

WRCOG Executive Committee

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the WRCOG Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Chris Barajas at 10:00 a.m. on June 30, 2023, at Pechanga Resort Casino, Eagle's View Room, 45000 Pechanga Parkway, Temecula.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Chris Barajas led the Committee members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

- City of Banning - Reuben Gonzalez
- City of Beaumont - Mike Lara
- City of Calimesa - Wendy Hewitt
- City of Canyon Lake - Mark Terry
- City of Corona - Jacque Casillas
- City of Eastvale - Christian Dinco
- City of Hemet - Jackie Peterson
- City of Jurupa Valley - Chris Barajas (Chair)
- City of Lake Elsinore - Brian Tisdale
- City of Moreno Valley - Elena Baca-Santa Cruz
- City of Norco - Kevin Bash
- City of Perris - Rita Rogers
- City of San Jacinto - Crystal Ruiz
- City of Wildomar - Joseph Morabito
- County, District 1 - Kevin Jeffries
- County, District 2 - Karen Spiegel
- County, District 3 - Chuck Washington
- County, District 5 - Yxstian Gutierrez
- Eastern Municipal Water District (EMWD) - Phil Paule
- Western Water - Brenda Dennstedt

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

RESULT:	APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
MOVER:	San Jacinto
SECONDER:	Perris
AYES:	Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Canyon Lake, Corona, Eastvale, Hemet, Jurupa Valley, Lake Elsinore, Moreno Valley, Norco, Perris, San Jacinto, Wildomar, District 1, District 2, District 3, District 5, EMWD, Western Water
ABSTAIN:	District 2 - 5.A only

A. Summary Minutes from the June 5, 2023, Executive Committee Meeting

Action:

1. Approved the minutes from the June 5, 2023, Executive Committee meeting.

B. Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report

Action:

1. Received and filed.

6. REPORTS / DISCUSSION

A. Follow-up of Operational Review of the Finance Department

Andy Green, Senior Associate with Citygate Associates, provided an update on the recommendations provided by Citygate Associates last year to improve the processes of the Finance Department. Mr. Green praised Andrew Ruiz, WRCOG Chief Financial Officer, and his team for making tremendous progress, having completed 14 out of the 21 recommendations, including the two urgent priorities. The process for payments and contracts has been updated, and the budget process has been improved.

After a classification and compensation study, two staff members from the Finance Department were reclassified as Staff Analyst I.

WRCOG hired Baker Tilly to produce a 10-year financial forecast model. Development of a Request for Proposals for a new automation system of the accounts payable process is anticipated to be issued by December 2023. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2022/2023 budget included financial reports formatted by fund, with information to help improve transparency and understanding of the WRCOG spending plan. A fraud prevention hotline program is currently available on the WRCOG website. A regular meeting schedule of the different departments has been developed to improve overall productivity. The FY 2023/2024 budget included a Senior Analyst position to assist in the administration of grants.

The remaining recommendations are still being considered. Revisions of financial policies to be consistent with industry best practices will be done during FY 2023/2024. A review of internal controls is currently being developed by the Administrative Services Director. There is currently no formal training plan or manual for members of the Finance Department; however, employees are made aware of various training opportunities. Regular audits and grant policy development were put on hold due to workload and other priorities.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

B. Cybersecurity Threats to Regional and Local Governments

Bryan Willet, Senior Supervising Agent with the FBI, gave a presentation on cyber awareness and security. In the last 20 years, people have become more of a tech society, and thus, more prone to be compromised. Agent Willet explained the different threats, including ransomware actors, mirroring company emails / invoices, malware, and inside attacks / moles. Software has become more sophisticated, and even easier for cyber-attackers to obtain and use.

The FBI may assist in finding out who is responsible for attacks, to then discover how they are doing what they are doing, who is involved, the distribution, and better prevent future attacks. Extradition is not always an option, but most foreign governments aid the FBI or prosecute in that country. Information sharing regarding attacks helps raise awareness in the industry. The FBI website has multiple videos and resources for individuals and businesses with regard to different cyber threats and to report cybercrime.

Committee member Karen Spiegel asked if there is a way to prevent a cyberattack, rather than fix it once it has already occurred.

Agent Willet replied that there are a number of ways to harden a system to make it more secure. Sometimes the FBI shares information with an entity about a potential threat prior to an attack as well. There are so many different platforms and types of software being used, so there is no magic method to eliminate all attacks, but there are ways to secure a system to make it more difficult to attack.

Committee member Crystal Ruiz asked about cryptocurrency.

Agent Willet replied that crypto is complicated, but there are ways to get information, such as recruiting informants and crypto tracing.

Steve DeBaun, WRCOG legal counsel, brought up a case where a report was filed, and there was no follow-up from the agency.

Agent Willet replied that unfortunately it is a matter of numbers, and a lot of things happen behind the scenes that does not necessarily pertain to the victim. The FBI shares a lot of information on its website.

Committee member Christian Dinco asked if there is a way to help educate the public to protect itself.

Agent Willet reiterated that sharing information and resources are a great way to start. Hardening systems help decrease vulnerabilities. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is going to help everyone be more productive and defend from threats. Constant information sharing such as this presentation also helps greatly.

Chair Chris Barajas told a cautionary tale about a scam through AI, where a voice was synthesized and a relative was called using that voice, asking for money. Chair Barajas suggested having a safe word with family to prevent such attacks. In businesses, social engineering goes after the employees to get

into the system by pretending to be IT and asking for passwords, so employees should stay vigilant.

Action:

1. Received and filed.

7. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Chair Barajas thanked Committee member Crystal Ruiz for her leadership over the past year, as well as staff who put the General Assembly event together. He looks forward to seeing everyone in future meetings.

8. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dr. Kurt Wilson stated that this was a record fundraising year, exceeding the goal and having some seed money for future policies, if any. The next General Assembly will be on June 20, 2024.

9. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

There were no items for future agendas.

10. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no general announcements

11. NEXT MEETING

The Executive Committee is dark during the month of July. The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 7, 2023, at 2:00 p.m., in the County of Riverside Administrative Center, 4080 Lemon Street, 1st Floor, Board Chambers, Riverside.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m.