

**OREGON CASCADES WEST COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
SPECIAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
January 19, 2017**

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

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; Senior Accountant Janet Cline; Communications Consultant Lindsey Riley; and Administrative Assistant Jennifer Kelley.

The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments' (OCWCOG) Special Executive Committee Meeting was called to order by Chair Sharon Konopa at 12:11 p.m. on January 19, 2017 at the Cascades West Center in Albany.

1. Welcome and Introductions

General introductions were made. Senior Accountant Janet Cline introduced herself; she was hired in December and relocated from Michigan.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Bill Hall motioned to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2016 Executive Committee meeting, Councilor Dann Cutter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of the 2017 Executive Committee Meeting Schedule

Councilor Cutter and Chair Konopa expressed concern that the proposed December Executive Committee Meeting was scheduled during the week between holidays. Councilor Cutter suggested moving the meeting to December 7th, to coincide with the Full Board meeting.

Councilor Cutter motioned to approve the 2017 Executive Committee Meeting Schedule, with the alteration that the December 28th meeting be moved to December 7th. Commissioner Hall seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director Fred Abousleman requested moving a meeting to the Coast and suggested discussing during an upcoming Full Board meeting.

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

Finance Director Sue Forty and Senior Accountant Cline left the meeting.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that he achieved his previous goals, and stated that his goals for the coming year are to maintain sustainability for the organization. With budget cuts, it is a priority to avoid layoffs, if at all possible. Executive Director Abousleman stated that he thinks sustainability will be achievable unless there are radical, unpredictable cuts to incoming funding.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that another goal is to regionalize Senior and Disability Services.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that Union relationships have been good overall, and praised Deputy Director Lydia George for her current and previous work in Union communications and in Human Resources.

Commissioner Anne Schuster asked how many people are represented in the Union. Executive Director Abousleman estimated 110 to 120 people.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that he has fostered good relationships with our regional communities, and that he was the first OCWCOG leader to visit the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz in 7-8 years.

Executive Director stated that he would have liked to raise more revenue this past year, but capacity to do this was limited. He would like to increase capacity in the future.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that he was open to feedback from the Committee, and asked for questions.

Councilor Cutter commented that the economy has been expanding in the last few years, and that may be changing. Councilor Cutter asked whether there is a contingency fund to account for economic changes, or if certain positions are being left vacant.

Executive Director Abousleman stated yes, there are some contingency funds, and staffing levels are also being considered. Executive Director Abousleman also stated that there is a need for better data for staffing, including building a staffing model that is more flexible and adaptive. Critical positions need to be filled, however others may be able to stay open. It is important to have staffing models that are data-driven, technology-driven, and flexibility-driven.

Councilor Cutter asked whether salary is an issue when hiring or retaining staff. Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG salaries and benefits are fairly competitive; however, talent is becoming more difficult to attract, and outreach has had to expand.

Councilor Cutter asked whether a plan is in place to handle some salaries that may be disproportionate. Executive Director Abousleman stated that salary compression is an issue and has been for about 10 years. Solutions are being explored in order to solve the problem without cutting salaries, and staying competitive with similar agencies.

Commissioner Schuster asked whether OCWCOG has been targeting outgoing Federal workers as potential job candidates. Executive Director Abousleman stated that the organizations has been targeting graduating students, but had not previously considered targeting outgoing Federal employees; however, this would be a good idea.

Mayor Biff Traber asked whether internships have been considered. Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG already offers many internship positions.

Mayor Traber asked whether telecommuting has been considered as a possible incentive. Executive Director Abousleman stated it is being examined. However, it would be under a model wherein staff may be stationed at other locations, rather than working from home. Barriers are HIPAA compliance, data security, and renting facilities for work stations.

Councilor Cutter asked whether a plan was in place to address compression issues, and stated that this could be a potential weakness for maintaining talent. Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG has been examining salary schedules, and will report back with more information in the future.

Commissioner Schuster suggested telecommuting partnered with a City or County building to exchange workspaces at no cost to either organization.

Chair Konopa adjourned the Special Executive Committee meeting at 12:39 p.m. to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing the Executive Director's Employment Agreement, per ORS 192.660 (i).

5. Reconvene into Regular Session

Chair Konopa reconvened the Special Executive Committee Meeting at 12:45 p.m.

The Executive Committee agreed to enter into 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. Mayor Traber recognized an error in Section 14 regarding the car allowance. The Board increased the car allowance last January.

Mayor Traber motioned to recommend Executive Director Abousleman's Employment Agreement to the Board with the correction on the car allowance. Commissioner Hall seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Special Projects Discussion

Executive Director Abousleman introduced the concept of a *Special Projects Fund* as discussed at the last Board meeting, and directed the Executive Committee members to review Attachment 3 in the Agenda Packet for potential funding levels.

Chair Konopa asked whether City Managers have had an opportunity to review the numbers.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that they had not, but would be getting them at the City/County Manager/Administrator lunch scheduled for January 20th.

Councilor Cutter suggested a flat rate member fee to fund the *Special Projects Fund*, so that funding the project would be more equitable. However, this would put more of a burden on smaller communities. Councilor Cutter stated that he is a proponent of raising the dues in general.

Chair Konopa suggested asking City Managers at the upcoming lunch meeting. She stated that smaller communities would likely benefit more from this *Fund*, as larger jurisdictions already have funds and resources in-house to accomplish projects. Councilor Cutter agreed that smaller communities would benefit more.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that projects could be in coordination with City or County projects. Executive Director Abousleman stated that dues currently coming in are used to match funds. OCWCOG does not have dues dollars to run special projects.

Mayor Traber asked how projects and amounts would be decided upon. Executive Director Abousleman stated that money would be fully under Board control, not OCWCOG control.

Executive Director Abousleman suggested that an example of special projects could be to work with city housing departments to establish regional housing. The Board could join with other area jurisdictions to expand projects. Other examples could be for researching common City or County codes or other research projects; grants; watershed management; emergency planning; and economic resilience; or others.

Councilor Cutter stated that often pieces of information come up at Board meetings, with members suggesting potential projects. Waldport's leadership continually asks what other jurisdictions are doing, however nobody has money set aside for investigation or research.

7. OCWCOG Annual Dinner

Executive Director Abousleman stated that OCWCOG has not held an Annual Dinner in 10-15 years. Most other regional Councils of Government in Oregon have Annual Dinners. Executive Director Abousleman stated that he would like to organize an Annual Dinner that would feature awards, and he could give a *State of the Region* presentation. The event could be sponsored, and proceeds would go to the *Meals on Wheels* program.

Executive Director Abousleman asked whether discussion could move forward to the Full Board meeting for approval. The Committee agreed. Commissioner Hall suggested rotating the location on an annual basis among the three Counties. Executive Director Abousleman stated that this was the plan.

8. Adjourn

Chair Konopa adjourned the meeting at 1:02 pm.

Minutes recorded by Jennifer Kelley.