



Bi-Monthly Policy Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 23, 2021
Brushy Mountain Golf Course
6 pm dinner/6:45 pm meeting

Agenda Item	Presenter	Action Requested
Call to Order/Welcome	Chair Bob Floyd Alexander Co. & Taylorsville	
Introductions		
Minutes of Previous Meetings	Chair Floyd	Yes
FY 2020-2021 Audit Presentation	Andrea Roper & Mary Claire Chase	Yes
One Comprehensive NCWorks Career Center	Wendy Johnson	Yes
CEDS Committee Appointments	Anthony Starr	Yes
4th Budget Amendment of the FY 2021-22 Budget	Andrea Roper	Yes
Nominating Committee Report & Board Leadership Election	Kitty Barnes	Yes
Outgoing Board Member Recognition	Chair Floyd	No
Other Business		
Executive Director's and Staff Reports		
Next Meeting - Tuesday, January 25, 2022 -		
Host/Location TBD		
Adjournment		

Notes: Dinner will begin at 6:00 pm at the Brushy Mountain Golf Course (300 Golf Course Ln., Taylorsville, NC, 28681) compliments of the Alexander County & Town of Taylorsville. Persons needing special assistance are asked to notify WPCOG at 828/485-4221 before the scheduled meeting date.

Minutes
Western Piedmont Council of Governments
Bimonthly Policy Board Meeting
Tuesday, September 28, 2021
City of Claremont Fire Department Headquarters, Claremont, NC

Members Present:

Bob Floyd, Jr., Chair
Jill Patton, Vice-Chair
Johnny Berry, Secretary
George Holleman, Treasurer
Barbara Pennell, Past Chair
Wayne Abele, At-Large
Joseph L. Gibbons, At-Large
Kitty Barnes, At-Large
Larry Yoder
Johnnie Carswell, Alternate
Ronnie Setzer
Mike Labrose
Dale Sherrill
Joie Fulbright
Kyle Hayman, Alternate
Dr. Caryl Burns
Larry Chapman
Marla Thompson
Chris Jernigan
Jerry Hodge
John Stiver, Alternate
Allen Spencer
Amparo Alfaro
Helen Chestnut
Erisha Lipford
Malla Vue
Randy Burns
Tommy Luckadoo
Jeanna Price

Members Absent:

James Weaver
Donald Robinson
Dennis Anthony
Sheila Perkins
Vacant

Local Government/Agency:

Cedar Rock
Hickory
Connelly Springs
Taylorsville
Gamewell
Burke County
Lenoir
Catawba County
Alexander County
Burke County
Cajah's Mountain
Caldwell County
Claremont
Conover
Conover
Granite Falls
Hudson
Long View
Morganton
Newton
Newton
Rhodhiss
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed
Appointed

Brookford
Catawba
Drexel
Glen Alpine
Rutherford College

Keith Warren
Chip Black, At-Large

Sawmills
Valdese

Guests/Others Present:

Mary Carter, Gamewell
Randy Feierabend, Cahah's Mountain
Jason Brown, Claremont
Scott Hildebran, Lenoir
Shawn Brown, Claremont
Wendell Lawrence, SERDI
Jim Youngquist, SERDI

WPCOG Staff Present:

Anthony Starr, Executive Director
Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director/Director of Community & Economic Development
Ashley Bolick, Director of Administrative Services and Human Resources
Andrea Roper, Finance Director
Wendy Johnson, Director of Workforce Development
Alison Adams, Director of Community & Regional Planning
Jason Toney, Communications Specialist
Elizabeth Hilliard, Executive Administrative Assistant

Call to Order/Welcome

A regular meeting of the WPCOG Policy Board was called to order at 6:45 pm by Chair Bob Floyd. Chair Floyd thanked the City of Claremont for hosting. City of Claremont Mayor, Shawn Brown, welcomed the Policy Board to Claremont.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were considered. Mr. Joie Fulbright made a motion to approve minutes from the July 27, 2021 meeting and Mr. Larry Chapman offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business/Reports

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Nominating Committee Appointments

Board Chair Floyd announced appointments to the nominating committee. Each year at the September Policy Board meeting, four Policy Board members are asked to serve on a nominating committee. Under the WPCOG Charter, the Policy Board Chair appoints the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is responsible for presenting a slate of officers, Executive Committee members and

appointed (non-elected) board members for the following year during the November meeting. The Nominating Committee includes a representative from all four counties. Traditionally, two county officials and two municipal officials compose the four-member committee.

The following board members have been appointed and have agreed to serve on this year's nominating committee.

Kitty Barnes – Catawba County Commissioner

Wayne Abele – Burke County Commissioner

Larry Chapman – Town of Hudson Commissioner

George Holleman – Town of Taylorsville Mayor

WPCOG Past Board Chair Kitty Barnes will serve as the Nominating Committee Chair. Staff will assist with scheduling a committee meeting shortly after the November election.

One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding

Ms. Wendy Johnson, Workforce Development Board Director, presented the One Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). As a requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Public Law 113-128, the local Workforce Development Board, with the agreement of the Chief Elected Official, shall develop and enter into a Memorandum of Understanding between the local Workforce Development Board and the One-Stop Partners, concerning the operation of the One-Stop delivery system on an annual basis, and the required Infrastructure Funding Agreement, which is Attachment F in the MOU.

Staff requested the final approval from the Policy Boards for the required One Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding, which includes the Infrastructure Funding Agreement.

Ms. Jill Patton made a motion that the Board approve the One Stop Partner Memorandum of Understanding, which includes the infrastructure funding agreement as proposed. Ms. Kitty Barnes offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Workforce Development Board Appointment

Ms. Johnson requested that the Board appoint Patrick McClure, Business Enterprise Manager, at Material Return, in order to meet one of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) board private sector openings, representing Burke County.

Mr. George Holleman made a motion that the Board appoint Patrick McClure to the Workforce Development Board for a staggered two-year term beginning September 28, 2021 – June 30, 2023. Mr. Larry Chapman offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Section 8 Mainstream Voucher Application Intake/Waiting List

Ms. Stephanie Hanvey, Regional Housing Authority (RHA) Director informed the board of staff's intention to open the Section 8 Housing Mainstream Voucher waiting list for new applications beginning Monday, November 1, 2021. Since November of 2018, the Regional Housing Authority has been

awarded a total of 246 Mainstream Vouchers. These vouchers serve the disabled population between the ages of 18-62. Currently, the RHA has approximately 161 of the 246 Mainstream Vouchers utilized with approximately 83 available for use. The Regional Housing Authority's Section 8 Housing Program has exhausted its waiting list for this demographic as of September 2021. Staff would like to begin accepting new applications for the Mainstream Voucher rental assistance program only so that a new list can be started. Notice will be published in the local newspapers on/after October 1, 2021. Notice will also be published on the WPCOG's website and on our social media beginning on/after October 1, 2021. The Regional Housing Authority plans to accept new applications beginning Monday, November 1, 2021 and the application period will remain open as long as we have available vouchers left to fill.

Increase in Applicable Payment Standards

Ms. Stephanie Hanvey presented a proposed increase in the applicable payment standards. In August, HUD published an increase in the new Fair Market Rents for 2022. Payment standards for efficiency, one, two, three, four and five bedroom units need to be increased to help make those units more affordable for our tenants. In 2021, Fair Market Rents went down which created a burden on many families that were searching for housing. Many prospective tenants have been unable to find affordable housing and must submit numerous requests before being approved. Landlords are complaining because there is an enormous amount of paperwork involved with the normal request process and the denials are causing them to have to submit paperwork several times.

The goal of the RHA is to help as many families as possible in the communities while maximizing the funding that HUD allows. With the increase in the Fair Market Rents in 2022 and the ability to increase our local payment standards, it will greatly assist families to find housing that is affordable to them. The board has been provided the increase in the payment standards for approval.

Ms. Jill Patton made a motion that the Board approve the increase in the applicable payment standards to become effective October 1, 2021. Ms. Kitty Barnes offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

3rd Amendment of the FY 22 Budget

Ms. Andrea Roper, Finance Director, presented the 3rd Amendment of the 2021-2022 Budget reflecting a total budget of \$20,009,556 and an operating budget of \$7,373,355 which represents an increase of \$326,476 from the August 24th, 2021 budget.

The 3rd Amendment of the 2021-2022 Budget includes:

- An increase in General Government due to a new financial services contract set to begin in January 2022.
- Transportation has an increase in revenue to reflect actual contract amounts.
- Environmental Protection decreased to reflect actual contract amounts.
- An increase in Community Development to include additional construction work for housing projects and additional funding for the Unifour Consortium program.
- Community and Regional Planning increased \$226,226 to reflect several new projects and the addition of a new code enforcement position.
- Economic Development increased to reflect anticipated expenses for the EDA CARES

grant.

- A decrease of \$9,238 in Regional Public Housing to align with actual FSS reserve funding. Reserves are expected to be completely spent during the current fiscal year as required by HUD.
- Workforce Development increased \$29,495 due to additional funding for business services, career center services and other adjustments to personnel costs.
- A decrease of \$155,031 in fund balance appropriated due to the addition of new project and contractual work. The remaining fund balance appropriated is for the carryover of planning projects that were not finished at the end of the previous fiscal year and funds for the Piedmont Radar Project Study.
- Workforce Development revenue funds increased \$25,000 to reflect additional funding from the NC Department of Commerce.
- Compensated absences increased \$24,119 due to better reflect anticipated staff usage.
- Contractual increased due to the housing projects in Community Development.
- An increase in printing to provide vaccine outreach in Aging.
- Rent/Lease-Building increased due to additional funding received in Workforce Development.
- Contingency increased \$69,400 due to the additional of several new projects.
- OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Trust Allocation decreased \$31,920 due to an increase in compensated absences and other fringe benefit costs. This amount will vary depending on the availability of funds throughout the fiscal year.
- An increase of \$36,939 to the transfer to capital reserve fund expense line is due to the reduction in indirect personnel costs and additional indirect funds generated by the additional salary amount. This amount will vary depending on the availability of funds throughout the fiscal year.

Staff requested that the Policy Board review and approve the third amendment of the 2021-2022 budget.

Ms. Kitty Barnes made a motion that the Policy Board approve the 3rd amendment of the 2021-2022 budget as presented. Mr. Wayne Abele offered a second. The motion was passed unanimously.

Executive Director's and Staff Report

Mr. Anthony Starr reviewed the Executive Director's Report outlining both current and upcoming projects by department.

- WPCOG assisted Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority/DBA Greenway with their Executive Director Search. The Greenway Board of Directors appointed their new executive director on September 2, 2021.
- WPCOG is assisting Caldwell County with their search for a new County Manager. Interviews are complete and an announcement could occur soon.
- The WPCOG hired two new code enforcement officers and two part-time positions are open for applications (housing inspector and IT technician).

- Staff are working on suggested persons for the steering committee to develop the next Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region. The Policy Board should expect to make appointments at its November meeting.
- The regional housing forum on August 27th was a success with about 70 persons in attendance and more viewing the event online. The next forum is planned for February or March concerning affordable housing.
- The AAA received a grant from DHHS for \$65,620 to provide vaccine outreach for homebound older adults. Four existing staff will be working on this project.
- The Wake Forest Baptist Health contract has been received and provides up to \$99,600 for work through March 2023 to provide support for referred caregivers of those caring for someone with dementia.
- Community and Economic Development staff are currently administering seventy-seven (77) grants for local governments.
- Forty-one (41) housing rehabilitations projects are underway.
- Twenty-six (26) homeowners received foreclosure prevention counseling.
- Two N.C. Commerce Building Reuse Grant applications totaling \$875,000 were funded in August. Project Husky II located in Hildebran was awarded \$500,000 and will create 60 new, full-time jobs. Project Wavelength – in Claremont – received \$375,000 and will create 50 new, full-time jobs.
- The Comprehensive/Land Use Plans for Catawba County, Hudson, Longview, and Cahah’s Mountain are set to begin in October. Gamewell is kicking off this month. Cedar Rock and Maiden are also finalizing their schedule to begin work.
- Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority governing board approved the financial services contract with WPCOG at their August board meeting. WPCOG will begin providing financial services in January of 2022.
- The RHA is planning to hire a part-time Housing Inspector due to the increase number of vouchers awarded for our region. We have received many applications and plan to begin interviewing in the next few weeks.
- A virtual call with the Chief Deputy Secretary of Commerce Jordan Whichard, Asst. Secretary of the Division of Workforce Solutions Chet Mottershed (and few others from Commerce), along with WPCOG Board Chair Bob Floyd, Workforce Development Board Chair Josh McKinney, Workforce Development Director Wendy Johnson, and Anthony Starr was held on September 1, 2021.

WPCOG Assessment & Strategic Plan Work Session

Mr. Anthony Starr reviewed the assessment and strategic plan process. As previously communicated, the WPCOG initiated a planning process to assess the performance of the organization and to develop goals for a strategic plan. The WPCOG employed the assistance of the SouthEast Regional Directors’ Institute to manage the process and write the report. The process began in June with the distribution of two surveys. One survey was sent to all Policy Board delegates. The second survey was sent to various regional leaders. Both surveys received strong participation and the responses are overwhelmingly positive.

The next phase of the process included individual stakeholder interviews and focus group meetings. These interviews and meetings occurred during the week of August 16th-20th, 2021. A wide variety of stakeholders were invited and participated to ensure comprehensive feedback for the process.

The final phase includes a work session with the Policy Board during the September 28th, 2021 meeting. During this meeting, the SERDI consultants, Jim Youngquist and Wendell Lawrence, will review the results of the surveys, stakeholder interviews, and focus group meetings, along with their recommendations. The report will be finalized following the guidance and direction from the Policy Board.

SERDI consultant Jim Youngquist thanked the board and staff for allowing SERDI to conduct the assessment. Mr. Youngquist stated that of all the COG's in the 12 state region of SERDI, the WPCOG is in the top 2-3 in that 12 state region and top 3-4 in the country. Mr. Youngquist and Mr. Lawrence presented their findings to the board via a PowerPoint included in minutes. Mrs. Youngquist and Mr. Lawrence reviewed strengths and concerns as well as possible recommendations. Proposed possible recommendations include:

1. Annual Local Government Briefing and Work Session
2. Succession Planning
3. Developing Future Public Leaders through a Regional Effort
4. Expanding the Regional Focus through the WPCOG
5. Marketing the Western Piedmont/Hickory Metro Region

Erisha Lipford, Appointed Policy Board Delegate, suggested adding younger groups to the formation of a "future Public Leaders group" to create buy-in.

Malla Vue, Appointed Policy Board Delegate, suggested adding an action step to the marketing recommendation of identifying who would be marketed too.

Jerry Hodge, Policy Board Delegate, shared about an economic development trip to Rock Hill where he was told that Rock Hill markets themselves as "the best part of Charlotte region".

Adjournment

Chair Floyd reminded the board of the next meeting scheduled for November 23, 2021 and adjourned the meeting at 8:17 pm.

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: November 23, 2021

SUBJECT: FY 2020-2021 Audit Presentation

PRESENTER: Mary Claire Chase, Senior Accountant, Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, P.A.
Andrea Roper, Finance Director

ATTACHMENTS: Audit Highlights
Financial Report

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: The independent auditor and finance director will present a report to the Board regarding the financial audit of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. The audit is required by State Law and various regulation of funding entities.

Highlights of the audit report have been provided by the auditor as well as a financial report by the finance director. The auditor and will be at the meeting to review their observations and report.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Staff requests Policy Board to review the attached audit information.

Suggested Motion: *I move that the Board accept the audit report as presented.*

MARTIN·STARNES
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments

2021 AUDITED
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Audit Highlights

- ❑ Unmodified Opinion
- ❑ Cooperative Staff

MARTIN·STARNES
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.

General Fund Highlights

Balance Sheet

Total Assets	\$	2,579,480
Less: Total Liabilities & Inflows		<u>(645,861)</u>
Fund Balance	\$	<u>1,933,619</u>

General Fund Highlights Cont.

Income Statement

Revenues	\$	6,504,804
Transfers in		10,328
Less: Transfers out		(148,647)
Less: Expenditures		<u>(6,186,579)</u>
Net Change in Fund Balance	\$	<u>179,906</u>

General Fund Highlights Cont.

Unassigned Fund Balance:

2021		\$ 3,350
2020		<u>566,374</u>
Change in unassigned FB		<u><u>\$ (563,024)</u></u>

Special Revenue Fund - WIOA

Balance Sheet

Total Assets		\$ 218,925
Total Liabilities & Inflows		<u>(215,192)</u>
Fund Balance		<u><u>\$ 3,733</u></u>

Income Statement

Total Revenues		\$ 1,213,938
Total Expenditures		<u>(1,216,744)</u>
Net Change in FB		<u><u>\$ (2,806)</u></u>

Special Revenue Fund - Aging

Balance Sheet

Total Assets	\$ 858,774
Total Liabilities & Inflows	<u>(849,105)</u>
Fund Balance	<u>\$ 9,669</u>

Income Statement

Total Revenues	\$ 3,493,021
Total Expenditures	<u>(3,494,426)</u>
Net Change in FB	<u>\$ (1,405)</u>

Special Revenue Fund - Section 8

Balance Sheet

Total Assets	\$ 1,225,387
Total Liabilities & Inflows	<u>(368,188)</u>
Fund Balance	<u>\$ 857,199</u>

Income Statement

Total Revenues	\$ 6,072,237
Total Expenditures	<u>(5,864,875)</u>
Net Change in FB	<u>\$ 207,362</u>

Capital Project Funds

	<u>Building Generator</u>	<u>Capital Reserve Fund</u>
Balance Sheet		
Total Assets	\$ -	\$ 148,647
Total Liabilities & Inflows	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Fund Balance	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 148,647</u>

Capital Project Funds Cont.

	<u>Building Generator</u>	<u>Capital Reserve Fund</u>
Income Statement		
Total Revenues	\$ -	\$ -
Transfers in	-	148,647
Transfers out	(10,328)	-
Total Expenditures	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Change in Fund Balance	<u>\$ (10,328)</u>	<u>\$ 148,647</u>

OPEB Pension Trust

Balance Sheet

Total Assets	\$ 172,921
Total Liabilities	<u>-</u>
Fund Balance	<u>\$ 172,921</u>

Income Statement

Total Revenues	\$ 82,902
Total Expenditures	<u>-</u>
Net Change	<u>\$ 82,902</u>

Custodial Funds – Balance Sheet


	<u>Assets</u>	<u>Net Position</u>
Future Forward	\$ -	\$ -
Sister Cities	32,677	32,677
SE4A	9,986	9,986
NC4A	<u>15,309</u>	<u>15,309</u>
Total	<u>\$ 57,972</u>	<u>\$ 57,972</u>

Custodial Funds- Income Statement

	Future Forward	Sister Cities	<u>SE4A</u>	<u>NC4A</u>
Additions	\$ 30	\$ 3,016	\$ -	\$ 2,140
Deductions	<u>149,948</u>	<u>610</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,783</u>
Net Increase (Decrease)	(149,918)	2,406	-	357
Restatement	<u>149,918</u>	<u>30,271</u>	<u>9,986</u>	<u>14,952</u>
Net Position	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 32,677</u>	<u>\$ 9,986</u>	<u>\$ 15,309</u>

Performance Indicators

- ❑ No findings
- ❑ No general performance indicators of concern for FY 2021



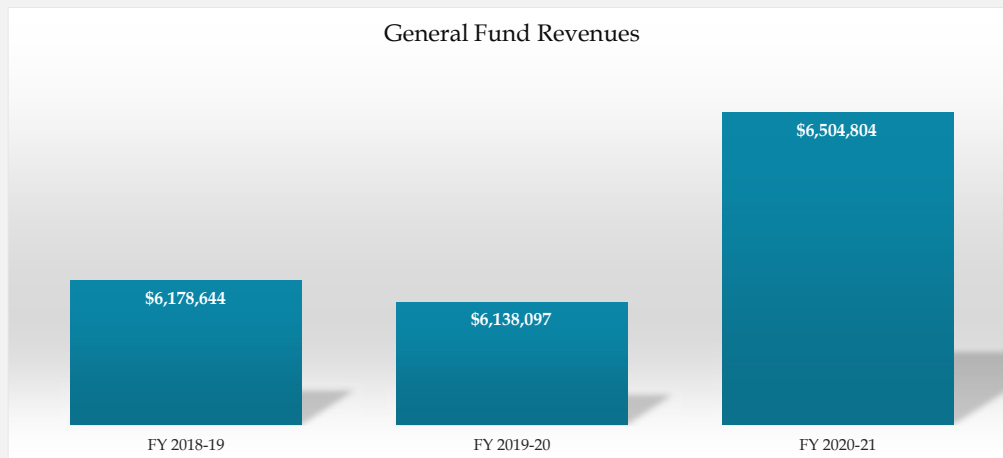
Western Piedmont Council
of Governments

Discussion
&
Questions

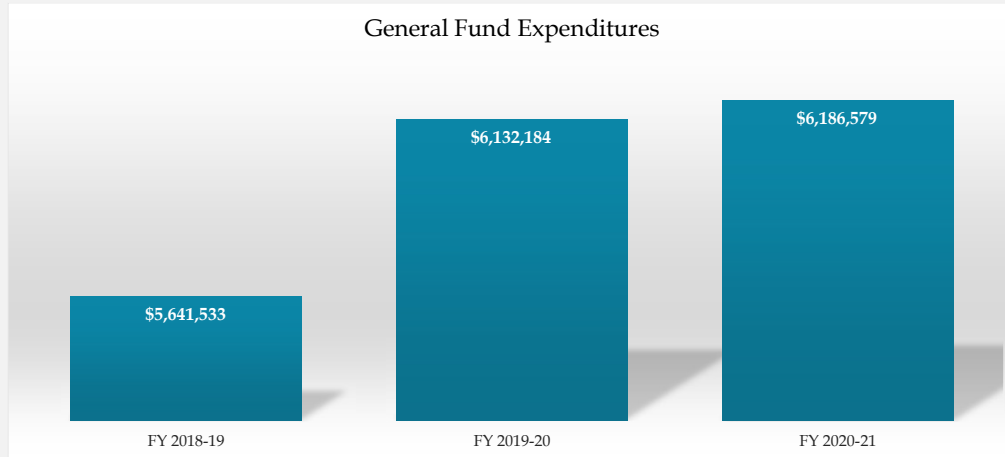
MARTIN-STARNES
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.

Fiscal Year 2020-21 Financial Report

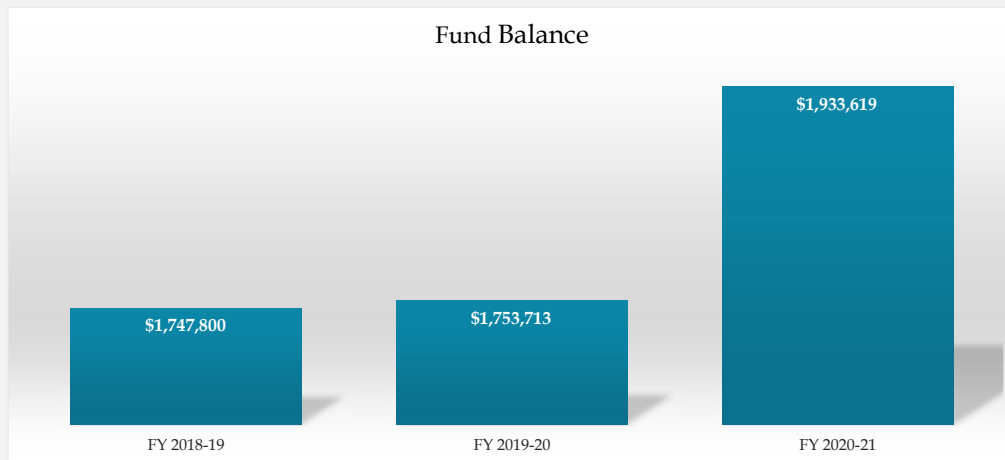
Historical General Fund Performance



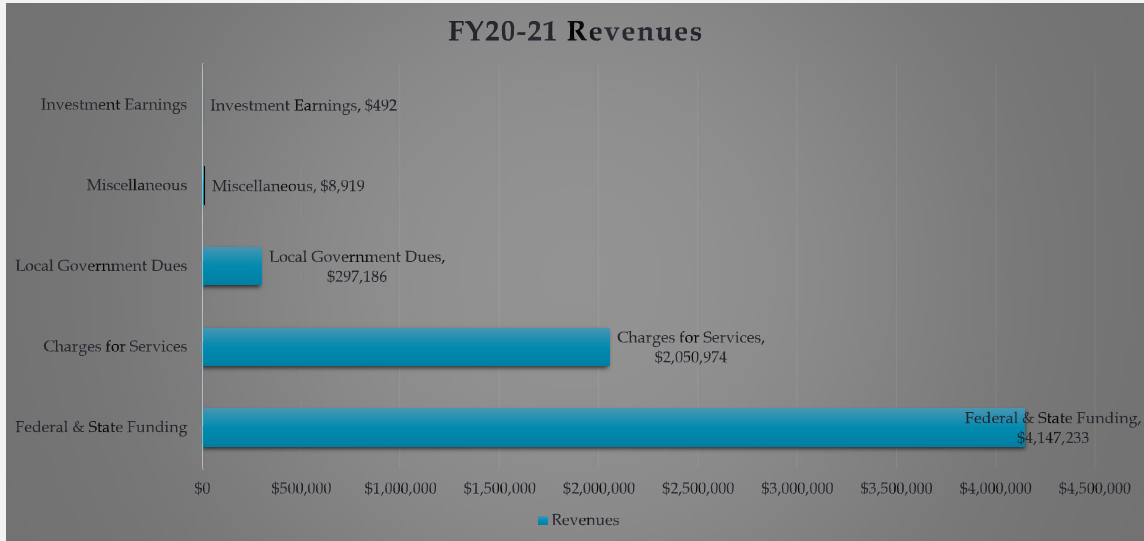
Historical General Fund Performance



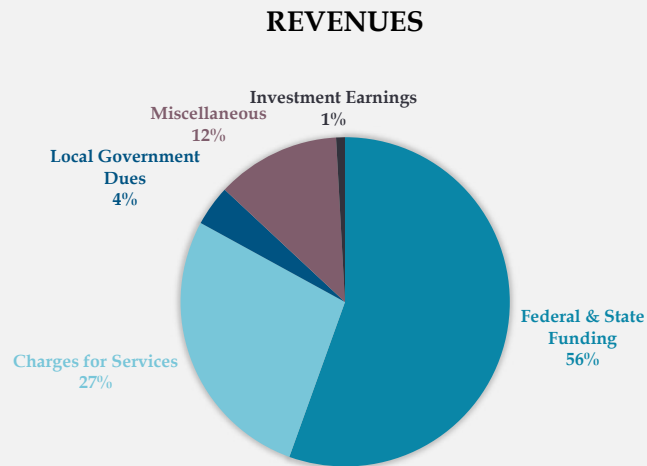
Historical General Fund Performance



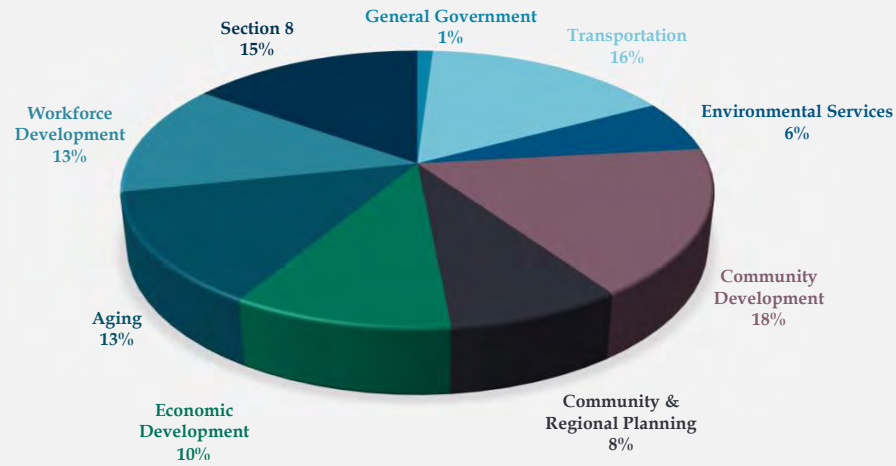
General Fund Revenues



General Fund Revenues



General Fund Expenditures



FY 2020-21 General Fund Summary

- Increase in Fund Balance
- Total Revenues increased from prior fiscal year
- Expenditures were underspent

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: November 23, 2021

SUBJECT: One Comprehensive NCWorks Career Center

PRESENTER: Wendy Johnson, Workforce Development Director

ATTACHMENTS: (1) PowerPoint

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The current and projected future NCWorks Career Center opportunities point to the revolution of establishing a single (one) comprehensive NCWorks career center for the region.

WPCOG staff received the suggestion to consider one regional comprehensive career center based on current and future funding and customer engagement opportunities. Factors that support a regional career center include:

- In-person engagement (foot traffic) at the current career centers is slowly decreasing;
- Increased engagement with customers via virtual platforms allows for greater participation and outreach to job seekers;
- Increased flexibility/mobility to deploy staff to various locations across the region is possible with a regional career center;
- Communication & management with a regional career center increases efficiency with staffing/mobility/virtual services; and
- Improve use of both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funding to cover one lease.

Construction of a regional comprehensive career center could occur at the main WPCOG campus. Funding would come from leasing the space to the NC Department of Commerce and could lower costs for the WPCOG and State of North Carolina. WPCOG Staff will provide a PowerPoint overview of the key considerations concerning this prospect.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

Staff requests the Policy Board to authorize proceeding with further research to establish one regional comprehensive career center. Future action by the Policy Board would be required before significant costs are incurred or construction began.

Suggested Motion:

I move that the Policy Board authorize proceeding with further research to establish one comprehensive career center.



Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

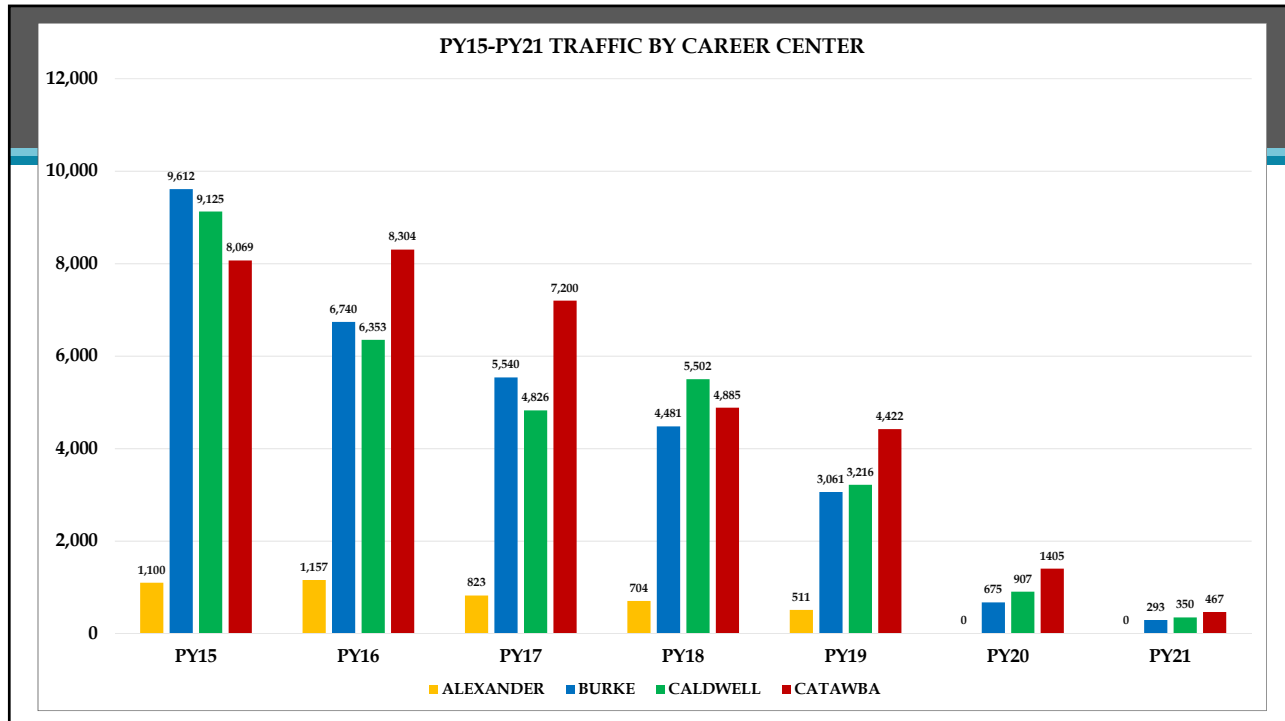
Creative Regional Solutions Since 1968

ONE-STOP COMPREHENSIVE NCWORKS CAREER CENTER

November 23, 2021 – 6pm

ONE COMPREHENSIVE CAREER CENTER

A comprehensive American Job Center, as described in 20 CFR 678.305, 34 CFR 361.305, and 34 CFR 463.305, is a **physical location** where job seekers and employer customers can access the programs, services, and activities of all required one-stop partners (section 121(b)(1)(B) of WIOA), along with any additional partners as determined by the Local WDB. **The One-Stop delivery system must include at least one comprehensive physical center in each local area.**

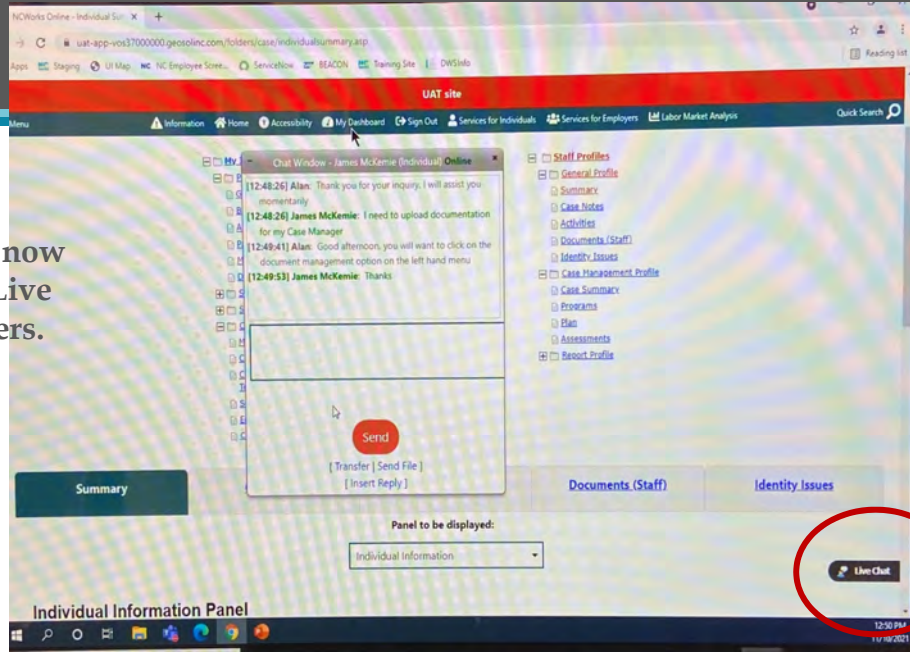


- Before COVID – On average less than 5 people in a workshop.
- During/After COVID – On average more than 10 people accessing a workshop.
- We can engage with customers across all four counties at once (efficiency).
- We are also providing virtual workshops for High Country & Foothills, beginning 8/2021.

WESTERN PIEDMONT NCWORKS VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS & ATTENDANCE

Workshop	CLASSES	ATTENDANCE
Earlychild Jobs & Training	1	16
NCWorks Scholarships	1	20
Job Applications	2	29
Financial Literacy	1	5
Reentry - Employment	4	44
NCCareers	1	137
Expungement	8	153
Customer Svc/Soft Skills	2	70
Resume Prep	16	307
Interviewing	15	429

www.ncworks.gov now has the ability to “Live Chat” with customers.

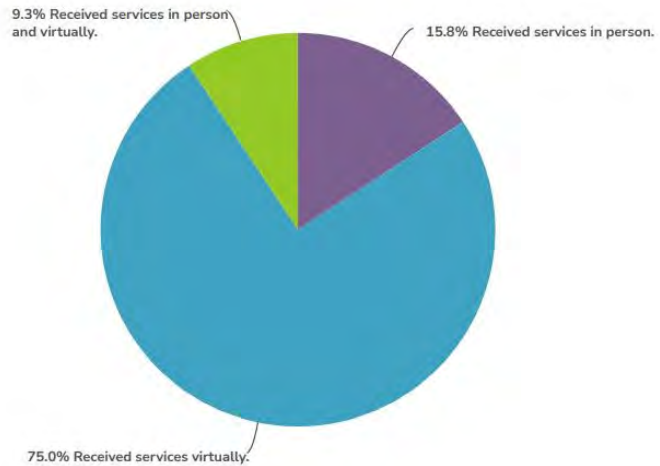


NCWORKS CUSTOMER SURVEY (Statewide)

In the past six months have you received services from NCWorks?

- Virtual Services highly received.

(2,424 responses)

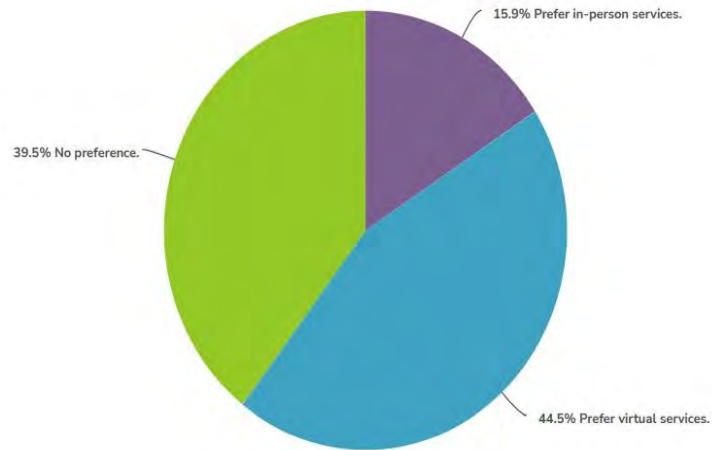


NCWORKS CUSTOMER SURVEY (Statewide)

Do you have a preference for how you receive services from NCWorks?

- Virtual Services highly preferred.

(2,425 responses)



ONE COMPREHENSIVE CAREER CENTER

WHY NOW?

- In-person engagement (foot traffic) at the current career centers is slowly decreasing;
- Increased engagement with customers via virtual platforms allows for greater participation and outreach to job seekers;
- Increased flexibility/mobility to deploy staff to various locations across the region is possible with a regional career center;
- Communication & management with a regional career center increases efficiency with staffing/mobility/virtual services; and
- Improve use of both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funding to cover one lease.

ONE COMPREHENSIVE CAREER CENTER

OPPORTUNITY?

- A regional career center located on WPCOG campus – Improved communication and management of integrated service delivery to increase cohesive staff involvement/engagement within the region.
- Cost savings: Current lease payments across three centers, approx. \$208,000 annually. Future lease with one center approx. \$100,000.
- Lease the space to Commerce to pay for any debt service.

ONE COMPREHENSIVE CAREER CENTER

NEXT STEPS?

- Develop cost estimates and a conceptual design
- Begin formal lease discussions with the state
- Establish a proposed project budget
- Review status and info with the Policy Board for approval
- Policy Board selects an architect to design the facility

ONE COMPREHENSIVE CAREER CENTER

QUESTIONS?

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: November 23, 2021

SUBJECT: CEDS Committee Appointments

PRESENTER: Anthony W. Starr, Executive Director

ATTACHMENTS: 1. List of Proposed CEDS Committee Members
2. Summary Page about the CEDS Committee

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The WPCOG was designated as the economic development district for our region in 2004 by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The WPCOG is required to develop and maintain a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) every five years. The last CEDS was adopted in 2017 and work must soon begin for the 2022 CEDS. Part of that process involves the appointment and engagement of a CEDS Committee that broadly represents the region.

WPCOG staff carefully compiled a list of 12 proposed CEDS Committee members for consideration by the Policy Board. Key diversity characteristics considered for the proposed committee members include: geographic representation, occupation/employment background, age cohort, race, ethnicity, and gender. About 33% of the committee is female, about 33% represent a racial or ethnic minority, and there is representation from each of the four counties. About half of the committee consists of persons under 50 years of age.

The CEDS Committee is expected to meet about six times and complete its work by September of 2022.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Staff requests the Policy Board to appoint the attached list of individuals to the CEDS Committee and appoint Randy Burns as the committee chair and Mandy Hildebran as the vice chair.

Suggested Motion: *I move that the Board appoint the attached list of individuals to the CEDS Committee and appoint Randy Burns as chair and Mandy Hildebran as vice chair.*

Proposed Members of the 2022 CEDS Committee

Name	Business/Organization/Affiliation
Randy Burns (Chair)*	Administration, WPCC & CVCC
Mandy Hildebran (Vice Chair)	CEO, Hickory Metro Convention Center & Visitors Bureau
Sarah Chester	Executive Director, Industrial Commons
Helen Chestnut*	Retired Administrative Officer for Dept. of Agriculture
Honey Estrada	Public Health Strategist, Catawba County Public Health
Alan Glines	Burke County Planning Director
Josh McKinney	VP for Peoples Bank & Workforce Dev. Board Chair
Bryan Moore	CEO, Caldwell Chamber of Commerce
Ike Perkins+	Minister, Lenoir
Dale Sherrill*+	Retired President of Vextra Tech, a CommScope Division
Ben Willis+	Caldwell Education Foundation Director
Malla Vue*	District Director of Goodwill Industries/Workforce Board

* Also serves as a WPCOG Policy Board Delegate

+ Also serves as a local government elected official

2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee

Purpose: The purpose of the committee is to steer the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba Counties).

Background: The Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) is the designated Economic Development District for our region. The U.S. Economic Development Administration makes this designation and provides resources to each region to improve local economies through various programs and grants. The WPCOG is required to develop and implement a CEDS every five years.

Why this is important: The CEDS will identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to business and economic development in our region. The CEDS serves as a guiding document for collaborative efforts among a variety of organizations, stakeholders, and leaders. The CEDS process is an opportunity to address needs and capitalize on new opportunities for every community and our region.

What is required to serve on the CEDS Committee: Attend the six scheduled meetings between January and September 2022, provide input, and participate in discussions. Some limited review of data and material may be required between meetings. The meetings will be held at the WPCOG office, 1880 2nd Avenue NW, Long View. The meetings are tentatively scheduled for 3-5pm on (Wednesdays) February 3rd, March 2nd, April 6th, May 4th, June 1st, July 27th, and August 17th, 2022.

Composition of the Committee Membership: The CEDS Committee is required to broadly represent the communities in the region. Efforts have been made to select proportional representation from each county, business and public sectors, minority groups, gender and age cohorts. The WPCOG Policy Board will appoint the CEDS Committee members at its November 2021 meeting.

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: November 23, 2021

SUBJECT: 4th Amendment of the FY2021-22 Budget

PRESENTER: Andrea B. Roper, Finance Director

ATTACHMENTS: Budget Summary Sheets

SUMMARY OF REQUEST: The attached 4th Amendment of the 2021-2022 Budget reflects a total budget of \$20,535,082 and an operating budget of \$7,414,567 which represents an increase of the total budget from the September 28, 2021 budget amendment of \$525,526.

The 4th Amendment of the 2021-2022 Budget includes:

- Transportation has a decrease in funding to reflect actual anticipated expenses.
- Community and Regional Planning increased \$40,953 to reflect several new planning projects.
- Aging has a \$30,000 increase due to ARPA funding.
- Workforce Development increased \$1,033 due to additional funding for infrastructure costs.
- A decrease of \$30,874 in fund balance appropriated due to the addition of new projects and contractual work.
- Workforce Development Special Revenue funds increased \$284,314 to reflect actual funding for the fiscal year.
- Aging Special Revenue funds increased \$200,000 due to ARPA funding.
- Chargeable salaries decreased and compensated absences increased \$16,266, respectively, to better reflect anticipated staff usage.
- Contractual increased due to the ARPA funding for Aging and increased costs for Community & Regional Planning.
- An increase in telephone to reflect anticipated costs for the security system and landline.
- Supplies decreased \$5,637 due to reallocation of funds to maintenance-building grounds for additional landscaping.
- Contingency increased \$20,771 due to the addition of several new projects.
- OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Trust Allocation decreased \$24,957 due to an increase in compensated absences and other fringe benefit costs. This amount will vary depending on the availability of funds throughout the fiscal year.
- A decrease of \$13,935 to the transfer to capital reserve fund expense line is mainly due to the reduction in chargeable salaries. This amount will vary depending on the availability of funds throughout the fiscal year.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED: Staff requests the Policy Board to review and approve the Fourth Amendment of the 2021-2022 Budget.

Suggested Motion: *I move that the Board approve the 4th Amendment of the 2021-2022 Budget as proposed.*



Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

WESTERN PIEDMONT
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
2021-2022 BUDGET
4th Amendment of the Budget
November 23, 2021



Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

WPCOG REVENUE BUDGET FY 2021-2022 11/23/2021	11/23/21 PROPOSED BUDGET	09/28/21 CURRENT BUDGET *	VARIANCE
WPCOG ASSESSMENTS	302,502	302,502	0
INTEREST	400	400	0
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	335	335	0
ANNUAL MEETING CONTRIBUTION	9,000	9,000	0
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
FIN. ADMIN, COMM.SRV	79,336	79,336	0
TRANSPORTATION			
MPO (FHWA & FTA) & PASS. SAMPLING	1,064,241	1,064,141	100
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION			
WATER RESOURCES, EPA 205(j) PROJECTS, AND ARC WATERSHED	354,468	354,468	0
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			
CDBG, HOUSING COUNSELING, & MPP	1,236,777	1,236,777	0
COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PLANNING			
PLANNING, DATA SERVICES, GIS	669,547	628,594	40,953
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
ECON DEV GRANTS & BUILDING REUSE	565,497	565,497	0
REGIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING			
SECTION 8 HOUSING VOUCHERS	1,246,385	1,246,385	0
AREA AGENCY ON AGING SERVICES			
AGING ADMINISTRATION & SERVICES	965,363	935,363	30,000
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT	893,105	892,072	1,033
FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED			
FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED	27,611	58,485	(30,874)
SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS (PASS THROUGH)			
AGING	3,552,174	3,352,174	200,000
SECTION 8 HOUSING	6,632,001	6,632,001	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	2,936,340	2,652,026	284,314
TOTAL	20,535,082	20,009,556	525,526

CAPITAL RESERVE FUND			
TRANSFER FROM GENERAL FUND	60,000	60,000	0
ALLOCATED FUND BALANCE	70,328	70,328	0
TOTAL	130,328	130,328	0

WPCOG EXPENSE BUDGET FY 2021-2022 11/23/2021	11/23/21 PROPOSED BUDGET	09/28/21 CURRENT BUDGET *	VARIANCE
GENERAL GOVERNMENT			
ARC-LDD, FFEA, & EDA	133,048	133,048	0
TRANSPORTATION			
MPO (FHWA & FTA) & PASS. SAMPLING	1,064,241	1,095,015	(30,774)
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION			
WATER RESOURCES, EPA 205(j) PROJECTS, AND ARC WATERSHED	354,468	354,468	0
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			
CDBG, BLDG REUSE, COUNSELING, MPP	1,236,777	1,236,777	0
COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PLANNING			
PLANNING, DATA SERVICES, GIS	701,182	660,229	40,953
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
ECON DEV GRANTS	741,140	741,140	0
REGIONAL PUBLIC HOUSING			
SECTION 8 HOUSING VOUCHERS	1,246,385	1,246,385	0
AGING AGENCY SERVICES			
AGING	1,044,221	1,014,221	30,000
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT	893,105	892,072	1,033
SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS (PASS THROUGH)			
AGING	3,552,174	3,352,174	200,000
SECTION 8 HOUSING	6,632,001	6,632,001	0
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	2,936,340	2,652,026	284,314
TOTAL	20,535,082	20,009,556	525,526

CAPITAL RESERVE FUND			
TRANSFER TO CAPITAL PROJECTS	130,328	130,328	0
TOTAL	130,328	130,328	0

* The amounts used for the Current Budget are from the adoption of the 2021-2022 Budget presented on September 28, 2021.
The Proposed Operating Budget is: **\$7,414,567**

WPCOG EXPENSE BUDGET FY 2021-2022 11/23/2021	11/23/21	09/28/21	VARIANCE
	PROPOSED BUDGET	CURRENT BUDGET *	
CHARGEABLE SALARIES	3,508,067	3,524,333	(16,266)
COMPENSATED ABSENCES	249,624	233,358	16,266
INCENTIVE	4,500	4,500	0
LONGEVITY	55,778	55,778	0
RETIREMENT	741,157	741,157	0
GROUP INSURANCE	627,699	627,699	0
WORKERS' COMPENSATION	18,000	18,000	0
UNEMPLOYMENT COSTS	36,720	36,720	0
CONTRACTUAL	868,636	828,132	40,504
TRAVEL-SUBSISTENCE/REGIST.	75,377	70,919	4,458
TRAVEL-TRANSPORTATION	98,679	99,266	(587)
FUEL	18,228	16,728	1,500
TELEPHONE	40,103	31,784	8,319
POSTAGE	24,432	24,082	350
PRINTING	23,153	23,153	0
UTILITIES	44,000	44,000	0
RENT - EQUIPMENT	10,308	10,308	0
RENT/LEASE - BUILDING	123,075	123,075	0
MORTGAGE/OCCUPANCY COST	133,000	133,000	0
SUPPLIES	145,073	150,710	(5,637)
AUDIT	34,851	34,851	0
DUES	32,169	31,952	217
ADVERTISING/SUBSCRIPTIONS	33,641	31,890	1,751
MAINTENANCE-EQUIPMENT	59,612	60,510	(898)
MAINTENANCE-VEHICLES	2,519	2,519	0
MAINTENANCE-BLDG/GROUNDS	59,500	51,000	8,500
CONTENTS/LIABILITY INSURANCE	20,264	19,408	856
ANNUAL MEETING	18,000	18,000	0
LEGAL FEES	9,976	9,976	0
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE	5,810	5,810	0
CAPITAL OUTLAY-EQUIPMENT	4,001	4,001	0
CONTINGENCY	168,419	147,648	20,771
RESERVE FOR FUTURE EXP.	0	0	0
OWNER IMPROVEMENTS	0	0	0
INTERNET SERVICE	10,140	10,140	0
WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT	49	49	0
SECTION 8 PORTABLE ADMIN	3,000	3,000	0
OPEB TRUST ALLOCATION	183	25,140	(24,957)
ALLOCATED FUND BALANCE	0	0	0
TRANSFER TO CAPITAL RESERVE FUND	106,824	120,759	(13,935)
SR - AGING FEES & SERVICES	3,552,174	3,352,174	200,000
SR - SECTION 8 FEES & SERVICES	6,632,001	6,632,001	0
SR - WIA FEES & SERVICES	2,936,340	2,652,026	284,314
TOTAL	20,535,082	20,009,556	525,526

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
WESTERN PIEDMONT COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
POLICY BOARD**

MEETING DATE: November 23, 2021

SUBJECT: Nominating Committee Report

PRESENTER: Kitty Barnes, Nominating Committee Chair

ATTACHMENTS: None

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Each year, the Board Chair appoints a nominating committee for the purpose of recommending persons for the Officers, Executive Committee and Appointed Delegates of the Policy Board. Chair Floyd appointed Wayne Abele (Burke County), Larry Chapman (Hudson), Kitty Barnes (Catawba County) and George Holleman (Taylorsville) to serve as members of the 2020 Nominating Committee.

Ms. Barnes, Committee Chair will present the recommendations from the Nominating Committee listed below:

Position	Recommendation	Term Ends
Chair	Jill Patton	Dec. 2022
Vice Chair	Joe Gibbons	Dec. 2022
Secretary	Larry Chapman	Dec. 2022
Treasurer	George Holleman	Dec. 2022
Immediate Past Chair	Bob Floyd	Dec. 2022
Executive Committee At-Large	Wayne Abele	Dec. 2022
Executive Committee At-Large	Kitty Barnes	Dec. 2022
Executive Committee At-Large	Marla Thompson	Dec. 2022
Executive Committee At-Large	Larry Yoder	Dec. 2022
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Malla Vue	Dec. 2023
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Jeanna Price	Dec. 2023
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Randy Burns	Dec. 2023
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Amparo Alfaro	Dec. 2022
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Erisha Lipford	Dec. 2022
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Tommy Luckadoo	Dec. 2022
Policy Board Appointed Delegate	Helen Chestnut	Dec. 2022
Forum Representative	Wayne Abele	Dec. 2022
Alternate Forum Representative	Kitty Barnes	Dec. 2022

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

The Board is requested to elect the Officers, Executive Committee members, and Appointed Delegates for 2022.

Suggested Motion:

I move that the Board approve the nominations as presented by the Nominating Committee.

Executive Director's Report

November 23rd, 2021

This report is intended to provide details about current operations of the WPCOG and issues that may be of interest to board members. The updates are grouped according to each department.

Administration

- Community and Regional Planning Director Alison Adams and Aging Specialist Sarah Stamey were named Top 10 Professionals Under 40 for the region. We are fortunate to have so many hard-working and talented staff.
- WPCOG is monitoring and examining the state budget. The latest draft includes provisions to fund COGs in NC to assist local governments with technical assistance for disaster funding (\$6 million) and American Rescue Plan funding (\$10 million). In addition, the budget includes \$465,000 for trail planning and development in **Burke County, Rhodhiss, and Hildebran** to connect a trail from **Hickory** to **Morganton**. The budget also includes \$4.5 million allocated to the WPCOG for capital improvements. It is assumed this is the provision for broadband and/or rail improvements along the **Caldwell County** rail line.
- Staff are exploring the feasibility of expanding the WPCOG office to accommodate the growth of the organization. We have only a few vacant offices for new positions. A conceptual plan will be presented at a later date for board consideration.
- Staff appreciates the board's participation and guidance for the development of a strategic plan. SERDI is finalizing the assessment report and staff are working on the next step, a short document that will serve as the strategic plan.
- WPCOG is assisting the **City of Conover** with their manager search. Applications are due by November 26th.
- WPCOG is also assisting the **Town of Long View** with the search for a new town clerk/PIO. Interviews should be scheduled within the next few weeks.
- WPCOG completed the **Caldwell County** search for a new County Manager. Thank you to the county for the partnership and congratulations to Donald Duncan for his appointment.
- Applications are being accepted for an Information Technology Manager at the WPCOG. Long-time WPCOG employee P. Scott Miller announced his retirement effective 1/1/2022. A retirement reception in his honor is planned for Wednesday, December 8th from 4-6 pm at the office of WPCOG. Please join us.
- WPCOG will be closed for Thanksgiving on November 25 & 26; closed for Christmas on December 23, 24 & 27; closed in observation of New Year's on December 31.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

- The AAA has begun providing work under the Atrium Wake Forest Baptist Health Dementia-Care contract. We received 5 caregiver referrals in October.
- The AAA received the notice for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funds from the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services for a total of \$1,651,663 in funding to be expended by 9/30/24.

\$644,759 of that is pass through for nutrition providers to expand services in the region. Plans are being developed for best utilization for the funds to help older adults in the region.

- AAA staff met with Catawba Public Health staff to discuss investing ARP funds into Community Health Workers targeting older adults in underserved areas of Catawba County.
- AAA Staff received \$1,100 in donations to support the Alzheimer's Association and staff participated in the Walk To End Alzheimer's.
- AAA hosted a quarterly meeting (hybrid) with regional aging service providers. A program was presented by AAA staff on in-depth overview of Dementia.
- AAA ombudsman staff provided information and outreach to long-term care facilities in the region on residents' rights.
- AAA continues to provide outreach in the community for vaccines for homebound individuals.
- Our family caregiver support specialist, Mary Mitchell, is participating in Leadership Catawba.
- The AAA has filled the vacancy for Senior Tar Heel Legislature in Catawba County.
- The AAA has filled the vacancy for Regional Aging Advisory Committee representative for Burke County and still has a vacancy to be filled in Alexander.

Community & Economic Development (CED)

- Community and Economic Development staff are currently administering eighty (80) grants for local governments.
- Forty-one (41) housing rehabilitations projects are underway in October.
- Eighteen (18) homeowners received foreclosure prevention counseling in September.
- 6 BRIC applications submitted in September have been selected to submit a formal applications to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) in November. WPCOG staff are working with: **Newton, Taylorsville, Lenoir (2), Sawmills, and Rhodhiss**. BRIC is the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant Program.
- Three Building Reuse grants were funded by the NC Commerce in October totaling \$959,000. **Claremont** received \$375,000 for WestRock Converting. The company will invest \$16M and create 50 new full-time jobs. **Claremont** also received \$500,000 to assist Poppelmann Plastics who will invest \$8M and create 80 new full-time jobs. **Long View** received an \$84,000 grant to assist ClearElectric Motor Services. The business is investing \$96,450 and creating 12 new full-time jobs.
- WPCOG submitted a Build Back Better Challenge application to the Economic Development Administration in October. The application is part of a two-phase competition with \$1 billion in grant funding available to help local economies build resilience in the face of the coronavirus pandemic and other economic disruptions. Our regional application included partnerships with local governments, non-profits and manufacturers focusing on innovation in the textile and furniture supply chains. Nationally, the EDA received 529 applications with Phase 1 proposals, and the agency expects to provide \$500,000 in grant funding with no required match to 50-60 communities across the U.S. If awarded, Phase I funds will be used to develop larger and more detailed Phase 2 proposals. Phase 2 proposals will be due in March 2022, and awards will range from \$25 million to \$100 million in grant funding.

Community & Regional Planning

Planning:

- Staff met and worked with the Economic Development Administration. Work for the NC Foothills Experience Team includes polishing the logo for the project, listing items to include and any further work needed, and identifying additional stakeholders to approach.
- Staff continue to explore and research the possibility of establishing a pre-trial release program for low-risk defendants in an effort to lower county jail costs.
- Held the second comprehensive planning advisory meeting for **Gamewell**. The second comprehensive planning meetings for **Cajah's Mountain** and **Hudson** is anticipated to occur in mid-November.
- Staff are preparing for the establishment of committees by **Catawba County**, **Long View**, **Maiden**, and **Hildebran** to begin the planning process for their comprehensive or land use plans.
- **Cedar Rock** contracted with the WPCOG to complete a land use plan beginning in January 2022.
- Land use collection for the **Catawba County** Comprehensive Plan is in process.
- The **Town of Catawba**, **Cajah's Mountain**, **Claremont**, and **Cedar Rock** zoning ordinance re-writes are underway.
- The Planning Division is providing day-to-day technical planning services to 10 local governments.

Natural Resources:

- Staff led cleanup events in **Sawmills** and **Lenoir** to meet the required public participation requirements for Phase II stormwater. We conducted stormwater outreach events in **Valdese** and **Hickory**.
- Outfall inspections are being completed for municipalities that have already been mapped.
- Bid packages were distributed for the **Alexander County** Emergency Watershed Protection grant. Only one bid was received. The project was re-bid until November 18th.
- WPCOG hosted the Western North Carolina Water Quality Conference in which multiple presentations focused on stormwater.
- Stormwater control measures and good housekeeping inspections are underway in all participating municipalities.
- Staff participated as a panel speaker for the Lake James Association Conference.

Data and GIS Center:

- Completed a draft of the Fall 2021 Economic Indicators Newsletters.
- Gave a State of the Workforce demographic/employment data presentation to **Catawba Valley Community College**.
- Held first Industry Growth Analysis (IGA) project meeting.
- Completed a data request for Hickory Daily Record concerning changes to the working-age population for **Maiden**.
- Gave demographic and county of origin data to **Western Piedmont Community College** to help with a grant application.
- Assisted developers obtain **Conover** housing data information.
- General ArcGIS Online and mapping support for **Claremont** and **Town of Catawba**.
- Presented the **Long View** redistricting analysis and recommendations at Town Council Meeting.
- Generated maps for **Carolina Textile District** EDA grant application.

- Continue to work on regional municipal stormwater mapping collected 3,180 stormwater features for the regional stormwater mapping project.

Compliance:

- 109 new code enforcement cases opened within the last month.
- Monthly reports were issued to all local governments.

Transportation:

- Continued to promote the new 2050 Plan survey and launched version in Spanish.
- Staff held the first round of Comprehensive Transportation Plan meetings with **Lenoir**, **Morganton**, and **Newton**, and scheduled meetings with **Conover**, **Hickory**, and **Granite Falls**.
- Facilitated Greenway Service Planning Team to revise the Burke transit service scenario, set the Caldwell agenda for future transit, and we finalized the Catawba re-route project.
- Presented the risk of losing committed funding for area transportation projects to Catawba County Commissioners and WHKY Radio.
- Collaborated with NCDOT Highway Divisions on re-scoping of Strategic Transportation Investment projects.
- Facilitated Technical Coordinating Committee and Transportation Advisory Committee, including new safety targets and update on major project re-scoping efforts.

Finance

- Finance continues to administer financial services for **Town of Catawba** and **Caldwell Chamber**.
- Payroll services are being administered for the **Town of Hudson** for a temporary period of time.
- Workflow development and testing in the Microix budget module for WPCOG is in progress.
- Finance staff are currently testing the Microix payroll module for the **Town of Catawba**. The budget module has been successfully implemented and currently in use by WPCOG staff. Town management chose to delay the implementation of this software until a later date. There are minor workflow decisions that must be made by management to fully implement.
- FY21 audit for the **Town of Catawba** was completed. The auditor intends to present the FY21 audit report at the November council meeting.
- Abila software development is complete for the **Hickory-Conover Tourism Development Authority**. The Microix database has been built as well. Workflows for all Microix modules are currently being developed. WPCOG will begin providing financial services January 2022.

Regional Housing Authority (RHA)

- The RHA hired a part-time Housing Inspector due to the increase number of vouchers awarded for our region. He started his employment with us in October and works an average of 16 hours per week.
- The RHA began leasing the 75 additional awarded Mainstream Vouchers in March 2021. Currently, the RHA has a total of 246 available Mainstream Vouchers and 159 of those are leased.
- The RHA opened the waiting list for applications for Mainstream Vouchers ONLY November 1, 2021. The application period will remain open until we have a significant number of applicants to pull from to keep our Mainstream Vouchers leased.

- The RHA continues to process the applications for Mainstream Vouchers. The RHA has approximately 87 openings to fill using the MainStream Vouchers.
- The RHA began leasing the 10 new VASH-Veteran vouchers awarded in February 2021. The RHA has now leased three veterans with housing assistance and six other veterans have pending vouchers at this time as they continue to search for housing.
- The RHA has received 30 guaranteed Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) to house individuals and families who are 1) homeless, 2) at risk of homelessness, 3) fleeing, or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking or 4) recently homeless. The RHA was given the opportunity to ask for more and we requested a total of 200 EHV vouchers. To date, no more have been awarded. The RHA is working closely with the Continuum of Care and the shelter homes in our four county area to begin using these vouchers. The effective date for these vouchers was July 2021. Currently, the RHA has four EHV applicants that have completed the leasing process and we have issued 12 EHV vouchers. We have received approximately 8 other applications that are going through the eligibility process for a voucher. Applications continue to be received.
- The RHA is currently leased at maximum capacity (1,079) for the regular housing choice vouchers. The RHA continues ongoing leasing efforts for our special purposes program vouchers.

Workforce Development

- Our NCWorks Career Centers are continuing to host in-person job fairs again.
- The tightening labor market continues to be the focus and concern for employers. As more people retire and our out-migration slowly recovers, we are encouraging businesses to take a closer look at their internal culture/flex-hours/wages/training...etc. Advertising and recruiting has to happen beyond our four counties. Please check out this Indeed-Hiring Lab newsletter <https://www.hiringlab.org/2021/11/05/october-2021-jobs-report/>
- Workforce has also added a Labor Market dashboard to the website that is specific to the Western Piedmont region. This LMI information is provided and updated by NC Labor & Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) <https://www.wpcog.org/labor-market>
- NC Department of Commerce-LEAD created an Unemployment Insurance Claims Dashboard that can provide information by County, and Workforce Board, Sept 2021 numbers are now available: <https://bi.nc.gov/t/COM-LEAD/views/RegionalUIDashboard/RegionalUIDashboard?:isGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&embed=y>