

# **Colorado Association of Regional Organizations (CARO)**

**Regular Meeting**

**Minutes**

**August 17, 2012**

**10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

**SLVDRG Office, Alamosa, Colorado**

**HOSTED BY REGION 8**

## **Introduction of members and guests.**

### **CARO Members Present:**

Jennifer Schaufele – Region 3

Jo Downey – Region 5

Mike Wisdom – Region 8

Laura Lewis Marchino – Region 9

Liz Mullen – Region 12

Judy Lohnes – Region 13

Priscilla Fraser – Region 14

### **Partners/Guests:**

Erin Minks – Senator Mark Udall's Office

Brenda Felmlee – Rep. Scott Tipton's Office

Senator Michael Bennet

Sarah Kendall Hughes – Senator Michael Bennet's Office

Christy Culp – DOLA

Charles Thompson – USDA RD (SW Area Director)

Kari Linker – OEDIT (via phone)

Trisha Korbas – EDA (via phone)

Jodi Duncan EDA (via phone)

Roni Wisdom – Region 8

Ed Morlan – Region 9

Rachel Lunney – Region 12

## **Roll Call and Determination of Quorum.**

**Quorum achieved – 7 out of 10 members present.**

## **Amendments:**

None.

## **Action on Minutes of June 19th Meeting**

M/S/P Jo Downey, Mike Wisdom to approve the minutes from the 6/19/12 CARO meeting.

## **Reports:**

**Financial Report** – Rachel Lunney reported that from January 1, 2012 – July 31, 2012, expenses have totaled \$2,783.43. There is a balance of \$10,266.43 in the CARO account. Additional expenses (staff time, travel, lunch) will be incurred from today's meeting, as well as the final meeting in 2012 which will be held in November. M/S/P Liz Mullen, Judy Lohnes to approve the financials (1/1/12 – 7/31/12).

**EDA Financial Update** – Laura reported that CARO has been granted a \$13,000 planning grant from the EDA (with a \$13,000 cash match from CARO). Laura went through the budget line by line: \$11,880 for staff time (NWCCOG staff to coordinate CARO); \$3,000 for travel costs (this could include mileage for CARO members to travel to meetings); \$7,000 for supplies (website, printing, advertising, brochures, memberships); and \$4,120 for “Other” (meeting expenses, meals, trainings). It was decided to track all mileage to either reimburse CARO members or to use as a match to the grant. Laura also asked the group to consider any memberships they would like to join as an organization. She stated that CARO will be joining NADO. It was decided to look into the cost of having CARO join CML and CCI as an associate member.

Discussion turned to the federal sequestration issue. Pete Fraser stated that NADO recently had a webinar on this issue. Jennifer stated that DRCOG is very concerned about sequestration and its consequences if it comes to fruition. She reported that the DRCOG lobbyist is putting together DRCOG’s position on sequestration, and that Jennifer will get this out to the group once it is ready to go.

Erin Winks, from Senator Mark Udall’s Office, stated that perhaps CARO should thoughtfully put together a position on sequestration, since Senator Bennet is on some of the committees that matter the most on this issue.

Judy recommended that CARO put together some solid information on the sequestration issue and send it out to our board of directors/council member in order to educate everyone on this issue. M/S/P Judy Lohnes/Jennifer Schaufele to (1) have CARO write a letter of concern regarding the sequestration issue and (2) have CARO put together an information packet to educate elected officials and agencies on sequestration.

The discussion returned to the budget for the EDA planning grant. Laura went through each line item. She said that the “other” line item includes funding for training, so if there is any training you are interested in, please let Laura know.

#### **Old Business:**

**EDA Scope of Work** – Laura stated that she wanted to get prioritization on items in the scope of work. Laura asked if anyone had done any CARO outreach to their legislators/elected officials (i.e. sent out the CARO directory with the memo Laura suggested). Laura went through the scope of work item by item for discussion. Discussion turned to the CARO website. Currently NWCCOG has a page on its website for CARO. The idea of CARO having its own stand-alone website, with its own domain name, was discussed. Rachel suggested that perhaps we look at the current developer of the NWCCOG website, as there could be some economies of scale realized in the fact that Rachel already knows the content management system used for the NWCCOG website, and she would most likely be the one maintaining the CARO site. Discussion turned to whether or not we would have to go out to bid on this, per the EDA grant requirements. Rachel pointed out that the funding is listed in “supplies”, and not “contractual costs”, and if we are just enhancing the current site (not developing a new one) perhaps we would not have to go out to bid. It was decided to ask this question of Jodi Duncan later when she is on the phone.

#### **New Business:**

**2013 Dues** – Laura suggested that the dues structure be the same as in 2012 – i.e. everyone pays \$250, with DRCOG and PPACG paying half of their current amount. This would mean DRCOG would pay

\$2,212.50 and PPACOG would pay \$616.50. New members would be at the \$250 level. Jennifer stated that DRCOG would be amenable to this. Laura stated that the formal adoption of 2013 dues would be on the next CARO agenda in November.

Discussion turned to how to get non-member regions to join/participate, namely Regions 2, 6, and 7. Jo stated that she talked with Eric Bergman from Region 2, and Aimee T from Region 7 at yesterday's statewide meeting of the business loan funds. Jo stated that she would follow up with both of them regarding the benefits of CARO membership. Pete stated that she will follow up with Dan Tate from Region 6 (SCEDD), as she often sees him at monthly STAC (State Transportation Advisory Committee) meetings.

**Representatives to CARO Board** – It was decided that everyone would bring their nominations for representative to the CARO board and alternate for each organization for consideration to the next CARO meeting in November.

Mike Wisdom pointed out that the letterhead needed to be fixed, as some of the member names are cut off. Rachel will take care of this. Discussion followed regarding whether or not to list the names of each CARO members' board chair on the letterhead. After discussion it was decided not to list board chair names, but to keep it as is (i.e. list just the names of member organizations).

ED Morlan, Executive Director for Region 9, joined by phone. Senator Bennet joined the meeting, along with 2 staff members. Laura asked Senator Bennet to comment on the sequestration issues he is working on. Senator Bennet stated that sequestration was insisted upon during the debt ceiling debate, and was designed to be ugly, and that no one wants to see it implemented. He stated that we need to have a discussion about priorities in this country. He recommended that we all do anything we can to hold our elected officials in Washington to the same standards as we do our local elected officials.

#### **Partner Updates:**

##### **DOLA – Christy Culp**

Christy reported that there most likely will be some funding available for COG's through the Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Grant Program. DOLA is still working out funding availability and timing. No information is available yet on match requirements, but likely could be as much as 50/50. The grant program will be competitive, and funding will be geared towards projects and mini-grants, not just general administrative funds. DOLA is hoping applications will be available within the next couple of months. DOLA is hoping for a January 1, 2013 start date.

##### **USDA – Charles Thompson**

Charles reported that USDA is running into the end of the fiscal year, and had a good year in the business loan program. There has been some interest in water and wastewater programs, and a great deal of interest in the community facilities program. The value-added program was just announced yesterday. Energy program expires this year, so they are hoping that the farm bill re-passes. USDA will have a better idea of their funding availability for next year once the continuing resolution passes in September. Housing has seen an increase by more than 50% in the guaranteed rural housing program. USDA has lost staff in the housing area, yet Colorado is leading the nation in the number of homes being financed. Applications are not slowing down, but any new requests now have to go through the Washington office for funding because all FY 2012 funding has been spent. Rural Business Opportunity

Grants (RBOG) have not been announced yet. Charles alerted the group to some scams that have been reported by applicants trying to get the CCR numbers.

**OEDIT – Kari Linker (via phone)**

Kari gave an update on the Blueprint process. She stated that some regions are moving quickly, some are not. OEDIT is working with the regions on developing a strategic summary for each that will tell the story for each region with respect to assets, goals, objectives, etc. The goal is to have these summaries completed by the Statewide Economic Summit on December 5<sup>th</sup>. At this summit, there will be a conversation around the six goals and objective for the state. OEDIT hopes to make this an annual event. Laura asked for some clarification about the forum. Kari confirmed that there will be one representative from each of the 14 regions, and one representative from each of the 14 key industries identified during the blueprint process. Kari was asked how is OEDIT going about completing the regional strategic summaries – i.e. should the regions submit information to OEDIT by a certain date? Kari stated that how it has worked best is to have a meeting with your regional team and invite OEDIT to be a part of that.

Pete Fraser asked what is OEDIT's deadline for completion of the strategic summaries. Kari will get a drop-dead date and email it out to everyone. Mike Wisdom asked if there was a template for the strategic summary as a reference. Kari stated that she would send this out to the group.

Kari reported on OEDIT's progress on the data asset mapping project. She reported that OEDIT has chosen Atlas as the company chosen to do the statewide asset map. OEDIT will be deploying out to the communities to make sure they have identified all assets by the end of the year. OEDIT will be rolling out this effort to the communities as soon as they can.

Kari reported on OEDIT's progress with the key industry work. Kari reported that OEDIT has completed the work on (1) technology and (2) manufacturing, and that there have been formalized business plans developed for both of them. They are well into food and agriculture, tourism and outdoor recreation, and electronics. Eight more will be complete by the end of the year.

Kari stated that Karla Tartz wanted her to update the group on OEDIT's data inventory project. OEDIT is holding final interviews for the competitive intelligence position (used to be Sue Piatt). This new person will be reaching out to CARO members on data inventory project, specifically on (1) asset mapping and (2) data inventory piece.

**EDA – Trisha Korbas and Jodi Duncan (via phone)**

Trisha Korbas reported that EDA recently held a training session in Park City, Utah where they worked together with NADO's Executive Director's Leadership Forum. There were training sessions for Revolving Loan Funds as well as for the EDA partnership planning program and CEDS. Trisha stated that EDA is considering having this training again here in Colorado for CARO and/or EDD's, and perhaps this can be coordinated with the next CARO meeting in the Denver area. Laura asked EDA to send a list of what topics could be included in a training.

Jodi Duncan stated that the PowerPoint used in Park City, which also includes information on statewide CEDS, is available on NADO's website. Mike asked Jodi about CARO's EDA grant and whether or not we needed to go out to bid on enhancing the CARO website. He stated that the site currently exists, and we have web developers already in place, that we just wanted to enhance the site. Jodi recommended that

we have as backup documentation on the competitive bidding process that happened back when the NWCCOG site was first developed, and that we should get about 3 to 4 phone bids as well.

Jodi reported that the NWCCOG EDD designation final approval is waiting for the Assistant Secretary of the EDA to sign it. She hopes this will happen next week. NWCCOG would not be eligible for October 1, 2012 funding, but would be funded in 2013. NWCCOG will need to submit a full grant application for this planning partnership funding. Beverly Fisher will be retiring in September; Jodi will most likely get her grants for administration as well. She is now the project officer for grants that Katie McKain was working on. Jodi asked Region 12 to send Region 1 the information on regional distress factors that it included in its CEDS.

Trisha Korbas reported on a success story regarding EDA grant funds that were provided to the Colorado Springs region very quickly. The funds helped fund a supplemental advertising campaign to help boost third and fourth quarter tourism dollars in light of the devastating wildfire there this summer. The fires resulted in a huge hit to the tourism in the area, and these funds will go to help build back up the region's image and reputation as a tourist destination.

Ed Morlan reported that Dee Funkhouser from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment gave a great presentation at the statewide BLF meeting yesterday. He recommended that CARO provide CDLE a list of contacts in each region that can provide data and input on the state of the economy in each county/region. Laura plans to follow up with her.

#### **CARO Member Updates:**

##### **Region 9 – Laura Lewis Marchino**

Laura reported that SWCCOG is having some growing pains as it strives to become its own entity. Region 9 is still staffing SWCCOG and serving as the fiscal agent. SWCCOG just took on the administration and has become fiscal agent for the SW All Hazards Region. Region 9 has developed an energy efficiency loan program whereby they are using revolved funds from unused business loan funds. They are working on a geothermal effort w/ Chafee County to explore the development of electric power generation. There is geothermal energy in Pagosa Springs (i.e. they have hot springs). Region 9 identified a large discrepancy in the number of housing units for a few of their counties, and this impacts conservation trust fund dollars, census counts, etc. This has been resolved. Region 9's Community Development Action Plans, which are included in the CEDS, are now color-coded to indicate whether each project listed meets (1) A county goal (community action plans) (2) A regional goal (CEDS) (3) A state goal (blueprint). Laura will send an example of this color coded system and regional blueprint to the group.

##### **Region 8 – Mike Wisdom**

Mike pointed out the fact that the buzz word these days is "regionalization" but there is no funding for it. Region 8 is trying to brainstorm different ways to fund the organization so they can do the work that needs to be done. Roni passed around the San Luis Valley Cone Zone Survival Guide, and asked for feedback on the document. Roni also passed around the San Luis Valley Small Business Energy Efficiency Guide, a document that Xcel Energy helped to fund. Mike pointed out that every county seat across the state has all the data for each county that is needed, and if we could just coordinate those entities with OEDIT and EDA we could have all the data needed. However, it seems that everyone is trying to recreate the wheel. We are still not collecting the electronic logic of the data sets that are already out there.

### **Region 14 – Pete Fraser**

Region 14 is working on broadband, economic development, and e911. All the players in these projects are intertwined. There is a great deal of turmoil in the local governments in Region 14; the good news is that SCCOG is being called upon more as everyone recognizes that it is so important to work together. They are having a great deal of difficulty with their assigned asset manager in the housing rehab program from the Colorado Division of Housing. If this does not get better, this will be an agenda item on a future CARO agenda.

### **Region 13 – Judy Lohnes**

Judy reported the region is working on regional economic development, broadband, and housing. They recently got a new rehab project approved for 2013. They are battling budget issues like everyone else. They are talking to local governments about leaving consideration in their comprehensive plans for source water protection. There has been an uptick in business loans. It is their understanding that EagleNet's claim is that they are working in areas that are underserved, however they really are working in over-served areas. There may be some lawsuits claiming misuse of government funds. There is an issue in Chaffee County that their ballots are traceable, so this is going to be very problematic with the upcoming election if not resolved.

### **Region 3 – Jennifer Schaufele**

DRCOG is working on the redevelopment of Denver Union Station and the HUD Sustainable Communities Grant. They are working on new modeling tools for growth and development (traffic patterns, etc.). DRCOG lobbyist is working on forming a position on sequestration. They are finding that more federal dollars are coming into programs that AAA could provide, so the region is looking to take on more programs, including case management, in-house, rather than contracting it out, as a way to draw down more federal dollars.

### **Region 12 – Liz Mullen**

Liz reported that NWCCOG is hopeful its EDA District designation approval is coming soon. The Northwest Loan Fund is working on re-capitalizing the loan fund by applying for CDBG funds. They recently a mobility manager to develop and run a new program of NWCCOG for transportation coordination for seniors, the disabled, and veterans. They are still working on getting the contract finalized with CDOT for veterans administration funds. Region 12 will be piggybacking with Region 4 on purchasing the Network of Care system for the AAA at a reduced cost. NWCCOG will be having a strategic planning session on August 23, and some of the main goals for the upcoming year to discuss include economic development, broadband, and the development of a joint purchasing consortium.

### **Region 5 – Jo Downey**

Jo reported that Region 5 will be applying for new CDBG funds for the business loan fund. Jo has been appointed to both the statewide Enterprise Zone task force (along with Mike Wisdom and Ed Morlan) and the Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance grant committee. The region has been very challenged by the drought, so Region 5 may look at using business loan funds to help businesses with impacts.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next CARO meeting will be either the first or second Friday of November, hosted by DRCOG. It will be ideal if both OEDIT and EDA can be there. We will look at trying to schedule an EDA training alongside the next CARO meeting.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.