

# Technical Advisory Committee

## Minutes

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the WRCOG Technical Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Rob Johnson at 9:31 a.m. on April 20, 2023, in WRCOG's office.

### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Johnson led members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3. ROLL CALL

- City of Banning - Doug Shulze
- City of Calimesa - Will Kolbow
- City of Canyon Lake - Nicole Dailey
- City of Corona - Jacob Ellis\*
- City of Eastvale - Mark Orme
- City of Hemet - Mark Prestwich
- City of Menifee - Rochelle Clayton\*
- City of Moreno Valley - Michael Lloyd
- City of Murrieta - Kristen Crane\*
- City of Perris - Clara Miramontes
- City of Riverside - Mike Futrell
- City of San Jacinto - Rob Johnson (Chair)
- City of Temecula - Betsy Lowrey
- City of Wildomar - Dan York\*

\*Arrived after Roll Call

### 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Arnold San Miguel from SCAG reported that Connect SoCal is conducting public outreach events throughout the region. A pop-up event will be held in Western Riverside County at the Temecula Rod Run on May 5, 2023, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Committee members and staff are encouraged to fill out a survey, and share it with other staff and members of the public.

**5. CONSENT CALENDAR** – (Banning / Perris) 14 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Items 5.A through 5.E were approved.

#### A. Summary Minutes from the February 16, 2023, Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

**Action:**

1. Approved the Summary Minutes from the February 16, 2023, Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

**B. Summary Minutes from the March 16, 2023, Technical Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Action:**

1. Approved the Summary Minutes from the March 16, 2023, Technical Advisory Committee meeting.

**C. 2022 Fee Comparison Analysis Update - Final Report**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**D. SCAG Activities Update: March 2023**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**E. Finance Department Activities Update**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**6. REPORTS / DISCUSSION**

**A. Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget**

Andrew Ruiz, WRCOG Chief Financial Officer, reported that Agency-wide revenues are budgeted at approximately \$19.5M against \$19.2M in expenditures.

The PACE Commercial Program is comprised of two providers, Twain and Nuveen, with a total budget of approximately \$110k. Actual revenues are currently at \$68k. It is difficult to make predictions for PACE because there is no consistency in the Program's activities. Proposed changes are to consolidate the PACE Commercial Program while tracking vendor activity, aligning revenues with fixed costs, primarily salaries at a proposed budget of \$148k, and finally, adjusting revenues and variable costs based on actual activity.

TUMF collections are split five ways: RCTC, WRCOG Zones, RTA, RCA, and WRCOG Administration. Based on WRCOG auditor recommendations, only 4% of TUMF collections will be considered revenue. Compared to last year, excluding the TUMF revenues, the Program has seen approximately a \$2M increase. TUMF revenues will be reclassified as an alternative revenue source based on recommendations from the WRCOG auditors, following GASB 84. TUMF Administration revenue will be approximately \$52k due to the Beaumont Settlement Agreement, which is 4% of the \$1.3M expected collections. Remaining funds will be distributed as outlined in the Settlement Agreement.

Environmental Program budgets include the Solid Waste Program, Love Your Neighborhood Program, and the Used Oil Program. Energy Program budgets include the SoCal Gas Partnership, Streetlight Program, and the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN), all of which have increased from Fiscal Year

(FY) 2022/2023.

The I-REN budget is \$65M over a 6-year period. Funds may be rolled over to subsequent years within those six years. An Advice Letter will be sent to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to increase the budget and allow rolling the remaining funds over into later years.

The HERO Program anticipates \$764k in revenues for FY 2023/2024, which is a decrease from the \$1.1M in FY 2022/2023. This is primarily due to various changes in the market and interest rates. Anticipated expenditures are \$1.15M, leaving a deficit of approximately \$388k.

The Administration budget is \$2.87M, including the overhead, member dues, and interest. The Fellowship Program has a budget of \$100k based on five Fellows. It will continue to operate with its current funding structure; however, additional options, such as fundraising, sponsorships, or support from philanthropic entities require further discussion to extend the life of the Program.

Over the past few years, the General Fund housed many of the WRCOG Programs. WRCOG staff are working to break out those programs and create their own separate funds.

Dr. Kurt Wilson, WRCOG Executive Director, stated that discussions with Executive Committee members reinforced the idea of having a longer-term view of the budget instead of year-by-year. WRCOG revenues are generally program-based, and are thus more volatile than with traditional public agency revenues that come from sales taxes or property taxes which are more predictable. Also, programs were implemented during different times of the WRCOG cycle, and money was not the main focus. Going forward, the consensus was that the programs should be able to pay for themselves.

Four guiding principles are being used as a part of the FY 2023/2024 budget process:

1. Fair distribution of funds and funding requests
2. Requiring all programs to be self-sustaining
3. Focusing on the long-term health of each fund
4. Incrementally moving towards these goals when full-scale immediate changes are impractical.

Dues for WRCOG general membership, Solid Waste, and Clean Cities were discussed. Changes for all three were proposed; however, only dues for Solid Waste and Clean Cities are being proposed for the FY 2023/2024 budget, with a phase-in for the Clean Cities dues. There were no proposed changes to the current year member dues, but an evaluation of the components of the dues structure and amount will begin immediately, which will then be presented to the Committee for approval.

The Solid Waste Program is an opt-in program, and increases will only apply to those member agencies that choose to participate. The Clean Cities Program is another opt-in program, and is partially funded by AB 2766 funds from the South Coast Air Quality Management District. The WRCOG energy team is actively pursuing grants, but these funds are not guaranteed. Other funding sources include the Department of Energy, a West Virginia University partnership, and the Local Transportation Fund. There is a proposed increase of 10% for participating member agencies while the Program works toward self-sufficiency. Additional changes will be addressed over the next fiscal year after further analysis.

The Executive Committee did not have an interest to use General Fund dollars to continue the

Fellowship Program. It will run until or unless funds are either depleted. Staff is seeking additional grant funding, sponsorships, or support from philanthropic entities such as the WRCOG Supporting Foundation to extend the life of the Program.

I-REN has a unique structure, which is funded by the CPUC over multiple years, and operates on a calendar year as opposed to WRCOG's fiscal year. The I-REN Executive Committee makes programmatic budget decisions, which are then incorporated into the WRCOG budget, with half of the budget accounted for in the current fiscal year, and the other half for the following fiscal year. Furthermore, I-REN is not a Joint Powers Authority, so all budget decisions are delegated to the WRCOG Executive Committee for approval.

There were changes made to the Budget Resolution, which is approved by the Executive Committee, with regard to the WRCOG Executive Director's authority as well as City Managers' authority to make changes to the budget.

Committee member Will Kolbow asked to clarify Section 4, item B of the Budget Amendment, asking whether the Executive Director would have authority to amend only the grant revenues, or if it would apply the entire Program revenue structure.

Mr. Ruiz replied that it is specific to the grant revenue. WRCOG received additional funds in the amount of \$125k for SB 1383 implementation, and in this instance, the budget was amended on the revenues and expenditure side without having to go through the Committee process.

Dr. Wilson added that for programs that receive grant revenue, those funds would be incorporated through a budget amendment when they are received. There is a challenge with the amount of time that it takes for items to be approved through the typical process: first by TAC, then by the Administration & Finance Committee, and finally by the WRCOG Executive Committee. If all goes well, the entire process still takes approximately 3 months, but can be significantly longer. Some grants are time-sensitive and there is a deadline to accept the funding.

Committee member Kolbow asked if this applies to grants that are within existing programs, or if it also applies to other things.

Dr. Wilson stated that the Administration & Finance Committee will be addressing a documented process for new programs at its next meeting. The focus has mainly been on internal operations, but there is a plan to create a process for new programs, which will then be presented to the various WRCOG Committees for approval.

Committee member Kolbow expressed concern about not having a limited dollar amount, and suggested requiring approval from the Administration & Finance Committee if it were to exceed a specified amount. With regard to the Classification and Compensation salary adjustments, there may be issues with CalPERS if the adjustments were not approved by a governing board.

Dr. Wilson clarified that CalPERS is most concerned about the approval of the Salary Schedule itself, as opposed to the employee's location on that schedule (Step I, Step II, etc.). WRCOG recently underwent a Classification and Compensation study which was approved by the Governing Board.

Committee member Lori Sassoon asked about the fund balances, and if there is anything the Committee

can do to reduce the HERO Program deficit.

Mr. Ruiz responded that the fund balance has yet to be brought forward, but will be presented in the near future.

Dr. Wilson added that the HERO Residential Program was paused by the Executive Committee due to many factors, including the sole WRCOG partner declaring bankruptcy. The revenues are gone because nothing new is being done, but WRCOG has an obligation to continue until the last one is paid off.

Casey Dailey, WRCOG Director of Energy & Environmental Programs, stated that the main expenditures for the HERO Program were for litigation costs and salaries.

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**B. Riverside County Regional Broadband Efforts**

Tom Mullen, Chief Data Officer for Riverside County Information Technology (RCIT), provided updates on the County's broadband initiative. Rivco Connect has partnered with various Councils of Government with a goal to bring ubiquitous fiber connectivity to all cities and unincorporated communities. RCIT works primarily with three internet service providers - AT&T, Charter Spectrum, and Frontier - to make this vision possible, and focuses on three areas that it seeks to address to close the digital divide:

1. Availability of broadband infrastructure;
2. Affordability; and
3. Adoption needs / digital literacy.

The County continues to encourage service providers to build more infrastructure to meet availability needs of the subregion, specifically in unserved and underserved communities. RCIT has conducted extensive geospatial mapping to identify those unserved and underserved areas of Riverside County and has hired a contractor to complete a Gaps and Opportunities Assessment to understand the state of broadband across the County. The County of Riverside was awarded a Local Agency Technical Assistance grant to update its Broadband Master Plan.

To address affordability needs, RCIT has launched an extensive Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) Outreach Campaign to make the community aware that the Program is available for eligible households. The ACP is a subsidy from the Federal Government, which provides a monthly discount of \$30 on internet service. There is a large population that qualifies for the Program, nearly one out of two households in Riverside County. Although the registration is through the Federal Government, Riverside County assists with the sign-ups through a call center hotline, (866) 922-1016, by helping residents enroll in the ACP. The subsidy also applies to cellphone bills, but the main focus is on broadband. RCIT has identified a need for digital literacy training in Riverside County and is seeking additional funding to assist with that effort. RCIT has a database of grant opportunities and is currently tracking over 70 broadband grant programs.

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

#### **D. Good Neighbor Guidelines for Siting New and/or Modified Warehouse / Distribution Facilities**

This item was heard out of order.

Chris Gray, WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, reported that the Guidelines were developed in 2003 by the Regional Air Quality Task Force and endorsed in 2005 by the WRCOG Executive Committee. The document includes recommendations and strategies for reducing the negative impacts associated with warehouse and distribution center operations. It has not been updated since its creation even though newer guidance, regulations, and requirements have been developed, but it is still being used and cited by various entities. Additionally, many member agencies have developed and adopted their own guidelines as it pertains to its community.

This item was presented to the WRCOG Planning Directors Committee, which were asked to consider either updating the current Guidelines, rescinding the document altogether, assisting agencies to develop their own guidelines, and waiting to see the result of currently proposed legislation (AB 1000 & AB 1748).

Issues may arise if regional guidelines conflict with local guidelines. Additionally, warehouse siting is a very contentious issue, primarily in relation to sensitive receptors (homes, parks, schools, etc.). Standard setbacks can range from 300 feet or less, to 1,000 feet or more, and are often the subject of litigation. While there are objective criteria, agencies evaluate that criteria differently.

Bill Blankenship from the Inland Empire Commercial Industrial Association expressed his opposition for updating the Guidelines, which may conflict with some member agencies' own guidelines. WRCOG should allow jurisdictions that are impacted by this issue work through it themselves.

Committee member Doug Schulze is also opposed to updating the Guidelines, as what may be good for one community may not work for another.

Committee member Will Kolbow agreed that the update is not worth doing, but supported the idea of WRCOG helping individual member agencies create their own guidelines.

Committee member Lori Sassoon suggested creating a decision matrix to assist communities when dealing with contentious issues and questions regarding siting standards and long-term impacts. Each community is different, so the guidelines would not be a one-size-fits all.

Committee member Clara Miramontes stated that the City of Perris recently adopted its own guidelines, which were developed using WRCOG's current Guidelines as well as guidelines developed by other surrounding cities. Instead of guidelines, perhaps a toolkit could be developed that member agencies can use to develop their own guidelines or use as a resource.

Mr. Gray added that if the Guidelines are withdrawn, WRCOG staff can still develop alternative documents or resources to help member agencies address different issues, without calling it "guidelines."

**Action:**

1. Recommended that the Executive Committee either withdraw the WRCOG Good Neighbor Guidelines for Siting New and/or Modified Warehouse / Distribution Facilities.

(Banning / Calimesa) 13 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Item 6.D was approved.

### **C. I-REN Energy Fellowship Update: Member Agency Participation**

Tyler Masters, WRCOG Program Manager, introduced the I-REN Energy Fellowship. One of the primary sectors of the I-REN Program is the Workforce and Education Sector. Through a partnership with CivicSpark, the Program is dedicated to building capacity and energy comprehension within the subregion. Staff anticipates placing up to 27 Fellows within Riverside and San Bernardino Counties to support energy initiatives, at no cost to participating host agencies.

Some energy projects include building energy benchmarking, developing building inventories, and conducting facility audits. Interviews will be conducted in May 2023 with the Fellowship beginning in September, 2023.

#### **Action:**

1. Received and filed.

### **7. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dr. Kurt Wilson reminded the Committee of the upcoming WRCOG General Assembly (GA) and asked Committee members to register the names and information of all attendees. The GA will be held on June 29, 2023, at Pechanga Resort Casino, and an Executive Committee meeting will be held on June 30, 2023. The guest speaker will be Presidential historian and Pulitzer prize winning author, Doris Kearns Goodwin, who will reflect on the challenges faced by various Presidents throughout history, and how it relates to experiences Committee members may have had. Sponsorship opportunities and tickets for the event are still available for those who would like to contribute.

### **8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

WRCOG staff were asked to return to a future TAC meeting with information regarding approaches member agencies could use when evaluating potential logistics projects or to develop their own localized guidelines.

### **9. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Committee member Lauren Sotelo announced that the SoCal Airshow will be held this weekend at March Air Reserve Base. Admittance is free and parking is at the main entrance on Cactus Street.

Committee member Mike Futrell announced that the City of Riverside is holding an insect fair; UC Riverside is the largest entomology school in the world. Attendees can see, hold, and even eat bugs.

### **10. NEXT MEETING**

The next Technical Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 15, 2023, at 9:30 a.m., in WRCOG's office located at 3390 University Avenue, Suite 200, Riverside.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:07 a.m.