

**Meeting of
Land of Sky Regional Council
January 27, 2015**

Minutes

- I. Call to Order - George Goosmann called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.
- II. Invocation - Charles Dickens gave the invocation.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance -
- IV. Roll Call - Mike Hawkins called the roll. The following members were present: Miranda DeBruhl, Mike Hawkins, Gwen Wisler, George Goosmann, Jonathan Kanipe, Larry Harris, Charlie Landreth, Anne Coletta, Albert Gooch, Bob Davy, Barbara Volk Dona Mennella, Lawrence Ponder, Gene Knoefel, Charles Dickens, Mark Burrows, and George Morosani. The following guests were present: April Riddle, Western Region Representative - Governor's Office, Mike Morgan (Interim Town Manager - Town of Weaverville), Dottie Sherrill (Town of Weaverville), Roger Kumpf (Regional Representative - Congressman Patrick McHenry), Tara Ledbetter (City of Hendersonville), John Connett (City of Hendersonville). A quorum was announced.
- V. Modification and Approval of Agenda -
- VI. Public Comment -
- VII. Recognition of Special Guests - Mr. Goosmann recognized several special guests; including, Miranda DeBruhl as the new Commissioner for Buncombe County and its newly appointed Council member. Also recognized were: April Riddle, Roger Kumpf, and from the Town of Weaverville, Dottie Sherrill and Mike Morgan.
- VIII. Chairman's Comments and Roundtable -
George Goosmann - Shared that he had a good Christmas and New Year and that he looked forward to hearing the Town's report from its Administrator, Jonathan Kanipe. Bob Davy - Shared that the Town of Fletcher has a couple of things going on - construction has started on a big apartment complex; also, the Town is working a couple of big incentives deal with companies that want to come into Fletcher and is also working with a group that wants to put in a soccer complex. Dona Mennella - Shared that in the Town of Laurel Park, a Commissioner has resigned and the process has begun to appoint someone to fill the vacancy. Gene Knoefel - Shared that the Town Manager for Weaverville has resigned and Mike Morgan has been appointed as the Interim Town Manager. He was previously the Town Manager for 19 years. A search for a new manager will begin in the spring. The Town Council will be getting into the budget process soon. Charles Landreth - Shared that the Brevard's City Council has its budget retreat on Thursday and Friday which will be the beginning of the budgetary process for the upcoming fiscal year. The City will also be updating its Pedestrian Plan. Particular issues on the budget will be Water and Sewer and how to expand those services. Gwen Wisler - Shared that the City of Asheville is also having its retreat this Friday which starts the budget process - everyone is welcome to come as its open to the public; she also shared that the City had a big meeting last night with a lot of incentives and a lot of zoning. Anne Coletta - Shared that the Town of Flat Rock continues to work on it park and hopes to have the Welcome Center open in the spring. The Park Foundation is planning its first big event which will hopefully be sometime in the fall. Lawrence Ponder - Shared the Town of Marshall's appreciation to Karen Kiehna who provides the Town with administrative services three days -a-week through a contract with LOSRC. Ms. Kiehna shared that the Town just received a DENR Community Development Block Grant totaling roughly \$2,154,000 to make improvements to the water system; another grant totaling nearly \$45,000 is also being used by the Town to

make repairs, paint and renovate their ground-level storage tank. The Town will have submitted by Monday, February 2nd a partial application to start the process of renovating the Skyway Drive Rec Park which has been dormant since the mid-seventies; eventually, it's envisioned that the facility will have a skate park, walking paths and other amenities to make it a really nice recreation area for Madison County. In May, the US Collegiate Bicycle Race will be held in Madison County and in Asheville - two days during that time, it will be in Marshall. Larry Harris - Shared that in December, the Town of Black Mountain approved \$30,000 in matching funds on a \$150,000 grant for the greenway system which is entering its fourth phase of development. He also shared that the Black Mountain Fire Dept. has contracted with the Dynamite Coffee Company to come up with the *Black Mountain Fire Department Dynamite Coffee* - anyone interested in a pound should let him know. Miranda DeBruhl - Shared that last week Buncombe County had its Capital Planning meeting and voted to move ahead with projects including a new Health and Human Services building for the county to be developed in downtown Asheville. She also shared that the county should hear by the end of the month if a new company has accepted an incentive package. April Riddle - Shared that during the winter months, the focus of the Governor's Office is to get out and do some Main Street Tours to provide a chance to come out and meet with business owners, officials, constituents and see what's going on. Barbara Volk - Shared that the Town of Hendersonville is planning its retreat in a couple of weeks. She shared also that the Town recently had a visit from the State's Secretary of Cultural Resources to talk about the importance of hopefully reinstating the tax credits for re-development of some of the Town's historic buildings. Mark Burrows - Shared that the county's Planning Department is working with the Planning Board to kick off an effort to bring in community advocates from through-out the county; this will be an ongoing process for the next several months and which ties into a lot of work that the County Commissioners have been doing. Mike Hawkins - Shared that Transylvania County has started its strategic planning process and has engaged an outside firm with the goal of integrating the county's Strategic Plan with its Comprehensive Plan over the next several months with the hope of coming up with something that will have positive impacts for the people in the county. Jonathan Kanipe - Shared that the Town of Biltmore Forest is starting the budget process, which will be his first and that the Town will also be looking at improving the recycling program in the Town. Meetings will be held with DENR next week to discuss what options may be available for those improvements.

- IX. Approval of Minutes from the December Regular Meeting - December Council meeting minutes were made available at the meeting. A motion was made by Bob Davy to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by George Morosani and approved without further discussion.

Consideration and Approval of Consent Agenda Items - Including items: A. December FY2015 Treasurer's Report; B. Performance Audit Recommendations Update; C. FY2015 Budget Amendment # 2; and D. NC Department of Transportation 5310 Grant - Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Program. A motion was made by Gene Knoefel to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. The second was provided by Charles Dickens and approved unanimously upon a vote.

- X. Presentations/Recognition -

- XI. Old Business -

A. CEDS Committee Update Request - Erica Anderson, Director of Economic and Community Development for LOSRC, shared that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) through the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) is used in our region to identify priority areas for economic and community development initiatives. Local governments, economic development entities, and partners use the CEDS to leverage strategic investments for our economy and communities. She continued that 2015 is an update year for the CEDS and she provided a proposed list of nominees for the Strategy Committee, who will help to identify the priorities and trends for the region's economic development strategy. While not everyone on the roster has responded at this point, Ms. Anderson recommended that the folks listed be accepted by Council as the CEDS Strategy Committee. Larry Harris made a motion to accept the

newly nominated CEDS Strategy Committee. Bob Davy seconded the motion. Gene Knoefel corrected the PSNC representative's name to Don Hollingshe. With no further discussion, the motion was approved.

XIII. New Business -

A. 2015 Council Meeting Schedule and Holiday Closings - Justin Hembree, Executive Director pointed out the two meetings (March and October) which will be held on the third Wednesday of the month rather than the fourth Wednesday in order to accommodate staff attendance at NADO conferences. He recommended acceptance of the 2015 Council meeting schedule and the Holiday Closings and he shared that the holidays which LOSRC will be closed for are the same ones listed in the Employees' Manual. George Morosani made a motion to approve the 2015 Council meeting schedule and Holiday closings. Mark Burrows seconded the motion which was approved unanimously and with no further discussion.

B. Strategic Planning Process - Mr. Hembree shared with Council the flow chart which outlines the Strategic Planning Process which will be kicking-off with a retreat for the Leadership Team and a few members of the Executive Committee. As part of that retreat process, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis will be conducted and once that is complete and a draft is available for Council to review, input will be requested. He shared that Council members would be receiving an email with a link to a questionnaire related to the survey regarding what are the perceived opportunities, threats, etc. Following steps are to identify strengths and ways to enhance those and to bring to the Council a list of limited priorities identifying the top four or five things to focus on. It is anticipated that a draft Strategic Plan will be presented to the full Council in April with approval requested in May. Mr. Hembree shared that this will certainly help us with our work plan for the 2015/16 Fiscal Year. It is expected that the Strategic Plan will be rolled-out over the next year once it is adopted. Mr. Hembree assured that there would be opportunities throughout the process to receive input from Council members, stakeholders, governmental managers, etc. The undertaking of a strategic planning process is another recommendation from the performance audit process. Dona Mennella made a motion to approve the strategic planning process as presented. Gene Knoefel seconded the motion. The motion was approved upon a vote with no further discussion.

C. Transportation Demand Management Program Grant - Ms. Anderson shared with Council that in 2013 the French Broad River MPO (FBRMPO) completed the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Study which recommended establishing a Regional Mobility Manager position to help connect rural workforce with job centers and bridge transportation gaps among existing providers. LOSRC is proposing to create a part-time (50%) position to re-establish and manage the Region's TDM program at a cost of \$75,000. This results in a request of \$37,500 from the NCDOT TDM with \$37,500 from local matching funds (MPO-STPDA allocation) authorized through the adoption of a Resolution. This will be a demonstration pilot to determine the effectiveness of the position. She shared that the position will work with employers to determine ways to get workers to jobsites and will work with all existing transportation networks (ART, Apple County Transit, etc.)

Mr. Hembree provided additional background: this issue initially surfaced through the Workforce Board's private sector employers relating the issue of good workers who do not have reliable transportation to get to work. This concern spurred LOSRC's Transportation Team to develop the TDM position. Larry Harris made a motion to approve the NC Department of Transportation Resolution. George Morosani seconded the motion. Discussion occurred regarding the length of the grant which will initially be for a year with the ability to re-apply after the initial period. Also discussed were duties of the job and what goals could be set to determine if the position was successful. With no further discussion the motion was approved.

XIV. Executive Director's Report -

A. 2014 CDBG Infrastructure Awards - Mr. Hembree shared a map generated by the Piedmont/Triangle COG which showed a geographic representation of the CDBG Awards that were made in 2014. He stated that the map speaks for itself and he encouraged Council members to contact legislative representatives

regarding the scoring system for the grant awards He shared that this is a big issue as we have a lot of communities in our region that have infrastructure needs. The CDBG Infrastructure Awards are State grants through DENR who has an Infrastructure Board which approves the grants based on a scoring system.

B. Annual Dinner - Mr. Hembree shared that LOSRC is thinking about doing some different things for its Annual Celebration and is ready to begin working to schedule the event, hopefully to be held in July (no meetings for a lot of boards, including LOSRC). He encouraged Council to keep an eye out for the save-the-date information.

C. Retreat Facilitation - Mr. Hembree shared that LOSRC staff can provide inexpensive, value-added services to member governments including facilitating retreats. He shared that staff are glad to help out as it allows them to interact with officials other than those appointed to Council.

D. Executive Director's Performance Evaluation - Mr. Hembree shared that, as recommended in the *Implementation Guide* for the Performance Evaluation Recommendations, the Executive Committee has approved establishing an evaluation process for the Executive Director. Council members will be provided with information regarding how the evaluation process will work.

E. Executive Director's Job Description - Mr. Hembree shared that the Executive Director's job description has been revised as recommended to take out the duties that are no longer relevant to the position and it now more accurately reflects the position's responsibilities. The revised job description will be shared with Council.

F. Appalachian Regional Commission 2016 Grant Programs - Mr. Hembree shared that the grants are for 2015, rather than 2016. The ARC is a program at the Federal level which sets-aside a specific level of funds to serve the Appalachian region. Each year there is a specific amount of funds allocated to each state in the region. The application process for these funds normally opens up mid-spring. Mr. Hembree shared that he brings this to Council's attention as these funds have traditionally been used to fund projects that local governments could not do on their own. A 50% match is required for these grants which has made it difficult for communities to gain access to these funds. He informed Council that more information can be provided to governmental managers and that job creation projects should be brought to the attention of LOSRC Administrative staff as more information can be provided. He also shared that this year there will be a new grant program for ARC available only in North Carolina (the grant is as-of-yet, un-named) which will be just for local governments - funds will be set aside in each ARC region in the State to be used for mini-grant programs (\$40,000 to \$100,000 in funding) for implementation-type projects: streetscape plans, downtown parking plans, building sidewalks, beautifying downtown areas, etc. The mini-grant program will be structured so that each region has a review committee to recommend funding priorities to the local Council with those that win approval then going to the Governor.

Mr. Hembree mentioned that Orientation Sessions are planned for Council members. Those will be held right after April's Council meeting. He encouraged that all Council members are welcome to attend.

Mr. Goosmann shared that Council members are welcome to join the Executive Committee meetings. Those are open meetings.

XV. Important Dates -

XVI. Adjournment - With no further business before Council, Mr. Goosmann adjourned the meeting.