

**HIGH COUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
AUGUST 18, 2025
MINUTES**

The Executive Board of the High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG) met August 18, 2025, 7:00pm, in the HCCOG Board Room in Boone. The following members were present at the meeting: Charles E. Vines, Brenda Lyerly, Todd McNeill, Otis Church, Bill Wheeler, Larry Fontaine, Jeff Whitson, Bobby Munsey, Jeff Harding, Rocky Buchanan, Teresa McCoy, Tom Hartman, Tim Futrelle, Braxton Eggers., Dennis Aldridge, and Doug Matheson. The following staff and guests were present at the meeting: Julie Wiggins, Caroline Briggs, Judson Bevins, Zack Green, Cory Osborne, Chris Grubb, Maddy Wilson, Jackson Marcellus, and Victoria Oxentine. The following guests were present: John Anglin and present via Zoom: Luke Fowler.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Chairman Matheson called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. Charles E. Vines led the Pledge of Allegiance and Tom Hartman offered the invocation.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

Braxton Eggers moved to accept the minutes of the July 21, 2025 meeting, seconded by Todd McNeill. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial Highlights

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented the Financial Highlights as of July 31, 2025 (Attachment A) and discussed revenues versus expenditures. Tim Futrelle made a motion to approve the Financial Highlights as of July 31, 2025. Charles E. Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Budget Amendment #1

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented Budget Amendment #1 (Attachment A1) noting that it was a \$212,357 decrease in the Workforce department to adjust their actual grant award which was announced after our budget had already been presented. Todd McNeill made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #1. Tom Hartman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant Project Ordinance Amendment

Finance Officer, Caroline Briggs presented the NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant Project Ordinance Amendment which is an additional \$100,000 awarded to the Workforce Development department and extends through December 2026. Larry Fontaine made a motion to approve the NCWorks Small Business Work-Based Learning Grant Project Ordinance Amendment. Charles E. Vines seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY/NHE PROGRAM
OVERVIEW**

Luke Fowler, NRHA/NHE CEO, joined the meeting via Zoom to give an overview of the Northwestern Regional Housing Authority (NRHA) program and projects. Mr. Fowler noted the organization is always looking for connections and new projects, especially for Workforce

Housing. There was discussion about the COG's role, partnering with NRHA, and helping with funding/grants.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXECUTION OF ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION FOR HCCOG ADMINISTRATION FOR ESSENTIAL SINGLE-FAMILY REPAIR GRANT

Judson Blevins, Planner/Housing Coordinator presented a Resolution authorizing the execution of all necessary documentation for HCCOG administration for the Essential Single-Family Repair Grant (Attachment B). This resolution gives HCCOG the authority to execute paperwork/provide information needed or requested for this housing repair grant program in Wilkes County. The resolution also designates the five signees from HCCOG: Julie Wiggins, Chris Grubb, Caroline Briggs, Judson Blevins, and Michelle Ball. Todd McNeill made a motion to approve the Resolution authorizing the execution of all necessary documentation for HCCOG administration for the Essential Single-Family Repair Grant. Jeff Whitson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING UPDATES

Zack Green, Area Agency on Aging Director introduced the new Home Modification Project Manager, Maddy Wilson. Maddy will be working on the new home modification grant that helps prevent falls. Maddy is currently accepting referrals. Mr. Green discussed other department updates and potential projects.

REPORT FROM THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Wiggins, Executive Director announced that the CDBG-DR Training #2 will be held at the COG office tomorrow and virtually. Ms. Wiggins also noted that the Urgent Repair Program applications are due September 2nd, Annual Banquet Award Nominations are due August 22nd, and the RSVP deadline is September 24th. Ms. Wiggins also reminded the board that in lieu of the banquet the Executive Board does not meet in September. Chris Grubb, Deputy Executive Director/Planning Director discussed EDA projects and introduced Jackson Marcellus, the HCCOG's Lead for NC Fellow. Jackson will be working on a dashboard of data for potential housing projects in the region.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Todd McNeill announced that he has accepted a new job as the Executive Director of the NC Association of Regional Councils and, therefore, will no longer be able to participate as an Executive Board member at the HCCOG. Mr. McNeill has enjoyed serving on the board for the last 7 years and will continue to serve as an Ashe County Commissioner. Tom Hartman announced that Teresa McCoy was recently appointed to represent the region as the new BROCC (Blue Ridge Opportunity Commission) Board Member. Teresa McCoy noted that the Lansing Town Hall has finally been renovated and reopened after Hurricane Helene. Dennis Aldridge

discussed the tragic flooding of the Guadalupe River in Texas and his advocacy/discussions with FEMA and the American Flood Coalition.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman Matheson discussed the upcoming Risk Management meeting in Raleigh and encouraged everyone to attend the 50th Annual Banquet this year.

PUBLIC COMMENT


John Anglin, Business Development Manager with BRANCH Group introduced himself and noted that he is a Yancey County native and serves on the Workforce Development Board.

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 8:04 pm.



Chairman, Doug Matheson



Clerk to the Board, Victoria Oxentine

Date 10/20/25