



**Executive Committee  
June 24, 2020  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
Land of Sky Regional Council  
339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, North Carolina 28806**

**AGENDA**

**1. Call to Order (11:00am)**

**2. Consent Agenda**

*Consent Agenda items are considered routine and noncontroversial in nature, and are considered and approved by a single motion and vote. If any member of the Executive Committee requests an item be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration and action that item will be placed under the Business, Updates and Discussion section of the agenda.*

- A. May 27, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
- B. FY 2019/2020 Budget Amendment #9

**3. Business**

- A. WNC Regional Leaders Initiative
- B. Land of Sky Regional Council Diversity and Inclusion Focus
- C. Land of Sky Regional Council Office Status

**4. Other Items**

- A. Executive Director Report
- B. COVID-19 Regional Response Effort
- C. Federal and State Advocacy Agenda

**5. Adjournment**

**Land of Sky Regional Council  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
Executive Committee  
May 27, 2020**

**Minutes**

Land of Sky Regional Council's Executive Committee held a virtual meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, May 27, 2020. Executive Committee members participating in the meeting remotely included Chair Larry Harris, Bob Tomasulo, Patrick Fitzsimmons, Barbara Volk, and John Mitchell. Land of Sky staff participating included Nathan Ramsey, Danna Stansbury, Glenda Brown, Vicki Jennings, and Zia Rifkin (Recording). Land of Sky Regional Council staff attending the meeting remotely included Erica Anderson and Zack Schmidt. Susan Russo-Klein (remote participation) was present as LOSRC's legal counsel.

**Call to Order** – Chair Harris called the meeting to order at approximately 11:00am.

**Business**

**Approval of Consent Agenda** – The consent agenda, composed of items A. April 22, 2020 Executive Committee minutes and item B. FY 2019/2020 Budget Amendment #8 was presented for approval with no modification requested.

***Barbara Volk moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Bob Tomasulo seconded and the motion carried unanimously upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.***

**New Business, Discussion & Updates**

**Land of Sky Regional Council FY 20-21 Budget Presentation**

The Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance will be presented to the Board of Delegates at the May 27, 2020 meeting and a public hearing on the budget will be held at their June 24, 2020 meeting, which would recess until the following day, when a vote on the FY20-21 budget will be held at 2:00 pm, which is 24 hours after the Board of Delegates meeting pursuant to NCGA 166A-19.24.

Nathan Ramsey noted that the proposed FY 2021 budget contains a 2.5% COLA for staff. He noted that LOSRC is a little different from local governments in the sense that the organization does not have a general fund and the administrative cost pool is generated through the indirect charged to programs. He shared that the net effect of having more funding go to staff salaries equals more funding to support LOSRC. The downside is that less funding is available for the programs.

Charlotte Sullivan shared the snapshot of the budget for FY 20/21. She noted that the AAA has a \$6.2 million budget proposed for FY21. For Workforce Development, the budget is \$1.8 million, with very little carryover funding going into next year. The ECD budget is \$4.8 million, which is a reduction of over 25% from current funding levels.

Discussion occurred about the increase in proposed funding for the AAA and it was noted that the administrative funding for CARES act funding requires a match at the local level. Nathan Ramsey noted that LOSRC is trying to get state funding to support the match requirement. If that is not possible, the programs would utilize those administrative funds. Coming up with the local dollars is a challenge, as of now. Through CARES, the AAA and ECD funds are the most important to LOS.

Discussion occurred regarding the General Operations budget, which is mostly the lease payment to Buncombe County. In the upcoming budget year, the expense would be one-third less than current levels. Charlotte Sullivan shared that revenue was generated from depreciation expense, which accounts for the reduction. She also noted that 50% of dues funding goes into General Operations. Charlotte Sullivan reviewed the AAA budget and noted that the CARES funding (#524) is shown. Increased funding for SCP and FGP next year, including new, private funding.

Discussion occurred about the purpose of the Buncombe County Lead Agency. The lead agency for Buncombe County is LOSRC. Next fiscal year, the County plans to take that function over directly. LeeAnne Tucker feels very good about this change as the County is moving forward in a positive way. Nathan Ramsey noted that LOSRC was the lead agency for Buncombe County only, with the other counties being their own lead agency for the CDBG funding for Aging. Nathan Ramsey shared that the administrative funds received for being the lead agency did not fully support LOSRC's efforts.

Charlotte Sullivan shared about the ECD budget, noting that the NEMT (#420) budget funding is awarded by Buncombe County and the contract is active through 2021. Charlotte Sullivan noted that the ECD anticipates receiving additional funding during the upcoming fiscal year. Erica Anderson shared that these EDA funds are going to have a positive impact on the ECD's work next year. For every economic development district, the EDA extended this invitation. Mountain BizWorks is the EDA's recipient of the Revolving Loan Funds, which brings additional funding into the region.

Discussion occurred regarding the MPO's Special Studies, which are the grant funds that hold over from Surface Transportation Block Grants-Directly Attributable (STBG-DA). Those funds are flexed into MPO Planning to support staff and another portion of these funds is designated for the MPO's Special Studies that are planned to take place in the FBRMPO region during the upcoming fiscal year.

The Workforce budget was shared next and Charlotte Sullivan noted that there was an over 10% reduction in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, with very little carryover funding anticipated. Nathan Ramsey explained that the WIOA funding formula depends on the local unemployment rates, which have been very low in the region for many years. He also noted that these are federal dollars and the allocation to North Carolina has declined in general. Workforce anticipates that there should be additional dollars in the coming year through the National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG)- \$6 million available for the State. Workforce has applied for a portion. He noted the need to develop a budget based on the funding that is actually allocated at this point.

Charlotte Sullivan shared about the General Operation's budget, which has a depreciation credit of \$134,309 for the lease on the Leicester Crossing building (LOSRC office). She reviewed the charges made to the indirect cost pool, noting a decrease in the administration line item of \$42k. Nathan Ramsey noted that staff are working to limit administrative expense as funding is tight. Charlotte Sullivan shared that the audit expense is also part of the administrative cost.

Discussion occurred about the anticipated 20% reduction in funding for FY21. Nathan Ramsey noted that outside of the CARES Act funding that the AAA and ECD are receiving, this budget probably represents the organizations' low point as it is anticipated that additional funding could be received as part of future stimulus in response to COVID-19.

Discussion occurred regarding the 2.5% cola for staff and Charlotte Sullivan noted that the expense is already in the budgets for the programs. Additionally, the increase in staff support provides additional funding to the indirect cost pool. Nathan Ramsey noted that the retirement and health care costs are going up for FY 21. Charlotte Sullivan shared that the indirect cost rate is right around 43% and the benefits rate is about 37% of staff salaries.

Charlotte Sullivan reviewed the Member Government assessments, which are the dues that member governments pay. These funds are utilized as match funding for grants. Nathan Ramsey reminded the Executive Committee that the Town of Mills River joined LOSRC, with no dues for the first year of membership.

Nathan Ramsey communicated that this budget presentation is for the benefit of the Executive Committee and he requested guidance on the COLA for staff.

Comments:

Bob Tomasulo shared that he was in favor of moving forward with the COLA at this point, noting that there should be additional funding coming in the next fiscal year.

Patrick Fitzsimmons shared that local governments are looking at pulling back on their budgets due to uncertainty about revenues. However, he has no issue with the COLA for staff.

Barbara Volk shared that the City has a different funding stream than LOSRC and as long as the administrative staff is confident that the budget would work, she saw no issues with providing the COLA for staff.

John Mitchell shared that he saw no issue with providing the staff COLA. He noted that if the economy does not improve in 6-8 months, there might be some very difficult decisions that need to be made by local governments.

Chair Harris shared that LOSRC does have a different funding structure and he concurred with staffs' recommendation to provide the 2.5% COLA.

***Information item. No action requested.***

Land of Sky Regional Council Department Presentations

Department Directors provided information on the impacts of COVID-19.

Erica Anderson shared that the ECD has been very busy this year with a lot of project development and grant applications. Received the EDA supplemental funding. Providing assistance to other COGs in the western region. Working on competitive grants for EDA funding and working on the regional PPE task force, which works to find PPE. Have been working on the communications outreach piece for local businesses. A lot of work regarding broadband due to interest in Telehealth. Doing webinars on how to reduce costs to businesses. MPO side, still in the process of the CTP update (2020-2045). NCDOT is in a major funding shortfall and most projects are on hold. NCDOT staff have reductions in force looming. Several regional studies underway. Many of the locally administered projects are wrapping up and administration continues on those.

Zack Schmidt shared that for the AAA, there are two major funding sources that have been received by LOSRC/AAA. Funding has been received for Nutrition- these are pass-through dollars. Providers have until September 2021 to expend these funds. Providers of nutrition services have added drivers and expanded routes. Food is delivered daily and sometimes weekly (for shelf-stable meals). Any additional costs to cover additional clients or expenses have been covered through this funding. Funding can also be used to provide PPE. The second funding stream is from the CARES Act and is meant to provide Nutrition Services. Additionally, the Family Caregiver Support and Ombudsman programs should receive additional funding, which does require a local match. No guidance has been received from DHHS yet on this funding. Level funding through all programs and have not heard that any programs would not be funded due to COVID19. Noted that the AAA is seeking an Ombudsman. Transition Coordinator, funded by the Money Follows the Person initiative.

Vicki Jennings provided an update for Mountain Mobility. She noted that Mountain Mobility's situation is a little different since we're under contract with Buncombe County. For Mountain Mobility, funding has already been secured for FY21, with level funding so it's anticipated to be business as usual. She noted that FY22 funding may be impacted due to Medicaid transformation. Trips are down across the board (50% of typical) for both Mountain Mobility and NEMT. Due to some organizations being shut down, those contracts are not active (AB Tech, for example). Mountain Mobility vehicles are clean and sanitized daily. Overall, the outlook is good for FY21, but some concern for FY22.

Nathan Ramsey shared an update for LOSRC Administration. He gave Charlotte Sullivan a shout-out. She is serving as the Interim Finance Director for the Town of Black Mountain currently as the Town seeks to fill the position. Through the CARES Act, North Carolina COGS are working with the state to provide a Regional Recovery Coordinator, which may bring additional funding to LOSRC. While DHHS has been focused on COVID19, Medicaid transformation is still on the horizon, which may impact the organization, when that resumes. He gave a shout out to Glenda Brown, NEMT Director.

For Workforce Development, Nathan Ramsey shared that there are several grants in process to providing funding to assist dislocated workers (DWs) in the region. He noted that there are tens of thousands of individuals who are currently displaced and who may or may not be able to return to their previous employment. NCWorks centers that are open in the region are some of the only career centers open in the state. Career center staff have been re-directed to work with DES to assist UI applicants. Virtual job fair coming up on June 3-5. Right now, 45 employers are planning to participate. The low unemployment rate has hurt Workforce funding over the past few years. It is hoped that additional funding might be provided to assist the many individuals impacted by COVID19.

***Information item. No action requested.***

Land of Sky Regional Council 501(c)3

Nathan Ramsey shared that initial directors need to be appointed by the Executive Committee so the Articles of Incorporation can be submitted to the NC Secretary of State.

Susan Russ-Klein shared that this is a continuation of the conversation from the April meeting. She noted that the next piece to undertake is the appointment of the initial directors for the Friends of Land of Sky, Inc. 501c3. Board members ought to represent the region, including Haywood County, and be able to provide some support to the 501c3. Initially, directors could be Executive Committee members.

Chair Harris requested Executive Committee members be the initial directors of the 501c3. He noted too, that the election of officers and committee members would be voted on at the Board of Delegates meeting today. He suggested that only the officers of the LOSRC Executive Committee serve as the initial board of the 501c3.

Susan Russo-Klein shared that the number of directors could be lowered since right now, there is not a lot to do (fundraising, grant writing, etc.). Additionally, other individuals, as appropriate could be appointed as directors.

***Patrick Fitzsimmons moved to appoint the initial directors to Friends of Land of Sky Regional Council, Inc. board, which would consist of nine (9) members- four of those members being the current officers of LOSRC Executive Committee. Barbara Volk seconded and the motion was approved unanimously upon a roll call vote.***

Susan Russo-Klein shared that Nathan Ramsey would be the Executive Director of the nonprofit and would sign the Articles of Incorporation.

Other Items

Executive Director Report

Nathan Ramsey shared that his report was in the agenda packet.

COVID-19 Regional Response Effort

Nathan Ramsey shared an update on the COVID-19 Regional Response effort.

Nominating Committee Report

Nathan Ramsey shared that the Nominating Committee report is included in the agenda packet. He proposed that the vote at the Board meeting take place for each position on the Executive Committee.

Nathan Ramsey briefly mentioned the possibility of having some type of event in the summer at the Town of Mills River. Possibility, LOSRC doing something to honor local representatives of the General Assembly, who are not seeking reelection, including Chuck McGrady and Terry Van Dyn, who have been strong advocates of LOSRC. Chair Harris concurred that this would be an amenable activity when the organization is able to hold a public events in-person.

Adjournment

Chair Harris adjourned the meeting, as there was no further business.

DRAFT

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**BUDGET AMENDMENT RESOLUTION #9**

BE IT ORDAINED by the governing board of the Land of Sky Regional Council that the following amendment be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.

**SECTION I.** To amend the appropriations as follows:

Area Agency on Aging	\$ 111,920
Workforce Development	150,000
Economic & Community Development	85,053
General Operations	
Total Appropriations	\$ 346,973

**SECTION II.** It is estimated that the following revenues will be available for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2020.

Federal	\$ 275,587
State	50,735
Local Dues	18,500
Local Government Contracts & Match	(72,638)
Private Grants, Contracts & Sponsor	35,495
Fees	39,294
In-Kind	
Total Estimated Revenues	\$ 346,973

**SECTION III.** The budget officer is authorized to allocate the amounts of projects, programs and functions to appropriate objects of expenditures in accordance with the requirements of the contract concerning each project, program or function.

**SECTION IV.** The Chairman and/or appropriate officers are authorized to execute all contracts or grants necessary to implement this budget, including federal and state grants, contracts for assistance to local governments and agencies, and subcontracts to local entities necessary to implement Council programs and activities.

**SECTION V.** Copies of this resolution shall be furnished to the finance/budget officer as directions in carrying out her official duties.

***Approved at the June 24, 2020 Executive Committee meeting of the Land of Sky Regional Council.***

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Larry Harris, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nathan Ramsey, Attest



**Budget Amendment # 9**

Date: **6/24/2020**

**Revenue & Expenditures**

Program Area	Unit	Original FY19/20 Budget	Current FY19/20 Budget	Proposed Amendment 9	Proposed FY19/20 Budget with Amendment 9
Area Agency on Aging	AAA	\$5,543,853	\$5,646,093	\$111,920	\$5,758,013
Workforce Development	MAWD	\$2,847,669	\$3,492,235	\$150,000	\$3,642,235
Economic & Community Development	ECD	\$4,339,041	\$4,856,241	\$85,053	\$4,941,294
General Operations	MNG	\$219,556	\$309,253	\$0	\$309,253
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$12,950,119</b>	<b>\$14,303,822</b>	<b>\$346,973</b>	<b>\$14,650,795</b>

**Revenue by Source**

Source of Funding	Original FY19/20 Budget	Current FY19/20 Budget	Proposed Amendment 9	Proposed FY19/20 Budget with Amendment 9
Federal	\$7,654,835.00	\$8,366,587	\$275,587	\$8,642,174
North Carolina	\$1,929,402.00	\$1,961,940	\$50,735	\$2,012,675
Local	\$2,655,388.00	\$2,779,819	(\$72,638)	\$2,707,181
Local-Dues	\$221,759.00	\$302,667	\$18,500	\$321,167
Private	\$42,558.00	\$324,826	\$35,495	\$360,321
Other	\$279,501.00	\$286,902	\$0	\$286,902
In Kind	\$126,676.00	\$115,472	\$0	\$115,472
Fees	\$40,000.00	\$140,913	\$39,294	\$180,207
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$0.00	\$24,697	\$0	\$24,697
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$12,950,119</b>	<b>\$14,303,822</b>	<b>\$346,973</b>	<b>\$14,650,795</b>





**Budget Amendment #9**

**Unit: Area Agency on Aging**

**Date:** 6/24/20

**Amendment #9 Net:** \$111,920

Unit	Grant#	Grant Name	AmendNetNine	FedNine	StateNine	LocalNine	LocalDuesNin	PrivateNine	OtherNine	InKindNine	FeesNine	FundBalanceNin
AAA	520	Home & Community Care Block Grant (P/T)	\$21,150	\$22,667	\$1,333	(\$2,850)						
AAA	524	CARES Funding	\$89,420	\$89,420								
AAA	534	Project Care (Administration)	(\$1,500)		(\$1,500)							
AAA	541	Health Promotion/Disease Prevention Pilot	\$2,850			\$2,850						



**Budget Amendment #9**

Date: 6/24/20

Unit: Workforce Development

Amendment #9 Net: \$150,000

Unit	Grant#	Grant Name	AmendNetNine	FedNine	StateNine	LocalNine	LocalDuesNin	PrivateNine	OtherNine	InKindNine	FeesNine	FundBalanceNin
MAWD	211	Special Activities	\$0	(\$24,500)								
MAWD	235	Rapid Response Contingency	\$50,000	\$50,000								
MAWD	275	NDWVG Admin	\$10,000	\$10,000								
MAWD	276	MIDWVG	\$90,000	\$90,000				\$24,500				



Budget Amendment #9  
Date: 6/24/20

Unit: Economic and Community Development

Amendment #9 Net: \$85,053

Unit	Grant#	Grant Name	AmendNetNine	FedNine	StateNine	LocalNine	LocalDuesNin	PrivateNine	OtherNine	InKindNine	FeesNine	FundBalanceNin
ECD	409	City of Asheville - Housing	\$4,800			\$4,800						
ECD	411	Montreat Zoning	\$0			(\$36,450)						\$36,450
ECD	429	WGN	\$5,000	\$5,000								
ECD	436	EDA Planning Grant - 1/1/18-12/31/20	\$23,500	\$5,000			\$18,500					
ECD	490	ARC - Ends 12/31/20- (PY Grant # 481)	\$6,000	\$3,000		\$3,000						
ECD	800	Clean Air Campaign	\$12,000					\$12,000				
ECD	823	DOE/NETL Clean Cities Coalition Support - 2/1/16-1/31	\$25,000	\$25,000								
ECD	830	Mobile Education Center	\$3,753			\$3,753						
ECD	320	Contact Fees	\$14,090									\$14,090
ECD	337	WRP - Buncombe Co Fire Districts Energy Assessments	(\$11,246)									(\$11,246)
ECD	343	WRP - Energy Assessments - AB Tech	(\$764)						(\$764)			
ECD	344	WRP - Energy Assessments - Asheville City Schools	(\$241)						(\$241)			
ECD	346	WRP - NCDEQ-STATE Energy Program	(\$1,839)						(\$1,839)			
ECD	350	WRP - NCDEQ - Solid Waste Management	\$5,000						\$5,000			
ECD	954	Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Coord	\$0			(\$47,741)						(\$47,741)



**Budget Amendment #9**

Date: 6/24/20

Unit: **General Fund**

Amendment #9 Net: \$0

Unit	Grant#	Grant Name	AmendNetNine	FedNine	StateNine	LocalNine	LocalDuesNm	PrivateNine	OtherNine	InKindNine	FeesNine	FundBalanceNine
MING	403	Leicester Crossing Facility - Debt Service	\$0									
MING	410	Local	\$0									
MING	412	Local Fundraising	\$0									
MING	413	ARC Fall Summit Fiscal Agent	\$0									
MING	415	Local Wellness	\$0									
MING	1	Indirect Cost Contribution	\$0									



## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

- Items:** 3A – WNC Regional Leaders Initiative
- Nature of Items:** Information
- Attachment(s):** Regional Leaders Memo by Samantha Cole, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
- Background:** Since early this year there has been a dialogue with five counties (Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania) led by the five county chambers of commerce. Samantha Cole with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce has facilitated this conversation. Land of Sky Regional Council has encouraged this dialogue and Nathan, Danna and Erica have participated in these meetings.
- Responsible Staff:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director, Danna Stansbury, Deputy Director and Erica Anderson, Director of Economic and Community Development
- Suggested Motion:** No action required.

**DRAFT MEMO: WNC REGIONAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT  
SAMANTHA COLE, ASHEVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**INTRODUCTION**

Communities across Western North Carolina are growing.<sup>1</sup> In recent months, local elected officials, municipal staff and business leaders have identified the need for improved communication across organizational lines to help manage the effects of growth in our region.

The reason is simple: communities across the region share challenges associated with growth. Low housing inventory and affordable housing shortages mean many workers are unable to afford housing near their places of employment. Longer commutes between communities strain aging infrastructure like roads and bridges. Areas with smaller tax bases face challenges preparing young residents for post-secondary education and career, while many students in more resourced communities experience significant opportunity gaps. Every community has unique strengths that can help attract employer relocations or expansions, but many need additional capacity to secure transformative public or private investment.

To strengthen Western North Carolina's economy over the long term, our communities can no longer afford to take individualized approaches to workforce development, education, transportation, wellness and opportunity. We must also think regionally.

**WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?**

To help address challenges and make the best of opportunities associated with regional growth, representatives from regional Councils of Government like Land of Sky and leaders from area Chambers of Commerce can work together with employers to convene a quarterly summit of leaders from Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties.

Business leaders from each county, government staff and elected officials would be encouraged to participate. Issue-based topics would be identified and shared with representatives from each county in advance so they can be prepared to discuss successes and challenges with their fellow participants. Meetings will enable participants to exchange ideas, share strategies for success and build lasting rapport, all of which will support a more regional approach to growth.

Meetings will focus on growth-related topics that highlight interests shared among all five participating counties. Early conversations with leaders in target counties have identified workforce development, housing and Opportunity Zones as potential topics.

**HOW WOULD THE REGIONAL SUMMIT WORK?**

Staff from participating organizations would help identify major employers in each of the five initial participating counties so they can help direct the focus of each meeting. In addition to employer leaders and chamber staff, county and city leaders would also be included.

Meetings would be convened quarterly. Topics would be shared with participants at least a month in advance so they have time to prepare information to share with the group. Meetings

would float to a new location each quarter so every participating county would have the opportunity to host.

Ideally, the meetings can scale to fit a broader footprint over time. If a consistent, valuable dialog is established in initial meetings with leaders from five counties, it should grow to include neighboring communities as well.

### **POSSIBLE QUESTIONS**

A number of questions about the project have materialized in conversations with prospective participants. Several of the questions and answers are included below.

1. What's the intended tangible outcome for each participant?
  - a. Leaders across the MSA have expressed interest in breaking down interorganizational silos and addressing challenges regionally. This series of meetings could facilitate collaboration, engagement and improved communication among leaders across the region.
2. Several regional partnerships and conversations have already taken place and several still exist.<sup>ii</sup> How is this different?
  - a. This concept is different from other regional conversations and programs in terms of geographic footprint, scalability, leadership from employers and collaborative leadership structure.
3. Would this concept compete with Councils of Government like Land of Sky?
  - a. No. Councils of Government like Land of Sky are irreplaceable resources in our communities, and this concept is not intended to replace or overlap with them. Instead, this model would ensure representatives from organizations like Land of Sky have a seat at the table.
4. What if not every community sees fit to participate?
  - a. It takes time to break down silos and deepen collaboration. Convening willing partners and creating positive outcomes is one of the best ways to demonstrate value to those who might feel reticent to participate.

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<sup>i</sup> [WLOS: Cost of Growth: Population surges in towns near Asheville](#)

By Karen Zatkulak  
September 20, 2018

As more and more people flock to Asheville, some surrounding towns are seeing spillover into their communities. It brings a boom to their local economies and populations.

But as some small towns are experiencing major success, others are shrinking.

Last week, we visited Rutherfordton, a place that has seen its population decrease over recent years.

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News 13 researched the U.S. Census Bureau data and found that four Western North Carolina counties -- Rutherford, Mitchell, Yancey and Graham -- are smaller now than they were in 2010.

Of the other nearby counties, Buncombe and Henderson are growing the fastest.

***Waynesville's 'easy feel'***

In Waynesville, it's easy to find crowds of people popping in and out of local shops and enjoying the quaint downtown.

"I can honestly say that at least once a day we get someone in who says they are either thinking of moving here or have already moved here," store owner Jose Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez, who owns Main Street Mercantile, said business was so good a couple years ago, he's since expanded, opening two other stores.

"That's one reason we've been able to expand, seeing the influx of people coming in here," Gonzalez said.

Waynesville's population has jumped recently and has now reached just more than 10,000.

Those who live there said the location and lifestyle are what attract people to the area.

"It's got a neat climate, a lot of nice people, there are opportunities here, maybe some smaller cities don't have the opportunities," Gonzalez said.

Town manager Rob Hites admits Waynesville was struggling during the recession.

But, he said, decades of downtown planning by local leaders laid the groundwork for today's success.

"All of a sudden, it's exploding again, and we are having to ramp up our planning departments and get back in the business of evaluating large commercial and individual projects," Hites said.

Hites said, over the years, the increase in population and popularity has led to a 7 percent increase in the local tax base.

"Yes, we're feeling it, our planning department is really strained to answer developer questions and sit down and a lot of people, to use an old saying, are kicking Waynesville's tires," Hites said.

He believes the proximity to Asheville and outdoor activities is a big sell for the small town.



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"We're becoming a bedroom community, the Asheville metropolitan area, and as it becomes more expensive to locate in Asheville and Buncombe county, people are coming to the next largest city west of Asheville, that being Waynesville," Hites said. "When people locate here, we have a first-class recreation center, we have a trout stream that flows right through the middle of town, we have wonderful restaurants, but you can still get right over to Asheville."

### ***Fletcher's future***

On the other side of Asheville, Fletcher's population is skyrocketing, as well.

"Location, location, location, we're in a great central location here in WNC," town manager Mark Biberdorf said.

The Henderson County town saw a 15 percent increase in residents since 2010.

Biberdorf said the town is growing for a different reason -- because of all the open and buildable land.

"We've worked hard to constantly update our land development code and look at our policies to maintain that balance where we have decent land use controls but they are adapting to the situation," Biberdorf said.

Unlike Waynesville, Fletcher doesn't have a decades old downtown to renovate.

Instead, Biberdorf said the town is trying to build one from scratch.

"We have a lot of new development, so it's kind of green filled, building the downtown from where nothing existed there or vacant undeveloped land," Biberdorf said.

The population in Fletcher has jumped 15 percent since 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Biberdorf said Fletcher's parks, planning, and lower priced property have been key to its success.

"There's things you can do to guide growth, but you can't absolutely control it," Biberdorf said.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Buncombe and Henderson have seen their populations grow 8 percent since 2010. The next biggest boom was in Jackson County, which saw a 7 percent increase.

ii RECENT REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Group Name	Type of Entity	Description	Geographic Footprint
<b>CarolinaWest</b>	Economic Development Collaborative.	Founded in 1991, <a href="#">CarolinaWest</a> is a seven-county regional economic development team that works together to support a brighter future for Western North Carolina.	Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, Mitchell, Transylvania and Yancey counties, plus the City of Asheville.
<b>Land of Sky Regional Council</b>	Lead Regional Organization (LRO).  Primarily grant-funded, with support from the dues of the 19 member governments.	Founded in 1966, <a href="#">LOSRC</a> reaches across county and municipal borders to provide technical assistance to local governments and administer projects and programs that benefit the region.	Represents 19 local governments in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties.  For transportation planning, also represents 5 local governments in Haywood County.
<b>French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)</b>		The <a href="#">French Broad River MPO</a> develops the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP).  Land of Sky Regional Council is designated as its Lead Planning Agency.	Cities of Asheville and Hendersonville; the Towns of Biltmore Forest, Black Mountain, Canton, Clyde, Flat Rock, Fletcher, Laurel Park, Maggie Valley, Mars Hill, Mills River, Montreat, Waynesville, Weaverville, and Woodfin; and urban parts of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties.

<p><b>Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (RPO)</b></p>		<p>The <a href="#">RPO</a> works in partnership with the MPO and NCDOT to assist the 4 counties and 19 municipalities in developing a regional transportation planning process.</p> <p>Land of Sky Regional Council is designated as its Lead Planning Agency.</p>	<p>City of Brevard; Towns of Hot Springs, Marshall and Rosman; non-urbanized areas of Buncombe, Haywood, Madison and Transylvania Counties.</p>
<p><b>GroWNC</b></p>	<p>Funded by a 2010 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.</p>	<p><a href="#">GroWNC</a> examined and issued recommendations to address growth and economic development in the region.</p> <p>No longer in operation.</p>	<p>Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties</p>
<p><b>Advantage West Economic Development Group</b></p>		<p>Founded in part by Senator Martin Nesbitt in 1994 to <a href="#">help Western North Carolina attract jobs and resources</a>.</p> <p>No longer in operation.</p>	<p>23-county area west of I-77</p>

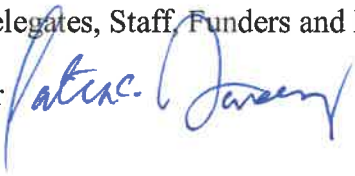


## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

- Items:** 3B – Land of Sky Regional Council Diversity and Inclusion Focus
- Nature of Items:** Action
- Attachment(s):** Council staff memorandum: June 9, 2020
- Background:** In light of recent national and local events, Land of Sky Regional Council staff core values has been amended to add the following core values:
- We value cultural, gender, racial and ethnic diversity;
  - We believe diversity and inclusion make us stronger;
- We propose that the Council establish a Diversity and Inclusion Committee comprised of Executive Committee members and staff to oversee the Council's D&I efforts.
- Responsible Staff:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Suggested Motion:** Motion to appoint Executive Committee members to the Council's Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

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To: Member Governments, Board of Delegates, Staff, Funders and Partners  
 From: Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director   
 Date: June 9, 2020  
 Re: Racial Disparities in our region

The killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 by law enforcement officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota was inexcusable and offensive to the fundamental promise of America that all people are created equal and endowed by our Creator of certain inalienable rights. While this heinous murder was far away from our home, we acknowledge that our region has significant racial disparities in most every aspect of our society. On average, African American individuals in our region earn lower wages, have less educational attainment, and suffer significant health and criminal justice disparities compared to White individuals. These disparities are unacceptable and are the result of many complex factors including, but not limited to, a history of enslavement and segregation of African Americans in our region.

Land of Sky Regional Council is committed to eliminating racial disparities and supporting disadvantaged individuals and communities. Land of Sky Regional Council employees agree to the following core values:

- We value cultural, gender, racial and ethnic diversity;
- We believe diversity and inclusion make us stronger;
- We will treat all people with dignity, respect and compassion to foster trusting and supportive working environment;
- We will be honest, open and clear in our communication with our co-workers, member governments, funders, clients and our region;
- We will respect diversity of opinion;
- We are committed to a culture of personal responsibility with an appreciation for risk taking;
- We will hold ourselves accountable to our co-workers, member governments, funders, clients and our region;
- And we will develop and implement policies and procedures that are fair, consistent and equitable.

Land of Sky Regional Council will begin to share data based on racial disparities with our region and will promote a regional conversation to help us all more effectively understand these challenges.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited our region in August 1965 for a speech at Montreat and he spoke of “man’s inhumanity to man.” In that speech over five decades ago Dr. King said “we shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice. . . . With this faith we will be able to transform the dangling discourses of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. . . . This will be a great day, it will not be the day of the white man, it will not be the day of the black man, it will be the day of man as man.”

We resolve that the promise Dr. King spoke of in that Montreat speech will not be forgotten and endeavor to make his promise a reality in our region.



### AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

- Items:** 3C – Land of Sky Regional Council Office Status
- Nature of Items:** Information
- Attachment(s):** Council staff memorandum: June 6, 2020
- Background:** Effective March 12, 2020, Council offices have been closed to the general public and staff have been encouraged to telework to the greatest extent possible. The most recent memorandum was released by the Executive Director on June 6, 2020 that the Council office will remain closed until further notice.
- Responsible Staff:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Suggested Motion:** No action required.

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To: LOSRC Staff Members

From: Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director

Date: June 6, 2020 *Nathan C. Ramsey*

Re: Response and Temporary Policies Regarding COVID-19

**Effective Immediately and Continuing Indefinitely Until Further Notice. This temporary guidance memo may be amended as needed as conditions change.**

Land of Sky Regional Council issues the following guidance to staff pursuant to state and federal recommendations.

#### **Telework**

Staff shall continue to telework until further notice. Supervisors and employees should continue to develop strategies to ensure telework can occur to the greatest extent possible while maintaining effective communication and coordination of work. If staff must work at the physical office at 339 New Leicester Highway, the staff member shall receive approval from their Supervisor, Departmental Director and the Executive Director.

It is recognized that some functions cannot be accomplished via telework and on-site work may continue when necessary. However, telework is strongly encouraged for any type of work that can be accomplished remotely. Employees shall discuss with their supervisor whether telework is appropriate for their role and if so, how their work will be accomplished via telework.

#### **Employee Business Related Travel**

LOSRC is prohibiting business travel to conferences, training or meetings until further notice, as well as any business travel by airline during this time. If a staff member is required to travel beyond Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties, that travel must be approved by the Executive Director.

It is the responsibility of the individual and their supervisor to confirm the expected attendance at events and plan cancellations accordingly.

**What Employees Should Do If They Feel Sick**

Employees who feel sick shall not work at the LOSRC office or at other locations outside of their own home. If an employee can work from home while sick, it is in the discretion of that employee whether they should use their sick leave or telework. If an employee does not have any available sick leave, the sick employee should remain at home. The employee should notify their supervisor that they are sick and without leave. LOSRC will allow shared leave for that employee with the approval of the Executive Director.

Employees shall notify their supervisor pursuant to the LOSRC personnel policy if they are sick and unable to work. Under no circumstances shall employees who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness, report to work on any day that they are sick or exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness. Sick employees shall not return to work until their temperature is below 100.4 degrees for at least 24 hours.

**Supervisors**

Supervisors are expected to support employee decisions to use sick leave if the employee is sick or needs to care for a family member that is sick pursuant to LOSRC personnel policy.

**Physical office Closure**

The physical office at 339 New Leicester Highway will continue to be closed until further notice to the general public and to staff who can telework.



1. Economic Community Development

- We have received a noncompetitive grant from EDA for \$400,000 in funding from the CARES Act, those funds will be reflected in the upcoming fiscal year.
- Planning for submission of multiple competitive grants to EDA for funding from the CARES Act including reshoring manufacturing focused on the outdoor gear sector in collaboration with Southwestern Commission and High Country Council of Governments.
- Erica participated in a panel with NADO and ERSI on “Telling Your CEDS Story Online: An Introduction to Ersi Story Maps”
- Assisting regional PPE task force with many partners including MAHEC and local governments.
- Introduced the “WIFI LOT” which is a regional map with accessible WIFI locations.
- Waste Reduction Partners has been hosting webinars on COVID-19 reaching over 500 participants.
- Partnering with AAA team for a grant application for a pilot telehealth project to develop a digital literacy program to long-term healthcare facilities in the region.
- Highlighted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for the WestNGN project.
- ECD participated in the statewide webinar “Broadband and Beyond.”
- Submitted a \$140,000 grant application to the NC Department of Justice to continue implementing innovative stormwater control measures in Black Mountain.

2. Workforce Development

- Received \$150,000 grant from the NC Department of Commerce to serve dislocated workers.
- Submitted a request for \$483,600 to support Buncombe County Government and \$54,389 to support Transylvania County Government with temporary employment in COVID-19 related activities, working with other counties in the region on possible grant requests as well.
- Dogwood Health Trust Leverage Fund will be supporting Jordan Peer Recovery with a grant writer for a “recovery to work” grant application for the ARC/USDOL WORC funding opportunity. MAWDB will support this application
- MAWDB will be submitting a grant application for the ARC/USDOL WORC funding opportunity in collaboration with RTI International to enhance the educator/teacher workforce pipeline in the region.
- Still awaiting announcement from USDOL ETA on \$5 million grant application submitted in partnership with three other workforce boards and the NC Department of Commerce.

- Hosted virtual WNC Career Expo in partnership with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, over 600 job seekers and 50+ employers participated
- Providing support for many employers who are downsizing or furloughing workers as well as many dislocated workers.

### 3. Administration

- The Council office large conference room was a polling location for the Tuesday, June 23 second primary. We encouraged staff to make an extra effort to telework on that date and there will be enhanced cleaning of the spaces that were accessible to the public.
- Exploring the possibility of hosting a “Foreign Trade Zone” (FTZ) for our region.
- Updated our employee core values to reflect the importance of diversity and inclusion.
- Working with Craft HR Solutions on diversity & inclusion efforts as well as staff evaluation tool.
- Updating EEO statement to be consistent with recent US Supreme Court decision to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- Interim finance director services to the Town of Black Mountain ended as the town has hired a finance director. We thank Charlotte for her willingness to take on this role in addition to her many responsibilities at the Council.
- Provided legal services to NCARCOG for the RPO contract with NCDOT.
- Continuing to support our region’s myFutureNC effort to increase postsecondary credential attainment aligned with local workforce needs.
- Weekly COVID-19 response calls have been averaging between 50 – 130 participants.
- Submitted an account on the FEMA disaster recovery portal to be reimbursed for eligible expenses.
- Supporting staff telework needs and many virtual meetings.
- Hosted multiple meetings on behalf of the NC Association of Regional Council of Governments (NC ARCOG).
- Response rates for the US Census in our region and NC are lagging and we are working with local partners to increase the response rates for our four counties. Failure to accurately count all of our population will cost our local governments and communities millions of dollars and will diminish our political representation in the NC legislature and US Congress.
- Working with Susan Russo Klein at Roberts & Stevens PA to move the nonprofit forward, submitting Articles of Incorporation to the NC Secretary of State.

### 4. Aging

- Will receive over 1,200,000 from the CARES Act and must secure the local match for the administrative funds. We believe that the state will provide the funding for the local match. If that does not happen, we have other aging funds that we have identified which can be utilized for the local match.
- The Senior Companion Program (SCP) volunteers remain on “pause” during COVID-19 awaiting a safe time to return to service with clients. The volunteers

continue to receive in-service training materials and they are making wellness check phone calls to their clients. A new SCP manager will be hired in the near future to replace Ann Whisenhunt, who is retiring after 5½ years with the program.

- Health Promotion Disease Prevention - Four remote evidence-based health promotion programs were launched last week (week of June 15<sup>th</sup>) serving approximately 30 residents in Transylvania, Henderson, and Buncombe counties. We are offering Zoom Tai Chi for Arthritis along with Living Health at Home (i.e. chronic disease self-management program) via toolkit mailings and weekly conference calls.
- Asheville Terrace Community Health Workers (ATCHW) received additional funding from Buncombe County to support COVID related needs of residents. LOSRC Aging Program Specialist (i.e. ATCHW manager) is also working with MAHEC to share best practices and to identify opportunities to grow this model of culturally appropriate services to underserved and underrepresented communities.
- By the end of May, all respite funding, approximately \$50,000, was utilized by dementia caregivers in Regions A, B, and C for Project C.A.R.E. Most caregivers used their respite funding to hire private caregivers who were already known to the family to provide respite care during the pandemic although a couple of caregivers did hire an agency to provide the care. Project C.A.R.E. continues to provide information, referrals and assistance to callers and to add caregivers to wait list for respite funding. There are 45 caregivers in Region B on wait lists and 34 in Region B are currently enrolled. We anticipate funding for respite again sometime next month and will be distributing it to already enrolled caregivers as well as enrolling new caregivers and providing them with respite vouchers.
- Family Caregiver Support Program – In collaboration with AARP, MountainCare Inc., and the Council on Aging of Buncombe County, the Family Caregiver Program is starting a second series of Virtual Caregiver Chats starting Tuesday, June 30. We have found this is a successful way to address caregivers' social isolation.
- Ombudsman Program - In an effort to continue advocating for all long term care residents, the Ombudsman Program has ordered 5000 informational postcards to provide to all long term care residents in our region. The cards have general information regarding the Ombudsman Program, resident rights as well as contact information for their specific Ombudsman. We are continuing to advocate for residents through phone calls, email and video calls as appropriate. The Ombudsmen are also in contact with facility staff in order to provide information, support and review new regulations.

5. Mountain Mobility

- Working to transport individuals to COVID-19 testing sites.
- Seeing continued increases in trips and increased ridership on Trailblazer routes.
- RIDE program experiencing decrease as passengers are opting to stay home.
- We have hired Sarah Marcin as our new PT RIDE Program Coordinator, she will be starting July 6.

6. NEMT

- Contract awaiting Buncombe County approval for program year 2020 – 2021. Land of Sky was selected as the provider of this service after a RFP process.