

**OREGON CASCADES WEST COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES  
May 17, 2018**

**MEMBERS:** Mayor Sharon Konopa, Albany; Commissioner Anne Schuster, Benton County; Mayor Biff Traber, Corvallis; Councilor Bob Elliott, Lebanon; Councilor Dann Cutter, Waldport; Mayor Marjean Cline, Halsey; Councilor Sarah Puls, Harrisburg; Mayor Jim Lepin, Millersburg; Councilor Dean Sawyer, Newport; Councilor Debbie Nuber, Scio; and Councilor Diane Gerson, Sweet Home.

**STAFF:** Executive Director Fred Abousleman; Deputy Director Lydia George; Deputy Director Rachael Maddock-Hughes; Finance Director Sue Forty; Community and Economic Development (CED) Director Phil Warnock; Senior and Disability Services (SDS) Director Randi Moore; Community Services Program (CSP) Manager Jennifer Moore; Technology Services Manager Brian Chytka; SDS Community and Program Coordinator Lisa Bennett; Executive Assistant Jennifer Kelley; and Communications Consultant Lindsey Riley.

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

**GUESTS:** State Representative Andy Olson; *Meals on Wheels* Advisory Council (MOWAC) Chair Catherine Skiens; Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC) Vice-Chair Mike Volpe; Senior Services Advisory Council (SSAC) Member Doris Lamb; and Cathy Savage, Homecare Worker assisting DSAC Vice-Chair Volpe.

The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments' (OCWCOG) Board of Directors Meeting was called to order by Chair Sharon Konopa at 2:09 pm on May 17, 2018 at the Cascades West Center in Albany.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Introductions were made.

**2. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Recognition of State Representative Andy Olson**

Chair Konopa stated that few people have had their service recognized by the OCWCOG Board of Directors. She stated that Representative Olson has been a Representative for 14 years, and is also retired from the Oregon State Police (OSP). She stated that Representative Olson has always been a valuable resource, especially on issues pertaining to public safety. She expressed appreciation for Representative Olson's support of OCWCOG programs, and especially Senior and Disability Services (SDS).

Executive Director Fred Abousleman stated that he met Representative Olson at a tough time for OCWCOG, during a funding crisis. Executive Director Abousleman stated that during this time, he found an ally and a friend, dedicated to his community. Representative Olson rallied to fix the funding problem, collaborating across the tri-County Region, with a diverse delegation. He added that Representative Olson works across party lines, and that it is rare to work with someone so non-partisan. He stated that Representative Olson will be sorely missed.

Executive Director Abousleman thanked Representative Olson for his service. He added that Representative Olson often visits OCWCOG staff before or during Legislative sessions, and typically spends one day per month reviewing programs to determine any issues with which he may be able to help. He stated that Representative Olson has encouraged other elected officials to do the same.

Executive Director Abousleman presented Representative Olson with a bowl handcrafted in northern New Mexico.

Representative Olson stated that he has valued having access to OCWCOG staff on a monthly basis. He expressed that as the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Human Services and Housing, the meetings with OCWCOG staff have been helpful. He recalled that in 2007, [current U.S. Senator] Jeff Merkley became Speaker of the House when Democrats gained control of the State House of Representatives. At that time, Representative Olson was designated Vice-Chair of the Committee on Human Services and Women's Wellness. He stated that this Committee caused him to want to grow and learn within that field. A few years ago, he reached out to OCWCOG, and has appreciated that connection.

*Meals on Wheels* Advisory Council (MOWAC) Chair Catherine Skiens stated that her journey with Representative Olson began when he was with OSP, and she was a Linn County Commissioner. She stated that most of their interactions at that time were regarding juveniles, and she came to know Representative Olson as a very caring and concerned person. She stated that she has watched him learn and grow, respects him, and that he has done a lot for seniors and people with disabilities.

Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC) Vice-Chair Mike Volpe stated that Representative Olson will be missed. He stated that he appreciates how Representative Olson set up so many meetings, and in particular when Representative Olson brought the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) Director Ashley Carson Cottingham to Albany. DSAC Vice-Chair Volpe stated that DSAC has enjoyed working with Representative Olson, and thanked him for his service.

Executive Director Abousleman asked Representative Olson whether he has any advice for OCWCOG, moving forward. Representative Olson responded that there is a new PowerPoint® presentation from DHS, outlining their direction. He stated that the PowerPoint can be found on the DHS website. He added that in House Bill (HB) 2017, Section 122, there is a payroll tax for public transportation that will yield over \$100 million each year. These funds will go into the Statewide Improvement Fund. He stated that Counties could potentially get some of that funding.

Executive Director Abousleman asked whether HB 2017 was the largest transportation bill in State history. Representative Olson stated that it was, at \$5.4 billion. He stated he wished that the Legislature could have done more for local Cities. Mayor Biff Traber responded that the City of Corvallis will get funding toward a new bridge. Chair Konopa stated that she hopes the bridge will make Highway 34 more efficient, and ease congestion on Highway 20.

#### **4. Consent Calendar**

Mayor Jim Lepin motioned to approve Consent Calendar items as presented, Councilor Debbie Nuber seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Consent Calendar items, as presented, were:

- a. Approval of previous Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes.
- b. Financial Update for the period of July 1, 2017 through March 31, 2018.

**5. Introduction of Incoming OCWCOG Deputy Director**

Executive Director Abousleman stated that new Deputy Director Rachael Maddock-Hughes started at OCWCOG on Monday, May 14th. He added that outgoing Deputy Director Lydia George has worked at OCWCOG for 28 years, and has helped build the organization. With Deputy Director George's retirement, OCWCOG recruited to fill her position. There were originally 80 applicants. He stated that the OCWCOG Executive Committee helped in selecting candidates, and that it was a tough decision. He stated that he was proud of all applicants.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that Deputy Director Maddock-Hughes was an outlier candidate with no local government experience. She has worked on global humanitarian efforts and with nonprofits. He stated that Deputy Director Maddock-Hughes will provide a new perspective on communities, as well as internal issues. He wished both Deputy Directors success.

Deputy Director Maddock-Hughes stated that she is honored to be a part of a group that is dedicated to their communities. She stated that she was born and raised in Corvallis, and is glad to be back working in local communities. She thanked Executive Director Abousleman and Deputy Director George for welcoming her, and for the work they are doing.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that Deputy Director George would be working through an undetermined date in July, and will be helping to transition Deputy Director Maddock-Hughes into the position. He stated that Deputy Director George may return on contract if needed.

**6. Presentation and Adoption of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-2019 Work Program & Budget**

Executive Director Abousleman stated that this year's budget is one of the largest, and that staff were careful to be sustainable. Goals were set to balance increasing services and building up programs. He stated that because of Measure 101, *Oregon Project Independence (OPI)* was fully funded. In addition, InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization (IHN-CCO) has continued to build *RideLine*. The Community Services Program (CSP) is also new to the budget.

OCWCOG staff presented a PowerPoint slideshow on the *FY2018-2019 Work Program & Budget*.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that CSP can offer an opportunity to look at new types of grants for programs that may not be directly related to health. He also stated that members can come to OCWCOG if they have issues that need addressing, as OCWCOG staff can either assist or help find the appropriate contact.

Deputy Director George presented on General Administration (GA). She stated that funds will be carried over for financial software, and for a class and compensation study for non-represented staff. She stated that non-departmental funds are held for the Albany building remodel, unexpected repairs, or other building-related expenses. She stated that to cover facilities expenses, individual programs are charged rent, and some building space is leased to Vocational Rehabilitation. She stated that staff are working on developing *Cascades West Business Services*, which will have packages that OCWCOG can offer to members.

Executive Director Abousleman added that Technology Services has approximately 17 contracts with members for technology needs. Finance has also contracted with members, and Human Resources has assisted with performing personnel recruitments.

Commissioner Anne Schuster asked whether OCWCOG uses external resources to help with these contracts. Executive Director Abousleman stated that it is all done internally through staff.

Community and Economic Development (CED) Director Phil Warnock presented on CED's budget. He stated that staff have been working with communities to address wetland issues, and are continuing that work. He stated that the *Marys Peak to Pacific Scenic Byway* project and *Pedal Corvallis* are transportation planning projects that CED has been actively working on. He stated that CED recently hired a new planner that will be taking on projects, such as brownfields.

Commissioner Schuster asked how the economic resilience grant can help communities. CED Director Warnock responded that the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funded an economic resilience grant so that communities can develop strategies for economic resilience relating to economic shock. This would help communities to assess code and policy decisions that can be made in advance, so that businesses may be able to recover more quickly in the event of a disaster or other economic crisis.

SDS Director Randi Moore stated that SDS is now mainly Medicaid and Older Americans Act (OAA) programs. These programs focus on assisting seniors and people with disabilities in their Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). She stated that SDS has a large beginning balance fund, with the goal of being conservative in budgeting. She stated that because funding fluctuates by biennium, her goal is to build a fund balance, in order to weather dips in biennial funding allocations more smoothly.

SDS Director Moore stated that in last year's SDS budget, staff predicted very low revenue because of the uncertainty on whether the Measure 101 referendum would pass. Because the referendum passed, SDS's budget had a slight increase with regard to previous years. She stated that the next biennium is somewhat concerning, in part due to the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) deficit. Because of these concerns, staff want to make very safe budget predictions, particularly with regard to hiring. The program is exploring cost-saving measures, such as hiring Case Aides to ease the workload of Case Managers (rather than hiring more Case Managers), and exploring teleworking to cut down on mileage. She stated that if member governments have space, OCWCOG would love to co-house staff at remote locations. Additionally, SDS has also purchased 25 new computers for staff.

CSP Manager Jennifer Moore stated that the *Money Management Program (MMP)*, *Older Adult Behavioral Health Initiative (OABHI)*, and Benton County Veterans Services Office are CSP programs under contract. She stated that staff want to be mindful of how populations will change, and recognize that the current model may not be the most appropriate configuration for the future. She stated that efforts are being made to prepare for future outlooks, while keeping up program capacity and maintaining a sustainable level.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that when the *FY2018-2019 Work Program & Budget* takes effect, CSP Manager Moore will become a Director. He recognized her for the work she has done, especially with the *Meals on Wheels* program.

Commissioner Schuster motioned to approve the *FY2018-2019 Work Program & Budget*, and adoption of *Resolution #18-05-01 Agency Budget for FY 2018-2019*. Mayor Traber seconded, motion passed unanimously.

## **7. Board Endorsement of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Proclamation**

Chair Konopa stated that the City of Albany has adopted the OAA Proclamation. Other members indicated that their jurisdictions had, as well.

Councilor Bob Elliott moved to adopt the 2018 OAA Proclamation, Councilor Diane Gerson seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## **8. OCWCOG Events Update**

Executive Director Abousleman stated that *Tapas and Treasures* will be held August 9th from 5:00 – 8:00 pm at Garland Nursery. He stated that the event supports *Meals on Wheels*, and is co-sponsored by Rotary of Corvallis and Cascades West Senior Services Foundation.

Executive Director Abousleman stated that *CelebrateLBL* will be held on September 13th from 6:00 – 9:00 pm in Newport, at the Oregon Coast Aquarium. He stated that the event will be less formal than last year's, and the entire facility will be open for attendees. It will be in the style of a dine-around, with guided tours. Attendees will briefly convene for Regional Awards. He encouraged all Board members to attend, and to nominate for Awards.

Commissioner Schuster asked if there would be music. Executive Director Abousleman stated that there may, and stated that staff is also working on a special rate for a hotel, in case attendees wish to stay on the Coast overnight. He anticipated 20-30 high-value raffle items for the event.

## **9. Legislative Advocacy Update**

Executive Director Abousleman stated that members and community partners have come together to talk about the impacts of wetlands. He stated that wetlands are a regional issue dictated by Federal law. However, 404 Assumption is a process that would allow the State to assume Federal responsibility for these laws, which would impact timing and permitting. He stated that the process is complex, and would take years, but the conversation is beginning. Many members are interested in moving forward with the process, and conversations are also occurring with the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) and the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC).

Executive Director Abousleman stated that current discussions are around strategies moving forward. He stated that there is an opportunity to make the process easier. However, some may disagree that easier is better, as the regulations are a barrier to growth and development. He stated that it may be good to turn the issue over to those with more lobbying power.

Mayor Lepin thanked OCWCOG for helping to coordinate meetings.

Mayor Traber stated that it is clear there is a regional wetland challenge.

## **10. OCWCOG Program Updates**

There were no questions on Program Updates.

## **11. Other Business**

Executive Director Abousleman thanked members for issuing OAA proclamations. He also acknowledged the new *Marys River to Pacific Scenic Byway*, and stated that OCWCOG may ask members for resources around promotion and marketing. He stated that there is an opportunity for businesses and communities to promote our Region.

Councilor Dann Cutter stated that in the next few years, housing will become a more prevalent issue. He stated that there is a crisis around both low-income and workforce housing, and suggested that OCWCOG could become a resource for member assistance on this topic. He suggested that the Board direct OCWCOG to see where it may add value in addressing housing issues without duplicating efforts, such as providing regional housing assessments or lending capacity. He stated that he would like to see Executive Director Abousleman craft a proposal related to housing, as well as funding sources to support this proposal.

Councilor Cutter stated that it may require members funding the new program initially, but hopefully it would become self-supporting. He stated that each community is putting in an effort currently, so a combined regional effort could be justified. He stated that a proposal would be needed that adds value to communities.

Mayor Traber stated that there is a statewide housing crisis, and that he is unsure of what OCWCOG would add. However, he liked the idea of challenging Executive Director Abousleman to craft a proposal. He expressed support for also including existing OCWCOG programs.

MOWAC Chair Skiens asked whether Linn-Benton Housing Authority (LBHA) had been considered as housing resource. Executive Director Abousleman stated that LBHA mainly works on issues related to low-income housing, whereas there is a larger housing issue in general, including workforce housing. He stated that there is a lack of regional housing assessments, including available lands and housing inventories.

MOWAC Chair Skiens stated that Community Services Consortium (CSC) works on many of those issues. Executive Director Abousleman stated that if CSC turns out to be a better fit to work on these topics, they could provide the requested support instead of OCWCOG. He clarified that OCWCOG would not be looking at specifically low-income housing, which seems to be the main purview of LBHA and CSC. He stated that he would view OCWCOG's role as addressing land use and environmental issues as well, which would be a different scale than trying to build affordable housing.

Councilor Cutter stated that he believes it would be worth exploring whether there are cost-effective and productive opportunities for OCWCOG involvement.

Commissioner Schuster stated that she has advocated for an OCWCOG grant writer, as funds are available that OCWCOG could access. She added that AOC, LOC, and Oregon Housing and Community Services are hosting eight workshops to look at housing needs in the State. She stated that these organizations will craft a comprehensive list of their findings, and potentially offer technical assistance. She suggested that OCWCOG not duplicate efforts, but instead collaborate.

The Board concurred; OCWCOG staff was directed to explore housing and report back.

## **12. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.

*Minutes recorded by Jennifer Kelley.*