

# Administration & Finance Committee

## Minutes

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### 1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the WRCOG Administration & Finance Committee was called to order by Chair Karen Spiegel at 12:00 p.m., on October 13, 2021, in WRCOG's office, Citrus Conference Room.

### 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Committee member Brian Tisdale led members and guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3. ROLL CALL

- City of Beaumont - Mike Lara
- City of Jurupa Valley - Chris Barajas
- City of Lake Elsinore - Brian Tisdale
- City of Menifee - Matt Liesemeyer
- City of Norco - Kevin Bash
- City of Perris - Rita Rogers
- City of San Jacinto - Crystal Ruiz
- City of Wildomar - Ben Benoit
- County of Riverside, District 2 - Karen Spiegel (Chair)
- Western Municipal Water District (WMWD) - Brenda Dennstedt

### 4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

**5. CONSENT CALENDAR** – (Jurupa Valley / Lake Elsinore) 10 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Items 5.A through 5.C were approved.

#### **A. Summary Minutes from the September 1, 2021, Administration & Finance Committee Meeting**

**Action:**

1. Approved the Summary Minutes from the September 1, 2021, Administration & Finance Committee meeting.

#### **B. Finance Department Activities Update**

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

#### **C. Amendment to the Appendix of the WRCOG Conflict of Interest Code**

**Action:**

1. Recommended that the Executive Committee adopt WRCOG Resolution Number 24-21; A Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Western Riverside Council of Governments amending the Conflict of Interest Code pursuant to the Political Reform Act of 1974.

**6. REPORTS / DISCUSSION**

**A. Inland Regional Energy Network Activities Update**

Casey Dailey, WRCOG Director of Energy & Environmental Programs, reported that Regional Energy Networks (RENs) are funded by California utility ratepayers through the Public Goods charge levied on regular bills by Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs), such as Southern California Edison and SoCal Gas.

In December 2018, the Executive Committee authorized a Joint Cooperative Agreement amongst WRCOG, the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, and the San Bernardino Council of Governments (collectively, COGs) to move forward with the coordination and development of a REN amongst the three agencies. That agreement expired June 30, 2021. The REN for Riverside and San Bernardino Counties would be known as the Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN).

RENs are coalitions of local governments created to administer energy efficiency programs independent of IOUs. There are three existing RENs in California - BayREN, SoCal REN, and 3-C REN.

I-REN will not provide any programs or services related to residential or commercial financing programs like PACE did. I-REN will not buy electricity, like WCE did. I-REN will:

- Provide technical assistance to participating agencies to support facility improvements designed to reduce energy consumption (Public Sector)
- Provide workshops and trainings for local building departments and the building community on updates and changes to Title 24 of the California Building Code (Codes & Standards)
- Support expansion of career training and certification programs to support increasing the clean energy workforce in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties (Workforce Education & Training)

RENs are funded by California ratepayers through the Public Goods charge. There s approximately \$600M available annually from the Public Goods charge. I-REN funding would also come from this source. There is no charge for member agencies to participate at I-REN. In the event of program failure, it would not financially affect any participating agency.

It is anticipated that the CPUC will provide a final approval for I-REN towards the end of the 2021 calendar year.

Committee member Mike Lara asked if funding is already in place for I-REN and would there be any staffing adjustments.

Chris Gray, WRCOG Deputy Executive Director, indicated that if this agreement is approved, WRCOG will need to make a budget amendment.

Mr. Dailey added that once the CPUC makes a final decision, there will be no need for any of the COGs

to provide any additional funding, and funding will come from the CPUC. There will be a need for additional staffing for each COG who will be dedicated to the I-REN.

Committee member Lara expressed concern that if the I-REN goes away there will then be an additional financial burden on WRCOG for I-REN staff.

Committee member Brenda Dennstedt asked how water agencies play into this.

Mr. Dailey responded that water districts are welcome to participate.

There are very few programs under SoCal that benefit the Inland Empire region. If WRCOG did not participate in the I-REN, the WRCOG subregion would likely not receive any funding for energy projects.

**Action:**

1. Authorized the Executive Director to execute a Joint Cooperation Agreement between the Western Riverside Council of Governments, the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, and the San Bernardino Council of Governments for Regional Energy Network development.

(San Jacinto / Lake Elsinore) 9 yes; 1 no; 0 abstention. Item 6.A was approved. The City of Beaumont voted no.

**B. Overview of UCR's Inland Center for Sustainable Development Sponsorship Opportunity**

Rachel Singer, WRCOG External Affairs Manager, reported that UCR's Inland Center for Sustainable Development (ICSD) has asked for a sponsorship request in the amount of \$15,000. Mrs. Singer introduced Dr. Ron Loveridge, Deputy Director of ICSD.

Dr. Loveridge reported that the role of ICSD is to function as a network center, an honest broker, a resource, and an important leader in public analysis decision making for local government leaders as they identify critical topics and issues related to the Inland Empire region and its future growth. ICSD is an important connection with UCR's School of Public Policy. ICSD is currently researching ways to understand the relationship between sustainability, housing affordability, and the consequences of an insufficient housing stock.

Qingfang Wang, UCR Professor of Public Policy, reported that ICSD's first year consisted of researching the region's profile and statewide housing policies and requirements, and determining opportunities and challenges. ICSD is now working on ways to solve a housing crisis that is complicated by regulations, an anti-housing sentiment, a changing climate, and determine the economic repercussions from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Loveridge added that funding and leadership for ICSD comes from the stakeholders / sponsors, and the funding covers the research.

Committee member Lara indicated that most sponsorships are approximately \$1,000 and asked how this sponsorship would benefit WRCOG and its member agencies.

Dr. Loveridge responded that the sponsorship would help fund ICSD's research on the most pressing

matters in this region. This is an opportunity for WRCOG to be a participant in UCR's School of Public Policy.

Committee members expressed concern in not seeing a direct benefit to WRCOG, especially at the requested amount, and would be more apt to support the sponsorship request if there was a direct benefit to WRCOG.

Committee member Ben Benoit volunteered to lead an ad hoc committee to meet with ICSD to discuss future partnership opportunities.

**Action:**

1. Received and filed.

**C. Updates to WRCOG JPA and Bylaws**

Dr. Kurt Wilson, WRCOG Executive Director, reported that changes to the JPA include:

- Removed references to Morongo Band of Mission Indians.
- Removed reference to the use of member agency employees to perform agency functions.
- Revised and updated indemnification language.
- Removed outdated arbitration process.

Changes to the Bylaws include:

- Clarified the role of the Chairperson to include the power to execute documents, make appointments, and call special meetings.
- Clarified who will preside over meetings if Chair is absent.
- Clarified duties of the Executive Director and General Counsel.
- Clarified that Executive Committee has ultimate oversight over Executive Director and General Counsel.

**Actions:**

1. Recommended that the Executive Committee direct staff to forward the JPA Amendment to WRCOG member agencies for their approval.
2. Recommended that the Executive Committee Adopt Resolution Number 25-21; A Resolution of the Executive Committee of the Western Riverside Council of Governments amending its Bylaws.

(Perris / Wildomar) 10 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Item 6.C was approved.

**7. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Dr. Kurt Wilson reported that a memorial service for Moreno Valley Mayor Pro Tem Victoria Baca is scheduled for October 18, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.

**8. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Chair Spiegel reiterated that Committee member Benoit will lead an ad hoc committee to meet with ICSD to discuss future partnership opportunities.

## **9. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no general announcements.

## **10. CLOSED SESSION**

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Title: Executive Director

Due to time constraints, this item was moved to the November meeting.

## **11. NEXT MEETING**

The next Administration & Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 10, 2021, at 12:00 p.m., on the Zoom platform.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting of the Administration & Finance Committee adjourned at 1:16 p.m.