

Administration & Finance Committee

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the WRCOG Administration & Finance Committee was called to order by Chair Crystal Ruiz at 12:00 p.m., on March 8, 2023, in WRCOG's office and on the Zoom platform.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Crystal Ruiz led members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

- City of Calimesa - Wendy Hewitt
- City of Corona - Jacque Casillas
- City of Jurupa Valley - Chris Barajas
- City of Lake Elsinore - Brian Tisdale
- City of Norco - Kevin Bash
- City of Perris - Rita Rogers
- City of San Jacinto - Crystal Ruiz (Chair)
- County of Riverside, District 2 - Karen Spiegel
- County of Riverside District 3 - Chuck Washington
- Western Municipal Water District - Brenda Dennstedt

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR – (Lake Elsinore / Corona) 9 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Items 5.A through 5.D were approved.

A. Summary Minutes from the February 8, 2023, Administration & Finance Committee Meeting

Action:

1. Approved the Summary Minutes from the February 8, 2023, Administration & Finance Committee meeting.

B. Approval of the Third Amendment to Professional Services Agreement with Yunex, LLC

Action:

1. Recommended the executive Committee to approve the Third Amendment with Yunex, LLC

C. Streetlight Program, Broadband, and Energy Resilience Activities Update

Action:

1. Received and filed.

D. Finance Department Activities Update

This item was pulled for discussion by Committee member Wendy Hewitt who asked why WRCOG has an operating loss of \$146k.

Andrew Ruiz, WRCOG Chief Financial Officer, indicated that budget adjustments were approved at the recent Executive Committee meeting. Changes are now being implemented and will show up on the next update. The General Fund also consists of PACE revenues, most of which will come at the end of the fiscal year.

Committee member Hewitt also asked about a discrepancy in the HERO program.

Mr. Ruiz indicated that this was also addressed in Monday's Executive Committee meeting, and explained that the reason behind the discrepancy in the actuals is because the housing market has changed. With the rising interest rates and home values flattening out, people are no longer pulling equity to pay off their loans.

Committee member Hewitt also asked about the discrepancies in the REAP Program, which Mr. Ruiz clarified that this is another budget adjustment of \$300k. REAP has been extended for another 18 months.

Chris Gray, WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, added that REAP is a reimbursement grant. It does not cost WRCOG to operate the Program, but the grant money has not been spent as quickly as anticipated, so it will take slightly longer to spend it.

Committee member Hewitt also noticed no actuals on the insurance and also asked about Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) repayment that did not have an actual either.

Mr. Ruiz responded that the payments for the insurance do not coincide with the fiscal year, so it will be added later. OPEB payments for are made later as well.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

6. REPORTS / DISCUSSION

A. I-REN Activities Update and Survey Participation Request

Casey Dailey, WRCOG Director of Energy and Environmental Programs, provided an update on the formation of the I-REN Program and how I-REN will focus on three sectors: 1) Public, 2) Codes and Standards, and 3) Workforce Education and Training. Through these sectors, there will be some direct benefits to participating members which include technical assistance, financial incentives, energy modeling services, benchmarking services, Title 24 Code Compliance trainings, energy certification programs, and placement of I-REN Energy Fellows.

WRCOG's representatives are Crystal Ruiz of the City of San Jacinto (serving as I-REN Executive Committee Chair), Chris Barajas of the City of Jurupa Valley, and Jacque Casillas of the City of Corona. CVAG's representative is Oscar Ortiz (serving as I-REN Executive Committee Vice-Chair). SBCOG's representatives are Art Bishop of the Town of Apple Valley (serving as I-REN Executive Committee 2nd Vice-Chair), Curt Hagman of the County of San Bernardino, and Deborah Robertson of the City of Rialto.

Highlights were presented on the development of the I-REN Strategic Plan, a 5-year organizational plan designed to ensure effective and efficient use of ratepayer funds, identify clear priorities and actions, and to ensure activities and engagement are aligned across all members of I-REN. Part of the process in preparing the Strategic Plan was the release of two surveys; one for committee members, and one for member agencies. The results will be presented at the March 21, 2023, I-REN Executive Committee meeting. Primary areas for discussion will be to prioritize which programs and areas to build out first, securing regional partners, and connecting with local governments and tribes to provide service.

Finally, an update was presented on four major contracts that were approved at the February 17, 2023, I-REN Executive Committee meeting. For the Public Sector Programs, The Energy Coalition was selected as a consultant. For the Building Upgrade Concierge software development, Alternative Energy Systems Consulting was selected. For the Codes and Standards Programs, Frontier Energy was selected. For I-REN's Marketing and Outreach efforts, ICF Resources was selected. These implementers will all be responsible for developing and implementing I-REN's Programs and offerings for the next few years.

Committee member Jacque Casillas indicated that the three agencies are working together to find where they can have the greatest impact and provide tangible results for residents.

Committee member Chris Barajas added that I-REN will be servicing over 4 million people. I-REN is fully funded by the California Public Utilities Commission, so there will be no revenue generation or rate payers. There has been a lot of positive discussion, starting off slow but making great progress towards giving back to the region, like SOCAL-REN and BAY-REN did to their regions.

Chair Crystal Ruiz indicated that her favorite part about I-REN is the opportunity for education, not just for city employees, but for college and high-school students to start young and get them involved in renewable energy. The partnership with both counties is phenomenal, and they have the unique opportunity to develop the program and what direction to go in. Chair Ruiz commended staff for all the work they put in.

Committee member Barajas explained that specifics are still being discussed, but ultimately it would be the cities' responsibility to apply for funding through I-REN, there is no set amount that will be automatically distributed to each city.

Mr. Dailey added that I-REN will offer direct financial incentives and rebates for replacing or upgrading old, inefficient equipment to new energy efficient equipment, similar to WRCOG's Streetlight Program model.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

B. 2023 General Assembly Community Service Awards and Nominations

Julian Brambila, WRCOG Analyst, presented seven nominations for consideration for this year's award. The nominees for the individual award are Ann White, Noland Turnage, Ronnie Imel, and Ted Hoffman. The nominees for the group award are the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals, Inland SoCal United Way, and Moreno Valley College Corps.

Award recipients will receive a plaque, a complementary ticket to the General Assembly event, plus a ticket to the VIP reception, and will be included in a short video.

Committee member Rita Rogers brought up the fact that there were some nominations that did not stick to the 200-word count, which might not be fair to those who did, as they could have emphasized more about the nominee.

Mr. Barajas suggested to stick to one individual and one group award.

Chair Ruiz liked the idea of nominating Ted Hoffman, but suggested that he be presented with his own separate award.

Committee member Karen Spiegel suggested a Lifetime Achievement / Legacy award.

Chris Gray, WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, added that Mr. Jon J. Benoit received a Lifetime Achievement award in 2017.

Mr. Gray said that we will work with staff to make all accommodations necessary for Mr. Hoffman's family to attend the assembly to provide him with appropriate representation.

Actions:

1. The following nominations for the 2023 WRCOG Awards for Outstanding Community Service were recommended to the Executive Committee for final approval:
 - a. Ronnie Imel for individual (Norco / County District 3), and
 - b. Moreno Valley College Corps (County District 3 / Corona), and
 - c. Ted Hoffman (Lifetime Achievement Award - posthumously, not as part of the Community Service Awards).

7. REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chair Crystal Ruiz reported that staff are working extensively on General Assembly preparations and are getting ready to do a food-tasting.

8. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Kurt Wilson was not present to provide an update.

9. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

There were no items for future agendas.

10. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee member Kevin Bash announced that Riverside County purchased a building in Norco that will serve as a tech bridge that connects with the Navy base and March Air Force Base, making technologies developed in federal facilities available to the public. This would be a great opportunity for I-REN to partner. It has an incubator and access to federal labs. The City of Huntington Beach is involved in a case against the State of California, arguing that it cannot build the housing that the Governor mandated. State law dictates that zoning governance goes to local and county entities. The City is expected to lose at the State Supreme Court, and the case will then go to the Federal Supreme Court for review.

Committee member Chris Barajas announced that the City of Jurupa Valley received \$1.5M from the federal government and \$33M from Senator Sabrina Cervantes's office for a proposed Inland Empire (IE) technical trade center. It will partner with the Inland Empire Labor Council and Riverside City College in teaching the trades: electrical, plumbing, carpentry, etc. The trade center is located in Jurupa Valley, but it is an IE project.

Committee member Chuck Washington announced that he and Supervisor Spiegel will be working to put together a fentanyl task force to address this issue.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next Administration & Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at 12:00 p.m., in WRCOG's office at 3390 University Avenue, Riverside.

12. CLOSED SESSION

This item was moved to April.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Administration & Finance Committee adjourned at 1:10 p.m.