. to see what is happening – recent update DOI took some steps then went to Treasury who asked for DOI and DOE to take some steps toward releasing the funds. The Senator wants to be sure it gets across the finish line – there are lingering uncertainties with staff about getting it done. Betsy noted that Jennifer Lorraine is the DOE staffer working on the Anvil Points fund and she has a great deal of experience and knowledge about it.

### **Discussion on Opportunity Zones:**

Sonya Guram with OEDIT provided an overview of opportunity zones (OZ) which were created within the tax bill signed in December 2017. The OZ's will provide capital gains tax relief to investors in distressed census tracts based on poverty or median family income. Colorado has 531 eligible tracts, but we can only designate 25% of them for the program. The Governor will have the final say but OEDIT has asked the enterprise zone administrators to work with local communities to determine which tracts should be nominated for the OZ designation. Local information related to the viability of an area being designated needs to be submitted to OEDIT by close of business on February 28, 2018. Tiffany will be working with local ED organizations to gather information for the response.

### **CPW Future Generations Bill:**

JT Romatzke provided an update of the CPW bill and thanked the group for their support. The bill passed the Senate committee on a 5 to 0 vote; 30 or more testified in support of the bill and it is continuing to move through the process. The conversation was opened to for discussion and the question of wolf introduction was raised. There is an organized effort pushing for the introduction of the wolf into Colorado; CPW has worked for the last 30 years on multiple resolutions regarding wolf introduction. It has not been supported for Colorado and the Governor has support that decision. CPW worked with many groups, environmental, agriculture, counties and drafted a state plan saying we are not going to introduce wolves in Colorado – although, they may migrate here. They are still listed as federal endangered and managed by US Fish and Wildlife. It would take legislation to introduce wolves into Colorado. The negative side of wolf introduction has not been heard here. There are concerns about the next election cycle and maintaining the state's current plan. AGNC members suggested that perhaps the organization could work with CPW to host a forum on the impacts of wolf introduction, so people have the facts and both sides of the story as well as help legislators that don't have a connection to the landscape to see the whole picture from both sides. Many people don't understand the losses ranchers could experience and there is a financial impact to the state from stock depredation which could skyrocket due to wolves.

JT provided an update on the Cameo shooting range. CPW is working with a second contractor now as the first one requested that their contract be terminated which has delayed the project. A shooting sports coordinator has been hired and ground breaking is anticipated in a couple of months. A "living RFP" is on the CPW website to allow private enterprise to submit a proposal for an opportunity in Cameo – the question was asked if Cameo might be nominated as one of the OZ sites. Palisade is putting in a 6,000-panel solar system to provide power for every town owned building – CPW would like to have the first solar powered shooting range.

There are elk population declines across the state but mainly in the south; CPW is trying to identify the issues and keep them from traveling north. Chronic wasting disease seems to be increasing in prevalence.

### **REDI Grants:**

Trish Thibodo, 4R Manager for DOLA provided an update on REDI grants for rural areas. \$150K in grants are available generally for communities with a population of less than 20,000 and counties of less than 50,000. The goal is to diversify economies and to sponsor entrepreneurship. Applications are only accepted online; contact Kimberly Bullen or Trish for projects. Trish also outlined an opportunity the state is working on through the alliance for rural initiatives in partnership with America Makes. The goal of the pilot project is to develop a workforce for manufacturing.

### **Administrative Update**

Bonnie Petersen provided an update on the BLM headquarters move – a letter was sent to Secretary Zinke outlining the points in favor of moving the headquarters to Mesa County. All seven-member counties agreed to be included in the letter response update and all provided their logos to be included.

**Anvil Points** update – Working with Representative Rankin, a state bill supporting the distribution of Anvil Points funds to the counties has become a JBC bill and should be introduced soon.

**November Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, a new meeting calendar will be sent to everyone.**

### **New Business:**

*Next Meeting will be March 21, 2018, Civic Center, 341 West 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Palisade, CO*

Meeting was adjourned at 1:51 pm.

### **Attendance:**

Mike Samson, Garfield County  
Rich Sales, Town of Palisade  
Pattie Snidow, USDA Rural Dev.  
Betsy Bair, U.S. Senator Gardner  
Frank Moe, Moffat County  
Jeff Comstock, Moffat County  
Trish Thibodo, DOLA  
Andy Key, Town of Rangely  
Greg LeBlanc, City of Grand Junction  
Si Woodruff, Rio Blanco County  
Jeff Rector, Rio Blanco County  
Jeff Comstock, Moffat County  
Katelin Cook, Rio Blanco County  
Amy Provstgaard, Battlement Mesa Svc. Assoc.  
George Rossman, Congressmen Tipton  
Konnie Billgren, Rangely Chamber  
Ray Beck, Moffat County  
Dave Norman, AAoA of NWCO  
Tiffany Pehl, AGNC  
Bonnie Petersen, AGNC  
Art Riddle, Town of New Castle  
Mike Foreman, City of Craig  
John Justman, Mesa County  
Katie Mackley, RREDC  
Michael Langhorne, RREDC  
Sheryl Bower, Garfield County  
Michael Gamba, City of Glenwood Springs  
Frank McNulty, Fair Districts Colorado  
Roger Granat, Town of Palisade  
Karen Harkin, CHFA

Diane Schwenke, GJ Area Chamber  
JT Romatzke, CPW  
Patrick Donovan, U.S. Senator Bennet  
Noah Koerper, U.S. Senator Bennet

### **Via Conference Call:**

Dianna Orf, Orf & Orf, PC  
Richard Orf, Orf & Orf, PC  
Robbie LeValley, Delta County  
Cari Hermacinski, Routt County  
Ted Orf, Orf & Orf, PC  
Sonya Guram, OEDIT  
Michelle Balleck, CMEDP, Craig  
Betsy Blecha, Jackson County