HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
JULY 21, 2025
MINUTES

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met July 21, 2025, 7:00pm, in the HCCOG Board Room in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Charles E. Vines, Todd McNeill, Bill Osborne, Kelly Melang, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Larry Fontaine, Jeff Whitson, Bobby Munsey, Mike Parlier, Rocky Buchanan, Teresa McCoy, Tom Hartman, Tim Futrelle, Braxton Eggers, Paul Robinson Jr., Dennis Aldridge, and Doug Matheson. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Caroline Briggs, Zack Green, Cory Osborne, Chris Grubb, Judson Blevins, and Victoria Oxentine. The following guests were present via Zoom: Patrick Pierce and Jamar Nixon.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairman Matheson called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. Rocky Buchanan led the Pledge of Allegiance and Dennis Aldridge offered the invocation.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Todd McNeill moved to accept the minutes of the June 16, 2025 meeting, seconded by Tim Futrelle. Motion carried.

NCHFA PROCUREMENT/DISBURSEMENT POLICY AND ASSISTANCE PLAN ADOPTION

Chris Grubb, Deputy Executive Director/Planning & Development Director briefly discussed the NC Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) Procurement/Disbursement Policy (Attachment A) and the Assistance Plan (Attachment A1) that were presented in June. Mr. Grubb recommended that the board adopt these policies as the NCHFA has now approved of them with one small clause they recommended removing, if someone had participated once in the program, they couldn't again. Mr. Grubb also noted that these policies needed to be approved before the Urgent Repair Program Grant Project Ordinance next on the agenda. Charles E. Vines made a motion to approve the NCHFA Procurement/Disbursement Policy and the Assistance Plan with the one small clause change. Otis Church seconded the motion. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented the Financial Highlights as of June 30, 2025 (Attachment B) and discussed revenues versus expenditures, noting that she is working on closing our FY 2025. Larry Fontaine made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of June 30, 2025. Charles E. Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Regional Economy Grant Project Ordinance Amendment

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented the Regional Economy Grant Project Ordinance Amendment (Attachment B1) and noted that the amendment is only for extending the deadline of the grant project ordinance to June 30, 2026. Tom Hartman made a motion to approve the Regional Economy Grant Project Ordinance Amendment. Braxton Eggers seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Urgent Repair Program Grant Project Ordinance

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented the Urgent Repair Program Grant Project Ordinance (Attachment B2) for $330,000 with $30,000 for Admin and $300,000 split equally between Alleghany, Ashe, and Wilkes county applicants. Tim Futrelle made a motion to approve the Urgent Repair Program Grant Project Ordinance. Charles E. Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NC RAILROAD COMPANY PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

Patrick Pierce, NC Railroad Company (NCRR) Economic & Business Development Director and Jamar Nixon, Business Development, Research & Analysis Manager joined the meeting via Zoom and presented a slideshow (Attachment B) about the NCRR statewide service. Mr. Pierce and Mr. Nixon noted how instrumental the NCRR is for the state's growth and tax revenue. Mr. Pierce and Mr. Nixon discussed NCRR grant programs, investments, and consulting noting they would love to explore potential projects with HCCOG.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director announced that the Suite B tenant would be moving out at the end of October 2025. As of August 1st there will be 28 HCCOG employees, therefore we will be moving back into that space and creating additional offices as needed. Ms. Wiggins also noted that we are soliciting banquet sponsors for the event on October 10th. Ms. Wiggins also reminded the Executive Board that typically the September board meeting is cancelled in lieu of the annual banquet. Lastly, Ms. Wiggins discussed increasing Admin capacity and at the suggestion of the Advisory Committee, she has named Chris Grubb as the new Deputy Executive Director/Planning & Development Director.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board members discussed tourism slowly coming back, summer happenings in the region, and recovery milestones from Hurricane Helene.

OTHER BUSINESS

Victoria Oxentine, Communications Manager announced that 50th Annual Banquet invitation will be emailed out via Constant Contact in early August and that award nomination forms will be emailed out by end of July. Mrs. Oxentine also announced that HCCOG will be able to accept online payment for tickets this year.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other comments or business, Otis Church made a motion to adjourn. Braxton Eggers seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm.

Doug Matheson

Chairman, Doug Matheson

Clerk to the Board, Victoria Oxentine

Date 8/18/25