

**Minutes**  
**Western Piedmont Council of Governments**  
**Bimonthly Policy Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday, May 25, 2021**  
**Conover Station Community Room, Conover, NC**

**Members Present:**

Bob Floyd, Jr., Chair  
Jill Patton, Vice-Chair  
Johnny Berry, Secretary  
George Holleman, Treasurer  
Barbara Pennell, Past Chair  
Chip Black, At-Large  
Wayne Abele, At-Large  
Joseph L. Gibbons, At-Large  
Kitty Barnes, At-Large  
Larry Yoder  
Johnnie Carswell, Alternate  
Ronnie Setzer  
Dale Sherrill  
Joie Fulbright  
Kyle Hayman, Alternate  
Dennis Anthony  
Dr. Caryl Burns  
Mike Smith, Alternate  
Larry Chapman  
Marla Thompson  
Trina Michael, Alternate  
Ronnie Thompson, Alternate  
Jerry Hodge  
Kendra Edwards, Alternate  
Gary McClure  
Amparo Alfaro  
Helen Chestnut  
Jeanna Price

**Local Government/Agency:**

Cedar Rock  
Hickory  
Connelly Springs  
Taylorsville  
Gamewell  
Valdese  
Burke County  
Lenoir  
Catawba County  
Alexander County  
Burke County  
Cajah's Mountain  
Claremont  
Conover  
Conover  
Drexel  
Granite Falls  
Hildebran  
Hudson  
Long View  
Maiden  
Morganton  
Newton  
Rhodiss  
Rutherford College  
Appointed  
Appointed  
Appointed

**Members Absent:**

James Weaver  
Mike Labrose  
Donald Robinson  
Sheila Perkins  
Keith Warren  
Erisha Lipford

Brookford  
Caldwell County  
Catawba  
Glen Alpine  
Sawmills  
Appointed

Randy Burns	Appointed
Tommy Luckadoo	Appointed
Malla Vue	Appointed

**Guests/Others Present:**

Donald Duncan, Conover  
Mary Carter, Gamewell  
Sherri Bradshaw, Drexel  
Randy Feierabend, Cahah's Mountain

**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  
Tina Miller, Director of Area Agency on Aging  
Stephanie Hanvey, Regional Housing Authority Director  
Jennifer Cannon, Community & Economic Development Administrator  
Mary Mitchell, Family Caregiver Support Specialist  
Wendy Johnson, Director of Workforce Development  
Alison Adams, Director of Community & Regional Planning  
Todd Stroup, GIS Analyst  
Anita Roberts, Regional Ombudsman/Aging Specialist  
Laurie Powell, Community & Economic Development Administrator  
Rick Oxford, Housing Program Manager  
Teresa Kinney, Senior Planner

**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 Conover for hosting the first in-person meeting since January of 2020. Conover Mayor Pro-Tem, Kyla Hayman welcomed the board to Conover.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting were considered. Mr. Joie Fulbright made a motion to approve minutes from the March 23, 2021 meeting and Mr. Wayne Abele offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

**Unfinished Business/Reports**

There was no unfinished business.

**New Business**

Employee Service Awards Recognition

Chair Floyd and Executive Director Anthony Starr recognized staff who had celebrated milestone service awards during both 2020 and 2021. The cancelation of the 2020 WPCOG Annual Meeting and virtual format of the 2021 WPCOG Annual Meeting did not allow for proper recognition of staff service awards. The following WPCOG employees celebrated milestone service years during 2020 and 2021.

<b>Employee</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>
Rick Oxford	35 Years
Laurie Powell	30 Years
Jennifer Cannon	20 Years
Anthony Starr	10 Years
May Mitchell	10 Years
Wendy Johnson	10 Years
Kim Duncan	10 Years
Jason Toney	5 Years
Sarah Stamey	5 Years
Erin Schotte	5 Years
Andrea Roper	5 Years
Anita Roberts	5 Years
Teresa Kinney	5 Years
Kala Guido	5 Years
Christina Franklin	5 Years
Ashley Bolick	5 Years

WIOA Plan Summary, Program Year 2021-2022

Workforce Development Board Director, Wendy Johnson presented the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Plan Summary for the program year 2021-2022. The WIOA requires each Workforce Development Board (WDB) to develop and submit, in partnership with the local chief elected official, a comprehensive four-year plan. The Four-Year Plan was last submitted in June 2020.

Annually, each WDB is to provide updates to the Comprehensive Four-Year Plan (PY 2020-24). The WIOA Program Year (PY) 2021 Plan is to provide current information and be effective July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 and will include all current local policies. The PY2021 Plan Summary must be made available for 30 days for public comment. The plan is located on the workforce website [www.westernpiedmontworks.org](http://www.westernpiedmontworks.org).

Staff requested that the board review and provide feedback of the WIOA Program Year 2021 plan as needed.

Section 8 Application Intake/Waiting List

Stephanie Hanvey, Regional Housing Authority Director provided an informational updated to the board concerning the Section 8 waiting list. The Regional Housing Authority's Section 8 Housing Program has exhausted its waiting list as of April 26, 2021. Staff would like to begin accepting new applications for

the rental housing assistance program so that a new list can be started. Notice will be published in the local newspapers the week of May 26th. Notice will also be published on the WPCOG's website and on social media beginning Wednesday, May 26, 2021. The Regional Housing Authority plans to accept new applications beginning Friday, June 4 through Friday, June 18, 2021. The goal is to be able to open the waiting list every year. This year we are accepting online application. Accommodations will be made for those who need it.

#### Essential Single Family Rehabilitation Policy Adoption

Sherry Long, Assistant Executive Director and Community & Economic Development Director presented the proposed 2021 Essential Single Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool (ESFRLP) Assistance Policy, Procurement & Disbursement Policy and the Four Factor Analysis Plan to the board for consideration. This Assistance Policy explains what the program requirements are and how the program will operate during the cycle of funding. The Procurement & Disbursement Policy is for procurement and disbursement guidelines. The Four Factor Analysis Plan is for reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access by persons with limited English proficiency. The funding agency for this program is the NC Housing Finance Agency.

Staff requests that the board review and approve the 2021 Essential Single Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool Assistance Policy, Procurement & Disbursement Policy and the Four Factor Analysis Plan for Burke and Iredell County.

Ms. Kitty Barnes made a motion that the Board approve the ESFRLP'21 Assistance Policy, the Procurement & Disbursement Policy and the Four Factor Analysis Plan for Burke and Iredell County as proposed. Ms. Jill Patton offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget

Ms. Andrea Roper, Finance Director, presented the 7th Amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget reflecting a total budget of \$22,343,295 and an operating budget of \$7,774,609 which represents an increase of \$808,315 from the March 23, 2021 budget amendment.

The 7th amendment of the 2020-2021 Budget includes:

- A decrease of \$16,567 in Transportation due to a change in project work duties.
- Environmental Protection decreased \$18,001 to better reflect actual expenses.
- Community and Regional Planning decreased \$33,154 due to personnel changes and project work duties.
- Economic Development increased \$42,283 due to an increase in EDA CARES anticipated expenses.
- Prior Year Indirect Funds increased \$13,968 to account for a new finance position and various year-end expenses.
- Prior Year Fringe Funds increased \$131,861 to adjust for increased compensated absence costs and an increased contribution to the OPEB Trust.
- Salaries decreased \$61,018 due to personnel changes and an increase in compensated absences.

- Supplies increased due to anticipated purchases for the Aging CARES Act funding.
- Capital Outlay-Equipment increased \$15,742 due to the anticipated purchase of two new IT servers.
- Contingency increased \$55,769 due to the decrease in chargeable salaries, fringe & indirect.
- OPEB Trust Allocation increased \$47,960 due to the allocation of prior year fringe funds.
- Special Revenue Fund – Section 8 increased to reflect anticipated increases in voucher payment expenses and account for additional administration expenses funded by the CARES Act.
- All other changes to the expenditure lines reflect normal program needs.

Staff requested that the Policy Board review and approve the seventh amendment of the 2020-2021 budget.

Mr. Chip Black made a motion that the Policy Board approve the seventh amendment of the 2020-2021 budget as presented. Mr. Larry Chapman offered a second. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### FY 21-22 Budget Hearing & Adoption

Chair Floyd asked if there was a motion that the Policy Board open a public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed 2021-2022 budget.

Ms. Jill Patton made a motion that the Board open the public hearing. Mr. Johnny Berry offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director, Anthony Starr presented the 2nd Reading of the 2021-2022 Budget. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of the 2021-2022 budget reflects a total budget of \$19,388,080 and an operating budget of \$6,896,879 which represents an increase of the total budget from the March 23rd, 2021 budget amendment of approximately .64% or \$124,285.

The 2nd Reading of the 2021-2022 Budget includes:

- 63 full and part-time staff positions.
- WPCOG dues rate increased by \$.01 per capita plus dues increases for the MPO as approved by the Board in January.
- Financial administration services for one local government and one local non-profit.
- Planning administration services for 7 local governments.
- Planning project services for 7 local governments.
- Code enforcement services for 8 local governments.
- The Planning Department expects to execute several new contracts for FY22 that will warrant the creation of at least one, possibly two, new positions.
- Administration of several new community & economic development projects (building reuse, infrastructure, economic development, etc.).
- Regional Public Housing received Emergency Housing Voucher funding as authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. One new full-time position will be added to cover the additional duties generated by the added vouchers.

- The Aging budget increased \$64,474 due to additional supplemental administration funding. One part-time position has been created to help with departmental duties.
- WIOA funding was reduced, resulting in an \$80,335 decrease.
- A group insurance increase (\$131,335) reflecting a projected health insurance increase of 49%. We usually do not receive quotes until May or early June for FY22 and this number will be adjusted at that time. We anticipate this increase will be less than the initial rate quoted at 49%. With this increase, our health benefit costs will remain at or below the average of local governments in North Carolina.
- Contingency decreased \$24,061 due to those funds being utilized in the FY 21-22 budget.
- OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Trust allocation decreased \$39,731 due to the expected increase in retirement and group insurance. This allocation may increase with the availability of funds.
- Aging Special Revenue Fund increased \$70,944 due to additional funding and remaining CARES funding that will not be spent in FY21.
- WIOA Special Revenue Fund decreased \$305,891 due to the reduction in administration funding and programmatic funding.
- Regional Public Housing Special Revenue Fund increased \$146,796 due to the additional funding authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.
- The proposed budget includes approximately \$46,414 in anticipated contracts for FY22. This amount is \$91,010 lower than the FY21 anticipated contracts amount at this time last year. The unfunded areas at this point are within the Community & Economic Development Department.
- Fund Balance Appropriated increased \$54,940, due to projects started in FY21, not completed, and carried over to FY22. The entire appropriation of \$194,516 reflects funds carried forward from FY21 for unfinished projects and services.
- Capital Reserve Fund increased \$130,328 due to a transfer from the General Fund and Allocated Fund Balance. These funds are for anticipated capital improvements as identified.

The Chair asked for comments. There were no comments made from the public.

Mr. Larry Yoder made a motion that the Board close the public hearing. Mr. Larry Chapman offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Kitty Barnes made a motion that the Board approve the budget ordinance and FY2021-2022 Budget as presented. Mr. Larry Chapman offered a second. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Staff Updates

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

- Mark your calendars for Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> (1-5pm) for the Virtual training, *13 Ways to Kill Your Community*. Registration is now open and the cost is \$50 per person. Please consider your participation and encourage your colleagues and staff with your local government to register. Registration is available on the WPCOG website.

- WPCOG completed assistance for the **Town of Catawba** in their search for a new Town Manager. Elizabeth Krige began work earlier this month.
- Staff facilitated the **City of Hickory** Council Retreat.
- As previously mentioned, the WPCOG will begin strategic assessment and planning process soon. The process will use surveys, focus group meetings, stakeholder interviews and guidance from the Policy Board to assess any weaknesses of the WPCOG and identify opportunities to enhance our role and service within the region. The process will begin in June or July and the Policy Board will participate in a discussion with the consultant in September. The SouthEast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) is conducting the process.
- Staff are also in the process of assisting **Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority/Greenway** and **Caldwell County** with their Executive Director and County Manager searches.
- We are receiving \$170,077 in July for Federal Supplemental Nutrition funding that will be pass through to nutrition providers in each county. \$18,898 will be allocated to AAA for administrative support of these funds. No match required.
- Community and Economic Development staff are currently administering seventy-five (75) grants for local governments.
- The **City of Lenoir** received notification from the Department of Housing and Urban Development that the Unifour HOME Consortium has been awarded \$4,182,773 in HOME American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding. Projects funded with ARP should be designed to meet the needs of people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, including through development of affordable housing, tenant-based rental assistance, supportive services, and acquisition and development of non-congregate shelter units. All funds must be spent by 2030.
- The RHA has received notice that we have been selected to receive 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 has also been given the opportunity to request additional EHVS and plans to ask for a total of 200. These vouchers are due to be effective in July 2021.
- Staff facilitated **Rutherford College's** Planning Board Retreat.
- Board staff are still doing a great job helping create Virtual Job Fairs for employers. Virtual workshops are planned monthly and job fairs as needed/requested. We are partnering with the City of Hickory to post our workshops and job fair information on their website and in their newsletters. Other local governments are invited to post this info on their websites and in newsletters.

#### Adjournment

Chair Floyd reminded the board of the next meeting scheduled for July 27, 2021 and adjourned the meeting at 7:26 pm.