



1. **CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS**–Meeting was called to order at 12:03 pm.
 - a. **Staff:** Michelle Haynes (R10 Director), Nancy Murphy (Small Business Development), Corey Bryndal (Broadband Director), Eva Veitch (AAA Director), Courtney Tribble
 - b. **In-Person Board Members:** John Clark (Town of Ridgway, Chair), Dave Frank (City of Montrose, Vice Chair), Jim Gelwicks (City of Gunnison), Michelle Nauer (Ouray County), Roger Rash (Montrose County), Jon Waschbush (Montrose County), Laura Pucket Daniels (Gunnison County),
 - c. **Remote Board Members:** Kris Holstrom (San Miguel County), Dave Roberts (Town of Lake City), Vince Rogalski (GVTPR & STAC),
 - d. **Guests:** Ken Fellman (entered at 12:59pm)

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA ITEMS**
 - a. Amended Executive Director report to move to end of reports, no EZ (Enterprise Zone) action items.
Motion to approve amended agenda: M/S Dave Frank/Roger Rash: as accepted. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES for October 2023, Board Meeting**
 - a. Michelle Nauer presented several grammatical and spelling corrections.
 - b. There was a request for less acronyms in future minutes or a definition of them.
Motion to approve amended minutes: M/S: Michelle Nauer/Dave Frank as accepted with addition. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

4. **Action Items:**
 - a. Executive Committee Elections
 - i. Jon Waschbush is stepping down from the Executive committee and as treasurer. The board thanked Jon for his service as treasurer.
 - ii. Dave Frank nominates Dave Roberts to executive committee; Dave Roberts is willing to serve.
Motion to nominate Dave Roberts to Executive Committee; M/S: Dave Frank/Kris Holstrom as accepted. None opposed. Motion passed unanimously.
 - b. Employee Benefit Modification
 - i. Sick Leave Discussion:
 1. Region 10 did not opt out of FAMLI (Family and Medical Leave Insurance) Leave. In the current policy, full time staff accrue 12 sick days a year, with accumulated accrual up to 480 hours sick leave. Considering that with FAMLI and our sick leave policy that would mean that an employee could potentially take up to 24 weeks of sick leave. Management is recommending review of our current policy to decrease the maximum amount of sick leave hours to be banked to 240 hours.
 2. FAMLI is a .9% Social Security Tax, employees can apply for these benefits if you need to go on to FAMLI Leave policy. The purpose of this is for extended illness and sick leave and is available to the employee, through the state, if they are no longer employed with Region 10 (similar to unemployment insurance).
 3. Accrued sick leave is not paid out when an employee leaves the organization.
 - ii. Federal & State Holidays: the handbook states that we take 11 holiday days. Management is proposing that 3 of the holiday days can be flexed to be taken on any federal or religious verifiable holiday, the employee's birthday, or attached to another holiday.
 1. Holidays we currently acknowledge and are proposing to become flex holidays; Martin Luther King Day, Columbus/Indigenous Peoples Day and Veteran's Day
 2. If a staff member does not use the holidays during the year, they are not accrued hours and they do not carry over to the following year.
 - iii. Michelle will bring an amended handbook in January.

- iv. There were questions and discussion about whether it is difficult to apply for the FAMLI funds for the staff members and concerns of if that process is burdensome to the staff members to take sick leave. Next year, 2024, is the first year that funds from FAMLI can be applied for and so it is unknown how burdensome or not the application process will be. However, the intention of the FAMLI funds is for extended leaves of absence rather than a day here and there—in those cases we encourage staff to take their banked Region 10 sick leave.

5. Reports:

a. Small Business Resources / Business Loan Fund –Nancy Murphy

- i. State of CO has developed an Exit Planning series for businesses. Many businesses and business owners will be exiting or selling their business within the next ten years. It takes 3-5 years to exit a business successfully.
- ii. The Business Cultivator has a success story: Two Bassets makes Italian bread, and their product is being sold out of a local store, Straw Hat Farmer’s Market.
 - 1. At the Cultivator this has prompted us to get FDA (Federal Drug Administration) approval for low acid processing for the client’s tomato sauce.
- iii. James has been visiting the incubators on the Western Slope, the ICELab (Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship) in Gunnison and SCAPE (Southwest Colorado Accelerator Program for Entrepreneurs) in Durango.
- iv. December Calendar for the SBDC (Small Business Development Center) is included with what classes are offered for the month.
 - 1. It was requested that we add the county PIOs (Public Information Officers) to the SBDC (Small Business Development Center) email blast.
- v. Loan program
 - 1. Inquiries from Hinsdale, Ouray, Gunnison, West End
 - 2. Loan applications from Delta, Gunnison, and Montrose,
 - 3. Loan closing in Cedaredge and Montrose this past month
 - 4. We are currently servicing approximately 115 loans.

b. Community Development

- i. The Regional Infrastructure Grants Navigator report is included in the Board Meeting packet.

c. Community Living Services / Area Agency on Aging –Eva Veitch

- i. The new term for Silver Sunami is “Wave of Wisdom”.
- ii. SUA (State Unit on Aging) is asking us to bring back congregate meals (hot meals at senior centers) which is challenging to implement in our region with changes that began during COVID. We had moved to a grab-and-go model and now we are facing a labor force shortage to re-implement the programs. The team is looking at creative solutions to bring back congregate meals to stay in compliance with the OAA (Older Americans Act).
- iii. Open Enrollment ends today, December 7th, for Medicare—the program utilizes volunteers to provide unbiased information about the available options.

d. Broadband – Corey Bryndal

- i. Crested Butte to Mt Crested Butte project is being put out to RFP (Requests for Proposal), for construction of fiber between the two towns and to put in an equipment room, a CNL (Carrier Neutral Location).
- ii. Lake City – Mammoth is wrapping up some constructions and we should be receiving our IRU (Infeasible Rights of Use) of services soon. Mammoth has begun offering services; partner ISPs (Internet Service Providers) and Open Access are currently available for any interested provider.
- iii. Telluride is ready and we are looking forward to activating services.
- iv. Pitkin contacted us to discuss improved access for broadband; we are working with the CBO (Colorado Broadband Office) and two potential partners for potential solutions.
- v. Montrose & Delta Counties-we have a significant request from ISPs for an increase in capacity for fiber to their network and it is likely if we can get service to Grand Junction to provide a boost in redundancy and capacity for the providers.

- vi. A network audit is being completed. Corey and contractor did site visits to all the locations with a contracted resource and are developing documentation of our resources. There are several power supplies that are aging out and those will have to be replaced.
- vii. DOLA (Department of Local Affairs): 12 new CNLs are going in that are all under construction and the physical builds are anticipated to be completed by the end of this calendar year 2023. This is the I-70 corridor from Glenwood to west of Fruita and then some from Durango to Cortez to support Durango, Cortez, Bayfield and Pagosa Springs. Working with Region 9 and 4 partners; the Tribe, the power companies, and two counties brought matching funds to DOLA for a build over to Pagosa Springs which will help to knit together the loop around the state to create some redundancy.
- viii. DOLA funding for middle mile is being transferred to CBO (Colorado Broadband Office)
- ix. Using Just Transitions fund for Contracted Labor for additional operating support.
- x. Considering hosting another Workshop in Crested Butte.
- xi. Jim: Regional Safety and Security – there was concern expressed about how easy it is to isolate the town of Pitkin in the winter months. Are there any ways to tie in with emergency service funding to help establish broadband in Pitkin. We work with CommNet wireless to extend the services from ATT and Century Link. They do have access to some federal funding for tower sites through FirstNet. The terrestrial fiber path is what we would want to push on.

e. **Gunnison Valley Transportation Planning Region Committee – Vince Rogalski**

- i. Final report for the study of the TPRs (Transportation Planning Regions) boundary issues was distributed—it is about 200 pages. MPOs (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) are for the larger areas but serve similar roles. There are 4 different sections in the recommendations that needed decisions.
 1. Management of the TPRs: is the current funding to the TPR adequate?
 2. Recommendations in terms of elected officials for the Chair and Vice Chair of STAC (State Transportation Advisory Committee): there have not been term limits; the recommendation proposed term limits as well as add a chair from the TRAC (Transit and Rail Advisory Committee) to the STAC. Recommendations include 3 terms for the Chair or Vice Chair that allows for 2-year terms (up to 6 years total.)
 3. Ensure TPRS at following statutory requirements including governing documents—STAC approved this recommendation.
 4. Change in TPR boundaries: per statute only 15 planning regions can exist, 10 must be Rural TPRs and 5 Urban MPOs. STAC voted to oppose the recommendation to change the boundaries for the Inter Mountain and Southern Co TPR. CDOT Staff made these recommendations based on populations. Decisions will not be made for at least 4-6 months.

6. **Motion to enter Executive Session to obtain legal advice on specific legal questions and negotiations concerning a state grant and a contract for a fiber optic IRU; M/S: Michelle Nauer/Dave Frank, all in favor, none opposed. Executive Session entered at 1:17pm Executive session was exited at 2:08 p.m. with confirmation of those in attendance.**

7. Reports Continued

a. **Finance & Executive Director – Michelle Haynes**

- i. DOLA Grant for Broadband: We have been working with 2 other COGS Region 9 and the Northwest COG (Councils of Governments) on potential to combine operations and reduce the burden on the individual COGs. We will soon be serving 12 communities outside of the Region 10 area, and the combined regions will serve about 20 counties. The board approved via e-mail vote to submit a grant; however, we had a meeting with the DOLA representative before that submission and he recommended that we do not submit the grant in the December cycle. (The grant is written in the DOLA portal but we did not submit.)
 1. Next steps, we will have to look at what those are. There are concerns regarding the staffing and financial capacity for the Broadband Network. We did just put in a \$2 million order for routers with grant funds, but do not have reserves for ongoing updates of equipment.

2. The reports reviewed different models for operations. The lowest level model would be that we all use the same operations company up to a state managed system.
 - ii. Insurance: we are working on quotes with new agents, and we have asked them to focus on professional liability and some of the items we feel we are underinsured on. Two agents that we are working with have more experience with non-profits and one with broadband experience.
 - iii. Scope of work from RGN program is being reviewed for year 2. The grant is a \$100,000 contract—Michelle will submit a budget for the grant.
 - iv. Auditors, Blair & Associates, came on-site October 10th and we have not yet had them back on-site. We are planning to have the audit presentation for the February meeting.
 - v. Annual conversations with staff are being completed.
 - vi. We are leasing new space for the Gunnison office—in the same building but moving to a larger, street-facing office. Gunnison team has grown, we now have a SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) Counselor and a RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) volunteer working out of that office, as well as business consulting and loan fund coordinators.
 - vii. Michelle sent out an email with a request for a LOS (Letter of Support) for Project 7 grant application, and based on the response, sent a letter of support for the project. The project manager asked if some of the Board was interested in a tour of the existing facility; we are looking at January 26th prior to the board meeting. Project 7 is a water project in Montrose County that serves 7 different water districts throughout Ridgway, Montrose, and Delta.
8. **Motion to approve Reports; M/S:** Dave Frank/Michelle Nauer. None opposed. Motion passes unanimously.
9. **Next Meetings:**
 - a. **Executive Committee Meeting:** January 25, 2024 Noon-3pm
 - b. **Regional Advisory Council AAA:** December 14, 2023 10am
10. **Meeting adjourned at 2:27 p.m.**