

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 12:01 p.m., on May 10, 2023, in WRCOG's office.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair 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 Eastvale - Christian Dinco
- City of Jurupa Valley - Chris Barajas
- City of Norco - Kevin Bash
- City of Perris - Rita Rogers
- City of San Jacinto - Crystal Ruiz (Chair)

*Arrived after Roll Call

Members absent:

- City of Lake Elsinore - Brian Tisdale
- County of Riverside, District 2 - Karen Spiegel
- County of Riverside, District 3 - Chuck Washington
- Western Municipal Water District - Brenda Dennstedt

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Arnold San Miguel from SCAG announced that there will be a number of virtual open-house workshops for Connect SoCal:

- May 17, 2023, 12 p.m. - 2 p.m.
- May 18, 2023, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.
- May 22, 2023, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
- May 23, 2023, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- May 24, 2023, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Mr. San Miguel will be retiring on May 19, 2023, and was invited to the June WRCOG Executive Committee meeting for a recognition of his service.

5. CLOSED SESSION

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION pursuant to Section 54957
Title: Executive Director

CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS pursuant to Section 54957.6
Agency designated representatives: Chair and General Counsel
Unrepresented employee: Executive Director

6. **CONSENT CALENDAR** – (Perris / Jurupa Valley) 7 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Items 6.A and 6.B were approved.

A. **Summary Minutes from the April 12, 2023, Administration & Finance Committee Meeting**

Action:

1. Approved the Summary Minutes from the April 12, 2023, Administration & Finance Committee meeting.

B. **Finance Department Activities Update**

This item was pulled for discussion by Committee member Wendy Hewitt who asked when the annual audit will be posted.

Andrew Ruiz, WRCOG Chief Financial Officer, responded that WRCOG is working with the auditors, and are hoping to be completed by the end of this month.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

7. REPORTS / DISCUSSION

A. **Nominations for Executive Committee Chair, Vice-Chair, and 2nd Vice-Chair Positions for Fiscal Year 2023/2024**

Chris Gray, WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, presented the Committee with the nominations for the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 leadership positions. Each year, the General Assembly selects WRCOG Leadership for the forthcoming year. Nominees are required to be members of the Executive Committee, and each must be from different agencies. The Administration & Finance Committee nominates, the Executive Committee approves, and the General Assembly ratifies.

Action:

1. Nominated the following Executive Committee members to serve as WRCOG Leadership for Fiscal Year 2023/2024, for consideration at the June 5, 2023, Executive Committee meeting:
 - Chair: Chris Barajas (City of Jurupa Valley)
 - Vice-Chair: Rita Rogers (City of Perris)
 - 2nd Vice-Chair: Brenda Dennstedt (Western Water)

RESULT:	APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
MOVER:	Norco
SECONDER:	San Jacinto
AYES:	Corona, Eastvale, Jurupa Valley, Norco, Perris, San Jacinto
NAYS:	Calimesa

B. WRCOG 2023 Legislative Platform

Dr. Kurt Wilson, WRCOG Executive Director, reported that one of the goals in the Strategic Plan is to serve as an advocate for the subregion. WRCOG developed a proposed Legislative Platform which defines a process for WRCOG to address issues associated with advocacy. The Platform includes a series of Guiding Principles and Implementation Strategies, which include protecting and advocating for local control, seeking financial sustainability, and collaborating for efficiency. CalCOG has allowed WRCOG to use its bill tracker to keep up with the various bills that are presented to Congress for consideration. Additionally, WRCOG has also partnered with IEEP, CalCities, CSAC, and Solve the Water Crisis.

The Administration & Finance Committee will address issues if there is a lack of urgency, or is of a heightened sensitivity. It would also review items that are not covered by the Strategic Plan Goals or Guiding Principles, and will require a 3/4 vote threshold. The Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee is a default clearinghouse for all advocacy actions, and can only act on issues covered by the Strategic Plan Goals or Guiding Principles. The Executive Director will be authorized to represent WRCOG and take action on items covered in the Goals or Principles, including sending letters of support or opposition, providing testimony, and other forms advocacy. The Executive Committee Chair is also authorized to represent WRCOG, emphasizing times when an elected voice is likely to get better results than a staff voice.

Committee member Kevin Bash stated that the term "local control" is talked about so often, that it seems to have lost its meaning, and is interpreted by the State to refer to the City Council. The United States is the only government in the world to work from the bottom up, and advocating at the local level and then advocating at subsequent levels. Now, people are going around their local Councils. Local control should refer to the citizens' voice, which has been lost in California.

Action:

1. Recommended that the Executive Committee approve the WRCOG 2023 Legislative Plan.

RESULT:	APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
MOVER:	Corona
SECONDER:	San Jacinto
AYES:	Calimesa, Corona, Eastvale, Jurupa Valley, Norco, Perris, San Jacinto

C. Guidelines and Framework to Evaluate New WRCOG Programs and Initiatives

Dr. Kurt Wilson, WRCOG Executive Director, and Chris Gray, WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, presented a way to evaluate fiscal and other potential risks for all new programs and projects. WRCOG is well-known for applying innovative strategies to help member agencies address problems; however, that innovation comes with some risk. As such, the Committee should be well-informed of the impacts before making a decision. Each jurisdiction is different, so there is no standard benchmark for an

acceptable risk. The current proposal is not to define what is acceptable or unacceptable, but to establish a disclosure process which would document potential risks and benefits of a new program or project. The final approval would still occur at the Executive Committee.

The proposed guidelines / checklist defines 20 criteria and evaluates each criteria based on defined outcomes which would be ranked as high, medium, or low. Low indicates a higher risk, or negative impacts on WRCOG, while high indicates less risk, or a positive impact. Staff tested 8 past, present, and potential WRCOG programs and tried to be as objective as possible when ranking each program. For future programs, having this transparency will allow the Committee to understand the thought process, and incorporate that feedback.

Staff reports would incorporate this evaluation along with a fiscal impact and the line on the Strategic Plan. The process is replicable and would be used for all new initiatives. It is meant to be a living document, allowing the Committee to make changes, and continue to allow WRCOG to be innovative while being responsible.

Committee member Christian Dinco asked if this is a pre-approval process, or an evaluation process.

Mr. Gray stated it is intended to be an evaluation process. As items are brought forward, the evaluation would be done.

Dr. Wilson added that the analysis would be presented as additional information for consideration when making a decision to approve a new program.

Mr. Gray stated that staff considered having a minimum score, but ultimately decided against it because the program may have a higher benefit than the risks.

Committee member Jacque Casillas stated that there is no perfect tool for assessment. The checklist approach makes it seem as though all criteria are weighed the same, and they are not. It is the Committee's job as policy makers to make that assessment. Committee member Casillas would prefer to have a pros and cons list, and let Committee members decide whether it scores high or low.

Mr. Gray stated that he created an interactive tool to weigh different criteria.

Chair Crystal Ruiz agreed with Committee member Casillas to have a pros and cons to better understand a complicated issue and make a wise decision.

Mr. Gray clarified that having this tool would not preclude WRCOG from performing a cost benefit or risk-management analysis for new programs. If there is a question, such as fiscal sustainability, the issue would be presented.

Committee member Dinco would not want this tool to transform into an automatic pre-approval, where a program would be pushed forward if it checks all the boxes.

Chair Ruiz agreed, and adding a pros and cons, and referencing the section for the Committee to be able to read, would be ideal.

Committee member Casillas stated that having a list of what staff considers to be pros and cons, would allow for more discussion about the importance of that pro or con, and allow for richer conversation.

Committee member Rita Rogers sees the value in the tool, especially with items that are out of the Committee's area of expertise.

Mr. Gray stated that there is an criteria that evaluates the level staff expertise, and if there is not a moderate level of staff expertise, that would raise questions.

Chair Ruiz liked the tool, with some minor changes by adding the pros and cons, and adding the section in the document.

Dr. Wilson stated that this tool was created by Mr. Gray. The attachment in the staff report includes the criteria and the definition of low, medium, and high. Dr. Wilson asked if the Committee wants to see if member agencies or members of the public have asked for help on that issue.

Chair Ruiz replied that yes, knowing if there is a request for that item would be helpful.

Action:

1. Recommended that the Executive Committee adopt the proposed Guidelines and Framework to Evaluate new WRCOG Programs and Initiatives with changes as recommended by Committee member Casillas.

RESULT:	APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
MOVER:	Norco
SECONDER:	Corona
AYES:	Calimesa, Corona, Eastvale, Jurupa Valley, Norco, Perris, San Jacinto

8. REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chair Crystal Ruiz stated there is only one more Administration & Finance meeting with her as the Chair, it has been an honor to serve, and she cannot believe that it has already been a year.

9. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Kurt Wilson reported that Form 700s were due in April and there are still some members who have not submitted their forms. A list will be sent out with names of those who are still missing, with a potential penalty of \$25 per day.

10. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Committee member Kevin Bash requested information on AI and having a speaker come talk to the Committee. Also, with regard to the Norco Tech Bridge, he requested Troy Clark or someone from the Navy base to speak at the Executive Committee meeting.

11. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee member Kevin Bash announced that the City of Norco will be celebrating 100 years of incorporation on Saturday from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at Norco's Community Center.

12. NEXT MEETING

The next Administration & Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 12:00 p.m., in WRCOG's office at 3390 University Avenue, Riverside.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Administration & Finance Committee adjourned at 1:29 p.m.