

**OREGON CASCADES WEST COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES  
February 23, 2017**

**MEMBERS:** Mayor Sharon Konopa, Albany; Commissioner Anne Schuster, Benton County; Mayor Biff Traber, Corvallis; Councilor Dann Cutter, Waldport; and Councilor Bob Elliott, Lebanon.

**STAFF:** Executive Director Fred Abousleman; Deputy Director Lydia George; Finance Director Sue Forty; Community and Economic Development (CED) Director Phil Warnock; Senior and Disability Services (SDS) Program Manager Randi Moore; Communications Consultant Lindsey Riley; and Administrative Assistant Jennifer Kelley.

The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments' (OCWCOG) Executive Committee Meeting was called to order by Chair Sharon Konopa at 9:13 am on February 23, 2017 at the Cascades West Center in Albany.

**1. Introductions**

Chair Konopa welcomed attendees and introductions were made.

**2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Councilor Bob Elliott motioned to approve the January 19, 2017 Special Executive Committee meeting minutes, Commissioner Anne Schuster seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**3. Review of the 2017-2020 Senior and Disability Services (SDS) Area Plan**

SDS Program Manager Randi Moore reminded the Committee of the Board of Directors' approval of the *2017-2020 Senior and Disability Services Area Plan (Plan)* at the September 15, 2016 meeting. The *Plan* was submitted to the State of Oregon in October. After submission, SDS underwent a revision process with the State, editing the document with updated goals, objectives, and policy clarifications. In January, the State of Oregon approved the *Plan*. There are not any significant changes from what the Board saw in September, as the State focuses more on bookkeeping, policy, and screening procedures, rather than on future projects.

Commissioner Schuster asked whether SDS is still able to do what it had hoped, considering revisions that were made. SDS Program Manager Moore stated that on occasion the State's identified goals are not necessarily in alignment with consumer priorities, the overall goals laid out in the *Plan* are still intact.

Commissioner Schuster asked for an example of State goals not aligning with consumer priorities. SDS Program Manager Moore stated that transportation is a large concern of OCWCOG consumers, specifically being able to get to medical appointments. The State's goals focus more on making sure that diverse and underserved populations are reached. While that is an important goal, it would be nice to focus on both, and hopefully in a way that they were tied together. SDS Program Manager Moore stated that there are community forums where consumers and advocates come together to discuss issues like food security, transportation, and housing. These are big issues, and if these issues could be addressed, reaching underserved populations would automatically happen.

Mayor Biff Traber stated that using focus groups to address needs doesn't necessarily incorporate the voices of underserved populations, and asked how connected SDS Program Manager Moore thinks that SDS is to these populations. SDS Program Manager Moore stated that the State's focus did cause SDS to reach out to more specific communities, such as the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities; and Latinx (a person of Latin American descent, used as a general neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina) communities. These communities also identified the same priorities – housing, food, and transportation.

Mayor Traber stated that because the State had different goals, additional outreach may have been appropriate. However, he stated that it is good to hear universal priorities among groups.

Executive Director Fred Abousleman said that it is not often that a detailed discussion on a *Plan* happens, and suggested that the Board use the *Plan* to either coordinate efforts for OCWCOG to take on programs not currently in our purview, or explore other avenues to getting community needs met. Executive Director Abousleman stated that approving a *Plan* with no goals outlined for accomplishing the priorities has no community benefit. Executive Director Abousleman requested the Executive Committee ask their communities to work on these problems, and to think about what OCWCOG can do to help.

Commissioner Schuster stated that Economic Development ties into these issues.

Chair Konopa stated that it is difficult to demand that someone receive behavioral or mental health support, and asked whether support is focused in-home. SDS Program Manager Moore said that SDS's focus on mental health support is mainly within the *Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives (PEARLS)*. This program reaches out to people that may not normally consider therapy or counseling, but may consider other things, like having someone come talk to them about how they could be more engaged so they don't feel so "down." The other focus of SDS on mental health is to increase services to those already within the Medicaid program.

Commissioner Schuster stated that some Oregon Health Plan (OHP) patients have access to home health clinics focusing on behavioral health. SDS Program Manager Moore stated that unfortunately, some people of an older generation will not pursue mental health services, even if recommended by a doctor. Some are more accepting of home visits, as it is perceived differently than going to a clinic.

CED Director Phil Warnock stated that possible ways to increase effectiveness of services by coordination among programs is being explored.

Commissioner Schuster stated that Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center is looking to expand their family and adult mental health facility, and that part of the expansion would be training more mental health workers.

#### **4. OCWCOG Program Updates**

Councilor Dann Cutter stated that OCWCOG's Board of Directors had previously discussed whether to add certain Board positions for non-elected members, but that concerns were expressed about these members not having accountability to their communities. For this reason, the Board had decided not to pursue having these additional positions. However, on the Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation (CWACT) Executive Board, one

member is from the private sector. Councilor Cutter asked whether the Board should insist that CWACT's Executive Board be only elected officials, to ensure public input and accountability.

CED Director Warnock stated that OCWCOG is the only Council of Governments (COG) to have an Area Commission on Transportation (ACT) as a standing committee of the Board of Directors. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) runs all other ACTs independently. ODOT has previously considered severing the COG relationship altogether. Additionally, CWACT Bylaws require that certain membership positions be open to appointed members. Each of these membership positions are also open to elected officials.

Councilor Cutter stated that he would like to encourage CWACT Executive Board members be elected officials, as they drive the direction of meetings. Mayor Traber asked who decides who is on the Executive Board. CED Director Warnock stated that members for the Executive Board are caucused by County, so each County has representation.

Mayor Traber asked how often this happens. CED Director Warnock said it is annually. Mayor Traber asked if appointments occur based on Fiscal Year. CED Director Warnock stated that it is by calendar year, but with staggered term expirations.

Mayor Traber asked what connections exist between the CWACT Board and our two regional Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). CED Director Warnock stated that there are coordination agreements, including presentations among groups.

Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that OCWCOG will put together a summary of CWACT Bylaws for the next Board Meeting, and begin adding Committee memberships to Agenda Packets going forward. Mayor Traber asked for more clarification going forward on how members are appointed to the Executive Boards of standing committees.

Chair Konopa asked whether CED Director Warnock had any information about potential reductions to public transportation funding. CED Director Warnock stated that he has heard of potential cuts to the Economic Development Administration (EDA), but nothing certain.

Chair Konopa stated that she had heard rumors of public transportation funding being removed to provide more funding for infrastructure. CED Director Warnock responded that he had not heard anything about those cuts.

Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that there is currently a discussion happening about a new infrastructure package, and that the President has stated that it would have a \$1 trillion budget, but there is nothing certain at this point.

Mayor Traber asked whether any word had been heard on potential federal funding impacts to states regarding immigration enforcement laws. Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that funding could potentially affect state budgets, and then cities potentially as a result. Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that OCWCOG is currently following the status of federal funding cuts.

Commissioner Schuster asked whether there are any updates on the State Budget. Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that the budget is not looking great, and that the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) is still a huge funding liability. Mayor Traber

stated that the State often focuses on their own budget, but not necessarily the budget consequences of smaller jurisdictions.

#### **5. March Full Board Agenda Items**

Chair Konopa asked for suggestions for a Topic of Regional Interest for the upcoming Board of Directors meeting. Executive Director Abousleman stated that previously, homelessness, the Solar Eclipse, transportation, and economic development had all been suggested topics.

Chair Konopa stated that the State is currently in Legislative Session, and that could be discussed.

Councilor Cutter stated that it is also budgeting season, and suggested a discussion regarding how OCWCOG might aid in a goal or long-term project that may not fit in to jurisdictional budgets.

Mayor Traber suggested discussing key budget issues that different sized cities are having, along with potential solutions.

Commissioner Schuster suggested having a round-table on economic development. Executive Director Abousleman asked whether there should be two topics. Commissioner Schuster stated that one topic is fine, and that economic development could be a topic for a future meeting.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that the OCWCOG Draft Budget would be presented at the next meeting, along with the Financial Audit and a presentation by the auditors.

Commissioner Schuster asked whether there would be an update on the Annual Dinner. Executive Director Abousleman stated that if the Board agreed, it could be put on the Agenda for March.

Executive Director Abousleman asked whether the Board wanted the *Special Projects Fund* discussed in the next meeting, or if more details should be discussed in Executive Committee with the intention of bringing a more specific plan to the Board. Councilor Cutter stated that having more discussion by the Executive Committee would be best.

The Executive Committee reviewed and approved the following Board of Directors meeting agenda for their March 16th meeting:

- 1. Consent Calendar**
  - a. Approval of previous Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
- 2. OCWCOG Special Projects Fund**
- 3. OCWCOG Annual Dinner**
- 4. Board Endorsement of the Older Americans Act Proclamation**
- 5. Program Update Question and Answers**
- 6. Topics of Regional Interest**
- 7. Other Business**
- 8. Adjournment**

## **6. Other Business**

Executive Director Abousleman stated that award categories for the Annual Dinner have been drafted, and reminded the Committee that one member had said there should be less emphasis on a person, and more emphasis on actions. Executive Director Abousleman discussed the tentative award categories with the Committee.

Mayor Traber asked when the Annual Dinner will be held. Communications Consultant Lindsey Riley responded that the two dates being considered are November 2nd and November 9th. The Committee agreed on November 2nd. Executive Director Abousleman stated that the event will be held at the CH2M Hill Alumni Center. The Board will be presented with costs, along with a suggested sponsorship program. The event will likely host approximately 200 guests, with seating reserved for Board members and community partners. Once reserved seating is assigned, the event will be open to the public. There will be a charge for meals.

Chair Konopa asked if there will be the potential for guests to stay overnight at a nearby hotel. Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG can consider holding rooms nearby at a reduced rate.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that a second draft has been created for the grant writer job description, as well as a development officer. Funding is still being explored for these positions. Executive Director Abousleman stated that CED Director Warnock has hired a Geographic Information System (GIS) Planner, Steve Lucker. GIS Planner Lucker is already well-connected within the community. Initially, he will be working with the City of Philomath, but he is available to assist other communities if needed.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that Solar Eclipse discussions have taken place with other states, State partners, and the congressional delegation. Recommendations include prefunding disaster funds, as the event could potentially be like a disaster in scope. OCWCOG has asked about Oregon and Idaho co-sponsoring an appropriations bill. Executive Director Abousleman expressed concern that no one has asked for discrete State funding.

Executive Director Abousleman told the Committee that he knows someone working currently in the Industry Council for Emergency Response Technologies (iCERT). iCERT represents the technological side of 9-1-1 response, regarding new technologies and efficiencies. Executive Director Abousleman suggested having a presentation at the July 20th Board Meeting, with the potential to invite other local partners, specifically emergency responders.

Chair Konopa stated that emergency responders in the Albany area are already having these conversations, and that she wouldn't want to overlap. Executive Director Abousleman stated that the idea is not to overlap, and that this presentation would be beneficial for innovation and funding. Mayor Traber stated that Corvallis has funding issues with this field, along with not having as much influence as the City thinks it should.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that his contact has experience worldwide, and is thus a good person with which to brainstorm ideas. Mayor Traber stated that the discussion seems like it could be worthwhile.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that Broadband USA is willing to provide help regarding how the region moves forward with broadband internet in communities. Currently OCWCOG is considering a grant for rural connectivity and last-mile broadband implementation. Executive Director Abousleman stated that the Council of Governments in College Station, Texas has gotten five rural counties to commit to broadband as a form of economic development.

Mayor Traber stated that it would be worthwhile to have a presentation for both the Board and City/County Managers/Administrators.

Executive Director Abousleman told the Committee that he met with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in Washington, DC. They are willing to match funds for a regional or local arts program. The NEA would like to see a regional assessment of arts opportunities, such as institutions, galleries, and theaters, to see linkages. The NEA suggested exploring links between art and health.

Executive Director Abousleman proposed that another project idea could include an art ride to farms, where participants would bicycle to a farm, and get a cooking demonstration to learn how to cook healthy meals with local ingredients. This would connect more rural areas and Counties as part of the art forum. Executive Director Abousleman stated that in Nebraska, struggling local farmers had artists put art in a field, reflecting local farmers and their goals. The farmers held art tours on their farm, could promote their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, and some eventually started making art themselves.

Mayor Traber stated that these are concepts that an assessment could help connect.

Mayor Traber stated that there is an upcoming forum with United States Congressman Peter DeFazio, Oregon's 4th District representative. However, there is some confusion as to the format of this event. Chair Konopa stated that she had also been invited, and that it was presented as a conversation among elected officials, but with the public invited. Mayor Traber stated that the forum is funded by Congressman DeFazio's campaign committee, rather than his district office. Executive Director Abousleman offered OCWCOG support in organizing events in the future.

## **7. Adjournment**

Chair Konopa adjourned the meeting at 10:37 am.

*Minutes Recorded by Jennifer Kelley.*