

## **SWCCOG Executive Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday, March 10, 2026**

**12pm**

### **Executive Committee Minutes**

**Attendance:** Veronica Medina, Chair, Archuleta County; Matt Salka, Vice Chair, La Plata County; Drew Sanders, Secretary, City of Cortez; David Harris, Treasurer, Town of Pagosa Springs.

**Region 9:** Laura Lewis Marchino, Shak Powers, Irina Hauser, Allyson Barker, and Shirley Jones.

#### **A. Call Executive Committee Meeting to Order – Veronic Medina, Chair**

1. Veronica Medina, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

#### **B. Amendments to the Agenda**

1. E-3 Nuclear Lifecycle
  - a. **Matt Salka made the motion, Drew Sanders second, to approve the agenda with amendment to add discussion topic E-3. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **C. Public Comment**

1. No public comment

#### **D. Decision Items**

##### **1. 2025 Financial close-out**

**Summary:** Shirley gave a summary of the 2025 financials provided in the packet, including the fact that no budget amendments needed to be made. This included: Statement of Revenue and Expenses comparing actuals to budget; Revenue and Expenditures by fund; and the Balance sheet by fund. The approved financials are to be sent to the auditors, and the audit is grouped into 2 funds: Broadband and Operating. Operating funds include: All Hazards, Grants Navigator, REDI, and SWIMT.

- a. **Discussion:** A question was asked regarding whether the financials were recorded as accrual or actual. Answer, accrual. A question was asked regarding the broadband payouts and whether they are paid to the county rather than the community development corporation as a recent check was sent to the county. Answer, it should have gone to the community development corporation. Region 9 will look into why it might have been sent to the county by mistake. Governments are paid every 6 months so that should have been July through December last year and should have arrived at the community development corporation in February.
- b. **David Harris made the motion, Matt Salka second, to approve the 2025 financial close out as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

##### **2. Accessibility policy materials**

- a. **Summary:** The Region 9/SWCCOG accessibility policy with proposed updates was included in the packet. The policy was updated to better identify staff responsibilities. Having an accessibility policy is a requirement and was last approved in December, but Region 9 wished to itemize some responsibilities since Region 9 does not have a dedicated accessibility personnel member. We are also looking to add some policy about AI which are not included in this update or up for approval at this time.

- b. **Discussion:** Comment regarding some typographical edits which will be passed on to Region 9 offline. The policy will be brought to the full Board to affirm.
- c. **Matt Salka made the motion, Drew Sanders second, to approve the updated accessibility policy as presented. Motion passed unanimously.**

### 3. **Congressionally dedicated funding for Broadband**

- a. **Summary:** Region 9/SWCCOG staff would like to submit an application to continue to build out our regional middle-mile infrastructure. Colorado Broadband Office will soon open funding for middle mile applications. Staff is asking for approval to apply for the funding for the alpine loop project and are meeting with congressional staff from Senators Hickenlooper and Bennet's offices tomorrow. There is only a \$12 million pot of funding to apply for and Region 9 plans to apply for up to \$2 million. There are still several stretches that need to be linked into the fiber loop, including Mancos to Durango, Silverton to Ouray, Dolores to Rico, and Cortez to Mancos as well as the connection over Wolf Creek.
- b. **Discussion:** Comment that typically with CDS funding there is a required match and a question about what that will look like. Answer, the hope is that the state middle mile funding will provide the match. Will have a better idea if we receive funding, and it is also possible match funding by city of Durango may be an option if the funding is used to expand to Three Springs or Bodo area. Unfortunately, Region 9 did not receive EDA funding. Comment that the COG still holds 200k of R9 funding, which could be released to assist in a match.
- c. **Drew Sanders made the motion, David Harris second, to approve Region 9 to apply Congressionally dedicated funding for broadband. Motion passed unanimously.**

## E. **Discussion Items**

### 1. **Tribes as SWCCOG voting members**

- a. **Summary:** The Tribes are currently non-voting members of the SWCCOG, and many on the Board believe that including the Tribes as voting members would further cooperation and collaboration for the benefit of all moving forward. The question is what steps are to initiate the process to make the tribes voting members. Staff have reached out to NADO for sample bylaws of similar association of governments with tribal members and several examples have been received but not yet thoroughly reviewed by Region 9. Staff will then pursue legal advice and reach out to the Tribes. In 2023 the Bylaws were updated for our two tribes to serve as nonvoting affiliate members, due to them not wishing to sign a SWCCOG member Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA).
- b. **Discussion:** A comment was made that previously the Tribes did not want to join the SWCCOG as voting members because the member governments all signed IGA's to participate and the Tribes did not want to sign the IGA. Question regarding the fact that the two Tribes participate on the Region 9 Board as voting members and how is SWCCOG different? Answer, Region 9 is not considered a government entity, so it doesn't have the IGA requirement for voting participation. A question was asked about what is driving the move for change and whether it was the Tribes who brought this to the table. Answer, a Tribal Representative on Region 9 has expressed interest in becoming a SWCCOG executive committee member which is what started the discussion. A comment was made expressing not wanting staff to do a lot of work without the Tribes expressing interest and to inquire with tribes' leadership before the investment of time and legal advice. Consensus was to ask the Tribes if they have an interest in becoming voting members of the SWCCOG before moving forward.

### 2. **SWCCOG Grant & Program Update**

- a. **Summary:** The All-Hazards audit was conducted, and follow-up information including policies and processes were sent in September. Region 9 is submitting a compliance plan this month. The current All Hazards grant round accepted individual community participation rather than a regional application. One Montezuma County Application was approved. If the trend continues, Region 9/SWCCOG may not need a contractor once the current grants close out in 2-3 years. Our current contractor Vicki Schaffer has indicated she will complete all open grants but will not continue after that. Region 9 received word that we did not receive the EDA grant funding but have yet to receive the official denial letter. Building expansion plans are on hold due to lack of current capacity. Region 9 is looking at providing an elected officials training. There is interest from area government, but we currently lack capacity and funding. Still on the table and maybe on the next strategic plan update.
- b. **No Discussion.**

### 3. Nuclear Lifecycle

- a. **Summary:** A memo was provided to the Executive Committee outlining that the Federal Department of Energy has reached out to states inquiring about interest in a large nuclear campus which could include reactors, uranium mining, processing, and disposal. A letter of support was requested. Since part of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe encompasses White Mesa Mill and its radioactive waste history could affect tribe members, their opinion was sought by staff. Since the area has history of nuclear waste disposal sites, if Colorado or Utah was chosen for the nuclear campus, continuing the storage of waste near White Mesa Mill is a possibility. There is a disproportionate number of people sick in White Mesa Mill with cancers believed to be caused by the waste of the uranium mining in that region. The question is, if Ute Mountain Ute is opposed, where does the SWCCOG committee stand? We sent introductions to the Tribes environmental directors, though neither have responded yet. Colorado must respond soon. If either or both tribes oppose the state, does the SWCCOG support R9 staff siding with the Tribes?
- b. **Discussion:** A question was asked whether siding with the Tribes is an appropriate role for SWCCOG when the Tribes are not members. Answer, Region 9 does not want to oppose the tribes- Question regarding whether it is known where this campus is going to be if Colorado is chosen. Answer, we do not have enough information, but near White Mesa Mill would be logical since there is a disposal site for nuclear waste already nearby. Comment regarding not wanting to tie the counties or towns to a decision without more information. Comment that those working at the community level have to protect their communities first. No decision was made.

### F. Other Business

None

### G. Adjourn Executive Committee Meeting

**Drew Sanders made the motion, Matt Salka second, to adjourn the meeting. Veronica Medina, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 12:45 PM**

**Minutes submitted by Allyson Barker**