

**OREGON CASCADES WEST COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
July 20, 2017**

**MEMBERS:** Councilor Jeanni Cuthbertson, Monroe; Councilor Bob Elliott, Lebanon; Councilor Diane Gerson, Sweet Home; Mayor Sharon Konopa, Albany; Councilor Scott McPhee, Millersburg; Councilor Debbie Nuber, Scio; Commissioner Anne Schuster, Benton County; Mayor Biff Traber, Corvallis; Mayor Don Ware, Brownsville.

**STAFF:** Executive Director Fred Abousleman; Deputy Director Lydia George; Senior and Disability Services (SDS) Program Manager Randi Moore; SDS Program Manager Jennifer Moore; Finance Manager Janet Cline; Community and Economic Development (CED) Program Manager Brenda Mainord; Loan Officer Sandra Easdale; and Executive Assistant Jennifer Kelley.

**VISITORS:** Senior Services Advisory Council (SSAC) Vice-Chair Saleem Noorani; Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC) Vice-Chair Mike Volpe; and Home Care Worker Cathy Savage.

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

The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments' (OCWCOG) Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by Chair Sharon Konopa at 2:03 pm on July 20, 2017 at the Cascades West Center in Albany.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Konopa welcomed everyone, and introductions were made.

**2. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**3. Consent Calendar**

Chair Konopa asked SSAC Vice-Chair Saleem Noorani and DSAC Vice-Chair Mike Volpe for updates on the SSAC and DSAC.

DSAC Vice-Chair Volpe stated that both Advisory Councils have had an active legislative session, and that members of the Councils met with legislators regarding *Oregon Project Independence (OPI)* funding. These meetings were a success. In addition, funding for Medicaid programs have been funded at the same level as previously.

SSAC Vice-Chair Noorani stated that in order to provide the public with specific faces and stories of *OPI* recipients, members of SSAC and DSAC created a document including six profiles of *OPI* recipients. One profile was of DSAC Vice-Chair Volpe. The profiles were one page each, and included a photo, in order to humanize the *OPI* program to the public. The packet was sent to State legislators, as well as AARP®. SSAC Vice-Chair Noorani stated that AARP was able to reach State legislators directly, which potentially had an impact on funding levels, as funding for *OPI* increased slightly, rather than being cut.

Councilor Debbie Nuber stated that she had first-hand experience with how important it is for people to be able to stay in their home, as she had been a caretaker for her mother in her home, so that she would not have to move.

SSAC Vice-Chair Noorani stated that for every dollar spent on *OPI*, three to four dollars is saved, as *OPI* recipients are prevented from using more expensive Medicaid services.

Executive Director Fred Abousleman clarified that *OPI* has received cuts somewhere between 25% and level funding, not an increase.

DSAC Vice-Chair Volpe stated that State funding for *OPI* included the *OPI Pilot* for younger people with disabilities.

Mayor Don Ware motioned to approve the Consent Calendar, Councilor Diane Gerson seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Items presented and approved on the Consent Calendar included:

- a. Approval of previous Board of Directors Meeting Minutes,
- b. Approval of SSAC and DSAC Elected Leadership and Membership Renewals, and
- c. Financial Update for the period of July 2016 – May 2017.

#### **4. OCWCOG Special Projects Fund**

Executive Director Abousleman reminded the Board that they had previously approved a *Special Projects Fund (Fund)*, a Board-directed fund for special projects of regional significance. Executive Director Abousleman stated that at time of meeting, the *Fund* contained approximately \$15,000, but that it will grow over time.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that on the advice of the OCWCOG Executive Committee, guidelines for application had been modified slightly. He added that at the request of the Executive Committee, an attempt was made to clarify guidelines so that there would be less denial of projects during the review process. It was also stated that entities or individuals outside of the Board could apply, as long as they were applying through a Board member.

Commissioner Anne Schuster asked what timeframes were decided for applications and payouts. Executive Director Abousleman stated that per Executive Committee Minutes from the June 22nd meeting, applications would be reviewed biannually.

Councilor Nuber asked for an example of a project that would meet application requirements. Chair Konopa stated that the *Fund* could provide matching dollars for a project of regional significance, for example a solid sewage waste management study. Executive Director Abousleman added suggestions of tourism projects, or code compliance studies.

Mayor Biff Traber stated that “regional” could mean sub-regions, meaning multiple entities or jurisdictions with similar interests, and not necessarily all jurisdictions within Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that the *Fund* does not need to be opened for applications immediately, but that funds could continue to build.

Councilor Scott McPhee asked whether the funds would build at approximately \$15,000 per year. Executive Director Abousleman stated that per Board decision, member contributions

double in the next Fiscal Year (FY), so the *Fund* will increase by \$30,000 with the next dues cycle, and increase at that rate each FY thereafter.

Commissioner Schuster asked how funds could build more quickly. Executive Director Abousleman replied that the *Fund* could also be used as match dollars for projects, in order to provide greater value.

Commissioner Schuster suggested letting the *Fund* grow for another year. Executive Director Abousleman stated that because the fund is only \$15,000 does not mean it can't be used for a project, and stated that the banking study OCWCOG completed was done for less.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that the application would be web-based, and limit the project description to a set amount of characters.

Councilor Gerson stated that "region" could mean many things, and asked whether a trail between Lebanon and Sweet Home could meet criteria. She added that Sweet Home is 20 minutes away from another jurisdiction, which could make collaboration more challenging.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that the Board would need to define whether a project met criteria. He noted that although "regional" does not necessarily need to include everyone within all three Counties, this area does include 26 Cities, three Counties, and two Ports. Executive Director Abousleman noted that a trail study could have a broader impact than the physical building of a specific trail. He added that a study could have potential economic impacts, tourism impacts, etcetera, and could even be the initial phase of a project to later be expanded to other areas.

Commissioner Schuster stated that there had been previous discussion on a regional Broadband study, and added that this study may be relevant to many people within all three Counties.

Chair Konopa stated that Albany has an increasing number of senior care facilities, which are increasing demand on fire departments. Chair Konopa stated that if a consultant could work with these communities and local fire departments to do a study on this problem, it could potentially impact any other jurisdiction with senior care facilities.

Councilor Gerson asked whether fire departments are charging these facilities per visit. Chair Konopa stated that the Albany Fire Department is adding a medic unit to handle this increase, at a large cost. She added that rates have been raised, but that it is not enough to cover the increased demand from these facilities. If a study could present potential reimbursement types, this could impact other areas. Mayor Traber added that care facilities pass on these fees to residents, which ultimately means an increased cost to Medicare.

Executive Director Abousleman reminded the Board that the idea for this project was based on a conversation surrounding the eclipse, and that Regional coordination sometimes requires funding in order to provide the staff required.

Mayor Ware stated that Linn County Cities recently worked with the Linn County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) to reach a common agreement, and the next step will be to work with LCSO on reporting, with the goal of improved services. Mayor Ware stated that this project could be an example of one that could have applied for *Fund* dollars.

Commissioner Schuster stated that other projects could be based on homelessness, Cascadia preparedness, emergency management, and the concept of "strategic doing."

Councilor McPhee stated that Millersburg is looking at disaster training within the City, with regard to certification by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). He added that the goal is to have multiple people within Millersburg FEMA trained, but that there will be associated costs.

Commissioner Schuster asked for an update on grant money awarded for economic resilience from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA). Executive Director Abousleman stated that he believed OCWCOG is currently waiting on the release of funds.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that when the Board is ready to move forward on the *Fund*, the application and criteria can be put on the OCWCOG website. He asked the Board when they would like the first round of applications to be, and if they would still like to review applications biannually.

Commissioner Schuster suggested January 2018 as a tentative timeframe for the first round of application reviews.

Mayor Traber motioned to accept *Fund* drafts as presented, with the intention of announcing the program and requesting proposals in January of 2018. Councilor Nuber seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Schuster asked who would be eligible to apply. Executive Director Abousleman responded that any member of OCWCOG could apply.

Councilor Gerson suggested creating a matrix to track *Fund* success.

Mayor Traber suggested that applications be reviewed annually, as biannually seemed too frequent, and biennially too infrequent.

Executive Director Abousleman asked when awards would be given. Mayor Traber stated that these details could be added later, and suggested that the *Fund* could launch in January, with awards given in April or May.

Mayor Billie Jo Smith suggested having awards coincide with FY, and therefore awarding funds on July 1st.

Commissioner Schuster asked when member dues are due. Executive Director Abousleman stated that they are due July 1st.

Mayor Traber amended his motion to include launching the *Fund* in January of 2018, creating a tracking matrix for success, and funds to be released July 1st. Councilor Nuber seconded motion amendments, motion passed unanimously.

## **5. OCWCOG Annual Dinner**

Executive Director Abousleman reminded the Board that OCWCOG will be hosting *CelebrateLBL*, a Regional celebration which will feature awards, a *State of the Region* update, and act as a fundraiser for *Meals on Wheels (MOW)*. *CelebrateLBL* will take place November 2nd at the CH2M Hill Alumni Center on the Oregon State University campus in Corvallis. The event has a website, [www.CelebrateLBL.org](http://www.CelebrateLBL.org), which features information on the event, and a sponsorship guide.

Mayor Traber asked if there is a flyer for the event. Executive Director Abousleman stated that there is not currently, as some details are still being finalized with the venue.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that registration has not been opened, but is expected to open soon. Invitations will first go to our member jurisdictions, including Board members, City Council members, Boards of Commissioners, Mayors, and City/County Managers/Administrators. Next, invitations will be sent to key community partners, all other partners, and finally the public. He added that there would not be a long lag between phases of invitations, but noted that with over 400 elected officials in our Region, it is important that they have the opportunity to register first.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that the event will begin with a silent auction, followed by dinner, and finally cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and awards. He added that nominations for awards could be completed at the event website, with the Board to pick winners at the September 21st meeting.

Commissioner Schuster asked whether Board members could nominate, as they will be deciding winners. Executive Director Abousleman stated that a Board member could make a nomination, and recuse themselves from the vote on that award.

Executive Director Abousleman gave an overview of sponsorship tiers, and stated that if Board members know of a contact OCWCOG should approach, to please let staff know. He added that the cost of the event is approximately \$22,000, and that tickets will be sold for \$40 each, to help cover the cost.

Mayor Traber asked if there is a minimum value requested for silent auction donations. Executive Director Abousleman stated that there has been a minimum of around \$100, but donors could contribute what they are comfortable with, and having a range of values would be fine.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG staff will be in communities soliciting donations. Each OCWCOG senior leadership staff member is responsible for gaining \$10,000 in sponsorships. Executive Director Abousleman stated that he would be visiting coastal companies soon, and that the event will be held in Lincoln County next year.

Executive Director Abousleman informed the Board that Rotary Corvallis has partnered to turn one of their events into a fundraiser for *MOW*. The event is *Tapas and Treasures*, and all ticket sales will go to *MOW*. Executive Director Abousleman stated that 80 tickets had been sold at time of reporting, out of 150 available.

Commissioner Schuster stated that this event could be an example to other local service clubs, as a method of fundraising. Executive Director Abousleman told the Board that Commissioner Schuster will have artwork at the event as one of the prizes.

Commissioner Schuster asked whether the Citizen of the Region recipient needs to be a person that has impacted the entire Region. Executive Director Abousleman stated that this decision can be made by the Board.

Mayor Traber asked whether the Citizen of the Region needs to be a citizen, or if they could be a resident. Executive Director Abousleman stated that the Board can decide this criteria.

Commissioner Schuster stated that a glass float donation from Lincoln County would be a nice addition to the silent auction. Mayor Smith stated that she would work on this.

Commissioner Nuber stated that when the Scio City Council voted to approve their *MOW* donation, they voted to donate triple the requested amount, in hopes other jurisdictions would follow suit.

Commissioner Schuster asked SDS Program Manager Jennifer Moore to investigate what level of funding is actually needed for *MOW*, as the program is more than just a meal to recipients.

Commissioner Schuster stated that *CelebrateLBL's* silent auction could be a way for different jurisdictions to showcase what is happening locally. The Board had a conversation about different local items each jurisdiction could contribute.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that although it can be difficult for coastal residents to make the trip to the Valley, it would be great to have coastal attendees.

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

SDS Program Manager Jennifer Moore stated that information had been received regarding a house appropriations bill had passed, with funding for senior nutrition programs at current levels. The bill passed 28-22. Executive Director Abousleman stated that level funding is actually a cut due to increasing need, and that there was hope for funding to match program growth.

Chair Konopa stated that there should be projections for if funding continues at this level.

SDS Program Manager Randi Moore stated that with the end of the legislative session, SDS is feeling pretty stable with regard to State funding. Medicaid funding is stable, including a small increase for caseload growth, although the increase will be postponed for one FY. SDS Program Manager Randi Moore stated that OCWCOG has been conservative with the Budget, so even with the postponement of funding increases, Medicaid programs are still relatively stable.

SDS Program Manager Randi Moore added that *OPI* and the *OPI* Pilot were both funded at current levels, and that several other projects have also maintained funding. SDS Program Manager Randi Moore stated that SDS is happy with funding outcomes, overall.

Executive Director Abousleman thanked DSAC Vice-Chair Volpe, and SSAC and DSAC for their work and contributions with regard to lobbying for funding.

Mayor Traber stated that he heard the bill funding Oregon Health Plan via a provider tax was being referred to voters.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that with regard to State allocations to various Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), if funding is impacted, all AAAs come together to balance allocations. Hopefully in the end, each AAA ends up with similar allocations to what they had previously, in order to sustain programs. If numbers are too far off, AAAs in various regions support each other.

DSAC Vice-Chair Volpe reiterated that although *OPI* was funded at current levels, it is actually a cut, especially with the aging population and increased need.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that with the absence of CED Director Phil Warnock, he could answer questions pertaining to the CED Program Update.

CED Program Manager Brenda Mainord informed the Board that the application has been submitted to receive funds for the \$600,000 brownfield grant OCWCOG received.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that Loan Officer Sandra Easdale has been catching up the *Cascades West Business Lending (CWBL)* program, after contracts were lost.

Executive Director Abousleman clarified that OCWCOG is in second position for lending, meaning that if a client has been denied by a bank, or the bank does not make the full loan, *CWBL* can fund if proper collateral is in place. *CWBL* previously lost nearly \$500,000 in contracts, but is slowly catching up. As banks begin releasing more dollars, this provides less opportunity for *CWBL*.

Commissioner Schuster asked about percentages for *CWBL* loans. Executive Director Abousleman stated that rates vary, but loans are generally between 3-7%. Executive Director Abousleman stated that members may be approached by other lenders for loan opportunities, but to please consider *CWBL* as an alternative.

## **7. Topic of Regional Interest – Solid Sewage Waste Management**

Chair Konopa provided the Board a recap of previous Board meetings, as well as the Regional Mayors' Meeting, where solid sewage waste management had been discussed.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG has hired an intern, Ryan Ballinger, who will be reaching out to communities to gather information regarding solid sewage waste. Once information has been gathered, it will be presented to the Board for discussion. The second piece of Mr. Ballinger's project will be to explore options for how to process the waste. Executive Director Abousleman stated that Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC) is interested in developing a hydrogen fuel facility, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Western Ecology Lab is potentially interested in a facility that would turn waste in to char, for the purposes of absorbing toxic chemicals. Executive Director Abousleman stated that once information is gathered, Mr. Ballinger will be exploring means of mitigating costs for solid sewage waste processing, and potentially, options for profit.

Chair Konopa asked if Mr. Ballinger had been in contact with the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) technology lab. Chair Konopa stated that she had taken a tour previously. Executive Director Abousleman stated that he and CED Director Warnock had attempted to reach out to the DOE, with no results. Chair Konopa stated that she could pass along appropriate contacts.

Councilor Bob Elliott stated that solid sewage waste management is a hot topic throughout the Region, and that Lebanon is having problems with this, as well.

Mayor Smith thanked OCWCOG for working on this project, and stated that Lincoln County mayors had spoken about this issue several times. Mayor Smith stated that if the waste can be used for another purpose, this would be best, and stated that the City of Toledo supports this study.

Commissioner Schuster asked whether Mr. Ballinger has been in communication with sanitation or civil engineers. Executive Director Abousleman stated that the project is not that far along currently. Commissioner Schuster asked whether these conversations would happen in the future. Executive Director Abousleman stated that once information is gathered, it will be presented to the Board, and the Board can decide if OCWCOG should continue moving forward in this way.

Councilor Susan Wahlke stated that Lincoln City has purchased a centrifuge, it is currently being installed, and that the goal is for it to be operational by August 1st of this year. The centrifuge will dewater biosolids to create cakes, therefore allowing more to be transported to the landfill, with less volume. Councilor Wahlke stated that the City is considering a \$25 million sewer bond for another centrifuge and dryer, with the intent of producing fertilizer.

Chair Konopa commented that this is a large investment for the City.

Commissioner Schuster asked about the size of the centrifuge. Councilor Wahlke stated that she had not seen it in person, but that she believes it is not more than 20 feet in diameter. Chair Konopa stated that the City of Albany used to have a centrifuge, but it was not enough for the needs of the community.

Commissioner Schuster asked Mayor Traber about whether the sewage waste needs of Corvallis are being met. Mayor Traber stated that he had not heard of problems with putting the waste on fields, but that he needs to find out more information. Mayor Traber stated that he is interested in the hydrogen fuel option, and stated that alternative vehicle fuels could be appropriate.

Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that he would keep the Board apprised of the project's progress.

Executive Director Aoulosleman proposed that for September's Board meeting, he would like to dedicate a day to discussing broadband. He added that broadband connectivity has an emergency preparedness component, and a connectivity component. Lane County (implemented by Lane Council of Governments (LCOG)) is currently working on regional connectivity. The City of Eugene recently won an award from Mozilla® and the EDA, to implement connection speeds upward of 100GB. Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that he has been in communication with George Rice, Executive Director of the Industry Council for Emergency Response Technologies (iCERT), in hopes that he would be willing to present as well.

Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that he does not want to take up time designated for the Board meeting. He suggested that the day prior to the Board meeting could be designated as a broadband day, with a recap during the Board meeting. Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that industry partners, community partners, City/County Managers/Administrators, and the Board would all be invited.

Mayor Traber stated that it would be preferable to have a relatively open invitation, with the intent of discussing more specifics at the Board Meeting.

Commissioner Schuster stated that she would like to invite transportation experts, transit districts, and the economic development district.

Chair Konopa asked whether there will be many campsites around the Scio area during the eclipse. Councilor Nuber stated that three areas will have campsites, with various organizations planning for food options throughout the weekend. Chair Konopa asked what is being done for security. Councilor Nuber stated that extra security has been hired for the entire weekend.

Chair Konopa stated that farmers are opening up their fields for camping outside City limits, but there is concern about lack of security and sanitation facilities. Councilor Nuber stated that Scio has several fields outside of town, with owners renting sites and planning to have live music. Chair Konopa stated that in Linn County, you must get an event license if the event will host more than 500 people. Under that number, there are no compliance requirements.

Executive Director Aoulosleman stated that the federal government discussed the release of \$1 million to Cascades West Economic Development District (CWEDD) for eclipse efforts. Since then, the offer has been reduced to \$200,000, on the condition of a funding match. Even still, funds are not available for release, and at present, it is nearly too late to plan for use of the funds.

Councilor Nuber stated that Linn County plans to have several Sheriff Deputies on staff at all times, so that they can be checking on campsites.

Chair Konopa stated that the next time the Board would meet would be after the eclipse. Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG will close its buildings that day. Councilor Elliott stated that Republic Services is also closing that day.

**8. Other Business**

There was no other business

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 pm.

*Minutes recorded by Jennifer Kelley.*