

**OREGON CASCADES WEST COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES  
January 19, 2017**

**MEMBERS:** Mayor Sharon Konopa, Albany; Commissioner Anne Schuster, Benton County; Commissioner Bill Hall, Lincoln City; Mayor Biff Traber, Corvallis; Councilor Bob Elliott, Lebanon; Councilor Dann Cutter, Waldport; Mayor Jim Lepin, Millersburg; Councilor Dean Sawyer, Newport; Councilor Debbie Nuber, Scio; Councilor Sarah Puls, Harrisburg; Mayor Marjean Cline, Halsey; Councilor Greg Chamberlain, Halsey; and Mayor Don Ware, Brownsville.

**STAFF:** Executive Director Fred Abousleman; Deputy Director Lydia George; Finance Director Sue Forty; Senior and Disability Services (SDS) Director Dave Toler; Community and Economic Development (CED) Director Phil Warnock; Technology Services Manager Brian Chytka; Senior Accountant Janet Cline; Communications Consultant Lindsey Riley; and Administrative Assistant Jennifer Kelley.

**VIDEO:** Mayor Billie Jo Smith, Toledo; and Councilor Max Glenn, Yachats.

**VISITORS:** Mike Volpe, Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC) Vice Chair; Jackie Mikalonis, Regional Solutions Coordinator, Governor's Office; and Cathy Savage, Home Care Worker.

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order by Chair Sharon Konopa at 3:08 p.m. on January 19, 2017 at the Cascades West Center in Albany, Oregon.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Executive Director Fred Abousleman welcomed new and current Board Members, and introduced the *Board Member Orientation Packets* as a reference guide for Board members.

**2. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**3. Consent Calendar**

Chair Konopa requested that item 3b, the OCWCOG Board of Directors 2017 Meeting Schedule, be removed from the Consent Calendar for future discussion.

Mayor Biff Traber motioned to approve the Consent Calendar items 3a and 3c, the December 1, 2016 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, and the Financial Update for the period of July through November 2016. Commissioner Bill Hall seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Konopa stated that some Board members have time conflicts with the Board of Directors Meeting schedules, and asked whether the Board would be open to moving the Board Meetings to 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. rather than 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Board members agreed that this time would be better for schedules.

Mayor Traber motioned to approve Consent Item 3b, Board of Directors Meeting Schedule with the change in meeting times to 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.; Commissioner Hall seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**4. Election of OCWCOG Officers**

Chair Konopa explained the process for electing OCWCOG officers per the OCWCOG Bylaws. She stated that current Officers have agreed to maintain their position, if elected by the Board. There were no other nominations from the floor.

Commissioner Hall motioned to reelect existing officers – Chair Sharon Konopa, Vice-Chair Anne Schuster, and Treasurer Bill Hall; Councilor Dann Cutter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**5. Review of Executive Director's Accomplishments and Goals, and Employment Agreement**

Executive Director Abousleman told the Board that his current three-year Employment Agreement is ending this month.

Executive Director Abousleman discussed his goals and accomplishments, specifically to make OCWCOG a regional leader. He stated that in his three years with OCWCOG, the organization has become an important regional planning organization. Future goals include becoming more visible, proactive, supportive, and engaged within the Region. Executive Director Abousleman stated that although he has had challenges, he has met most of his goals and is still assessing where improvements can be made.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG has a positive relationship with staff, including the Union, and thanked Deputy Director Lydia George for helping to maintain this relationship.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that with potential budget changes over the next four years, his goal is for OCWCOG to be flexible, effective, and relevant; additionally, he wants to keep working on adding funding sources to OCWCOG programs.

Mayor Don Ware remarked that in Executive Director Abousleman's written goals, addressing the *Senior Meals Program* deficit is noted.

Executive Director Abousleman reminded the Board that Adult Protective Services (APS) just had funding returned from the State, after substantial cuts to APS budgets following restructuring of criteria. APS got funding returned due to meeting and exceeding performance benchmarks.

**6. Executive Session**

The Board adjourned into Executive Session at 3:24 p.m., to discuss the Executive Director's Employment Agreement under ORS 192.660 (i).

**7. Reconvene into Regular Session**

The Board reconvened into regular session at 3:35 p.m.

The Board of Directors agreed to enter a three-year contract with Executive Director Abousleman that will begin March 1, 2017 through December 31, 2019. Section 3A has been revised to allow for a twelve-month salary for termination without cause. No other changes in salary or benefits were made.

Commissioner Hall motioned to approve the Executive Director's Employment Agreement as proposed; Mayor Marjean Cline seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**8. FY2016-2017 Dues**

Executive Director Abousleman explained to the Board that dues are tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and rise and fall with population. Dues are used to match funds for programs such as Medicaid, transportation, or various other programs. No dues are used for administrative expenses.

Mayor Konopa asked whether new spreadsheets had been run to reflect what the Finance Committee had proposed. New dues charts were passed out.

Executive Director Abousleman reminded the Board that at the last meeting, he had proposed starting a *Special Projects Fund (Fund)* for projects of regional significance. This conversation had stemmed from the discussion on the Total Solar Eclipse happening in August. Executive Director Abousleman reminded the Board that dues are not used for Board projects. Executive Director Abousleman asked Councilor Cutter to explain the dues proposal.

Councilor Cutter explained that rather than a substantial one-time increase, the Finance Committee recommended dividing the dues increase into two steps, as the idea for the *Special Projects Fund* was favorable overall, but a large increase could be unpalatable for certain jurisdictions.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that member dues need approval regardless of which option is selected. Member dues are calculated based on population for each jurisdiction. The Finance Committee has recommended a dues increase of 6.7% to accommodate the 1.7% Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase, plus an additional 5% for the *Fund*.

Mayor Jim Lepin asked what kinds of projects this fund would be applied toward. Mayor Traber reminded the Board that at previous meetings, discussions had occurred regarding lack of housing at different income levels. A potential project could be working with all member governments to collect information. Mayor Lepin asked whether funds are needed for a project like that. Councilor Cutter stated that yes, funds are needed for staff time and coordination, and reminded the Board that they will have control over the funds, not OCWCOG.

Chair Konopa told the Board that they are recommending adopting the increase now, as jurisdictions need to have it in their budgets. Chair Konopa suggested that the *Fund* would likely benefit smaller communities more than larger jurisdictions such as Albany, as larger communities are more likely to have budgets for projects. Chair Konopa suggested another project could be regional standards for senior housing.

Commissioner Hall suggested disaster planning as another potential project, such as planning for a Cascadia event.

Mayor Marjean Cline stated that earthquake preparedness is high on her list of priorities. CED Director Phil Warnock replied that CED has submitted an application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for earthquake preparedness, but the grant needs seed money to provide a match in funds. Community partners have agreed to match funds for the grant. However, the Region still needs proactive solutions for regional disaster preparedness.

Executive Director Abousleman suggested regional branding and research as possible areas of focus for projects, and emphasized that projects would be driven by Board members. Projects would not necessarily need to be carried out by OCWCOG; they could be contracted to other agencies.

Chair Konopa stated the need for long-term, supportive housing for people with mental disabilities, in a format that is regionalized so all communities are contributing.

Mayor Lepin stated that Millersburg needs an audit of land use planning processes, and suggested the need regionally as well.

Chair Konopa stated that the 5% additional dues increase will start the building of the *Fund* for these projects.

Commissioner Hall suggested that with the dues increase letter that generally goes out to jurisdictions, Chair Konopa could cosign with Executive Director Abousleman, explaining the *Special Projects Fund*, and the Board of Directors' strong endorsement. Commissioner Hall also suggested explaining key components of the concept, such as Board control, as well as the emphasis on regional priorities and impacts.

Commissioner Schuster stated that this is relatively little money for some of these projects, and questioned whether OCWCOG could do some of these projects with this level of funding. Executive Director Abousleman suggested that one approach could be to use the *Fund* as seed money to gain matched grants of community partner support.

Mayor Lepin stated that some smaller jurisdictions will still have problems with the additional dues increase, as their budgets are exceptionally tight. Commissioner Hall stated that this would be the purpose of an explanatory letter.

Councilor Cutter motioned to approve the dues rate for FY2017-2018 as proposed. Motion seconded by Councilor Bob Elliott, which passed unanimously.

## **9. OCWCOG Annual Dinner**

Executive Director Abousleman suggested to the Board the idea of hosting an Annual Dinner, and explained that we are the only Council of Governments in Oregon that does not currently hold an event like this. Executive Director Abousleman explained that the Annual Dinner could be a multi-purpose event to celebrate the Region, give awards, celebrate OCWCOG successes, provide a *State of the Region* address, and act as a fundraiser for the *Meals on Wheels* program. The Annual Dinner could operate via a sponsorship model, with sponsors donating \$5,000 for a table at the event; Barker-Uerlings Insurance has already committed to a sponsorship.

Executive Director Abousleman suggested that the Annual Dinner could rotate between the three counties OCWCOG serves, and that it would be held toward the end of this year

(2017). Executive Director Abousleman stated that to not compete with other events, the Dinner could also be held at the beginning of 2018, with awards being for the previous year.

Commissioner Schuster questioned whether the purpose of the Annual Dinner would be as an awards dinner with awareness building, or as a fundraiser, as these two types of events have differing approaches. Councilor Cutter suggested that it could be both.

Executive Director Abousleman suggested that the first event would be centrally located in Benton County. Executive Director Abousleman stated that support will be needed in identifying community interest in sponsorships, as well as award nominations and invitations. The event could be open to the community or by invitation only.

Mayor Ware stated that he would like to see recognition of people OCWCOG serves, rather than elected officials. Executive Director Abousleman stated that the benefit to recognizing legislators is that it draws them to your event.

Chair Konopa stated that there seemed to be a consensus that the Annual Dinner planning should proceed.

#### **10. SSAC/DSAC Issues and Advocacy Committee Legislative Outreach**

SDS Director Dave Toler reminded the Board that the Senior Services Advisory Committee (SSAC) and Disability Services Advisory Committee (DSAC) meet to provide advocacy for their focus populations. Both SSAC and DSAC have put forth a letter to legislators to share information before State Budgets are finalized. The purpose of the letter is to share information about *Oregon Project Independence* (OPI), which is currently in the budget to be cut entirely. OPI serves a couple hundred people in our area. The OPI program for people 60 and older stands to get a 75% reduction. These programs save taxpayers money by providing around 20 hours of in-home service per month, allowing seniors and people with disabilities to stay in their homes, rather than be in more costly programs, such as Medicaid.

Commissioner Hall asked how many people are in OPI per county. SDS Director Toler stated that closer to 200 people per county are in the program.

Mayor Traber asked how many of those are in Corvallis. SDS Director Toler stated that he was not certain of that number, but could provide it later. Mayor Traber stated that the program is cost-effective, and that it would be good to present to legislators.

Executive Director Abousleman reminded the Board that because the SSAC/DSAC letter is coming from the Committees on behalf of OCWCOG, the Board must approve it.

DSAC Vice-Chair Mike Volpe stated that OPI is a very good prevention program, preventing the decline of health and quality of life. DSAC Vice-Chair Volpe stated that the program has no federally matched funds.

Mayor Ware motioned to approve the DSAC/SSAC Issues and Advocacy Committee moving forward with their Legislative Outreach as proposed; Commissioner Hall seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Smith suggested including stories of individuals impacted by this legislation as a part of outreach. SDS Director Toler stated that the SSAC and DSAC are currently interviewing OPI clients to generate these stories.

Councilor Cutter stated that a good approach to outreach would be to point out that since this program is cost-saving, there is a cost increase hidden behind the cut from the budget. Councilor Cutter suggested calculating what that actual increase would be. SDS Director Toler stated that they are in the process of calculating that currently.

#### **11. Program Update Question and Answers**

Chair Konopa asked whether there will be cuts in service to SDS.

SDS Director Toler stated that Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) are implementing changes in eligibility requirements for long-term care. This change will impact a projected 5-6% of the current caseload, to which long-term care services will no longer be available. Estimates are that 550 people in our Region that are currently in community-based facilities, such as assisted living or adult foster care, should discontinue services - that means losing their housing. Many of these people will continue to need care, and will not have any viable housing options.

Chair Konopa asked whether this only impacts seniors if their needs have changed or improved. SDS Director Toler said no, the guidelines are changing, so people that were previously eligible will now no longer be, even if their needs have remained.

CED Director Warnock stated that budget estimates for economic development and transportation have been varying. CED's Lending Program made its first loan for the year, to Northwest Winds Kite Store in Lincoln City.

Executive Director Abousleman reminded the Board that OCWCOG's Lending Program runs seven revolving loan programs for small businesses.

CED Director Warnock stated that three loans have been paid off recently, indicating that loans are being given to viable, productive companies. Traditional bankers are not wanting to partner on loan programs as much lately. Businesses have been reaching out for lending though, and we can provide loan counseling for available programs. The lending program can help businesses navigate business loans to determine available programs of which they may not have been previously aware, such as United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grants.

CED Director Warnock discussed more details of the FEMA grant application, stating that the grant is for planning activities that have never happened previously in this format, such as economic recovery post-disaster. CED is hoping to hear back from FEMA regarding phase two of the project in late-winter. CED Director Warnock stated that an application submitted previously to Linn County regarding brownfield sites was not successful, however the application has been refined, and was resubmitted in December. It is expected that this year's application will be successful in gaining funding.

*Commissioner Bill Hall left the meeting.*

CED Director Warnock stated that OCWCOG has signed an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) this week for the *Pedal Corvallis* program to expand onto the Oregon State University campus. This expansion should take place just prior to Spring Break. There is currently another IGA in the works with the City of Monroe for planning services, while they are undergoing a search for a City Manager.

Mayor Smith asked whether more information could be provided on the brownfield sites. CED Director Warnock stated that the report and application could be provided if requested.

## **12. Topics of Regional Interest**

Chair Konopa introduced last month's Topic of Regional Interest – the Total Solar Eclipse taking place in August. Chair Konopa reminded the Board that an estimated 400,000 people will be coming into the region for the event. Logistics of the event need to be organized, such as emergency response, transportation, etc.

Regional Solutions Coordinator Jackie Mikalonis told the Board that the Governor's Office is currently working with regions that will be impacted by the event. Ms. Mikalonis presented a slide showing the path of totality, or the Region in which the full eclipse will be visible. This path includes cities, but also public lands with no facilities. Ms. Mikalonis explained that it is important to many tourists to view the eclipse where it first hits land on a continent, which would be along the Oregon coast. However, the coastline is often foggy in the mornings, so the eclipse may not be visible at this location. This could cause people to travel inland, creating transportation issues.

The Governor's Office has been working with Oregon Emergency Management (OEM), and has organized meetings in Eastern Oregon regions to share information. Ms. Mikalonis stated that OEM meetings for this region occur the first two weeks of February, and the Governor's Office has requested one for the inner Willamette Valley, and one for the coastal region. Scheduling will be happening soon, and the OCWCOG Board of Directors can be added to the email list to be notified of the meeting.

Mayor Traber stated that *Visit Corvallis* has already begun organizing with local organizations, and it is important for city organizers to get connected to regional plans as well. The meeting that *Visit Corvallis* held with the Forest Service was eye-opening, as far as hearing potential risks presented by the event.

Mayor Cline stated that as many people are coming into the Region from outside Oregon or outside the U.S., they will not necessarily know that mornings on the Oregon coast are foggy. Additionally, there are other issues, as everyone will be entering the Region at the same time, exiting at the same time, and even getting meals around the same times.

Ms. Mikalonis stated that regions adjoining the path of totality are also booked, as people plan to get lodging nearby, and then commute into the path of totality for the event.

*Councilor Elliott left the meeting.*

Mayor Smith stated that safety should be a concern, as looking directly at the sun is not safe. Ms. Mikalonis said that is being considered in planning.

## **13. Other Business**

Chair Konopa stated that she and Mayor Traber have discussed holding regional Mayor meetings, like the OCWCOG-hosted City/County Manager/Administrator meetings. Chair Konopa asked whether there is any interest from other Mayors.

Mayor Traber stated that other Counties and Regions do this, and it could be helpful in discussing regional issues. Chair Konopa stated that frequency could be flexible. Mayor Smith stated that Lincoln County mayors meet every other month, but meetings are informal.

Mayor Lepin and Mayor Ware expressed interest in having Mayor Meetings. Mayor Cline suggested having the meetings quarterly. Mayor Smith stated that quarterly would be too often.

Chair Konopa suggested that Linn and Benton Counties could meet monthly, with a yearly meeting among all three counties. Chair Konopa suggested meeting before the legislative session ends.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG will develop and maintain an email list for invitations to a Mayor Meeting.

**14. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

*Minutes recorded by Jennifer Kelley.*