

# MINUTES

## FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING (CONFERENCE CALL)

February 19, 2015 - 2:00 p.m.

**Anchor Location: Five County Association of Governments Office  
1070 West 1600 South, Building B  
St. George, Utah**

### MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff, Chair  
Commissioner Mike Dalton, Vice-Chair  
Commissioner Jim Matson

### REPRESENTING

Iron County Commissioner Representative  
Beaver County Commissioner Representative  
Kane County Commissioner Representative

### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bryan Thiriot  
Allison McCoy  
Gary Zabriskie  
Diane Lamoreaux

Five County Association of Governments  
Five County Association of Governments  
Five County Association of Governments  
Five County Association of Government

### MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Commissioner Dell LeFevre  
Commissioner Victor Iverson

Garfield County Commissioner Representative  
Washington Co. Commissioner Representative

Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed those participating via telephone and those at the meeting anchor location. Commissioners participating via telephone included Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff, Commissioner Mike Dalton and Commissioner Jim Matson. Commissioner Dell LeFevre and Commissioner Victor Iverson were unable to participate due to other meeting conflicts. Those attending at the meeting anchor location included Mr. Bryan Thiriot, Ms. Allison McCoy, Mr. Gary Zabriskie and Ms. Diane Lamoreaux. The Chair noted that a quorum of members were present for conduct of business.

### **I. OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL REQUEST FOR MUTUAL SELF-HELP STAFF**

Chairman Dale Brinkerhoff, Chair, entertained discussion regarding the Mutual Self-Help program travel request for two staff members to attend a conference in San Antonio, Texas. He questioned if the out-of-state travel is required and/or if it is necessary to expend such a large amount of money for staff to attend this training seminar. Mr. Bryan Thiriot explained that the conference is held in conjunction with the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) and will also have national figures from Washington, D.C. in attendance. Information provided at the conference will cover such items as new regulations and new things regarding the Mutual Self-Help program. Ms. Debbie Cook, U.S.D.A. Rural Development, provided an e-mail response to Bryan indicating that the conference is not mandatory, but it is essential training for Self-Help agencies who are implementing this program. Commissioner Mike Dalton indicated that he does not see a value in sending staff out-of-state to receive training for something that Rural Development staff are helping Five County walk through.

**MOTION TO DENY THE OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL REQUEST FOR MUTUAL SELF-HELP STAFF TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER MIKE DALTON. MOTION WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER JIM MATSON. Roll Call Vote: Commissioner Mike Dalton, aye; Commissioner Jim Matson, aye; Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff, aye. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.**

## **II. MUTUAL SELF HELP PROGRAM**

Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff asked staff to provide an update regarding the progress of the Mutual Self-Help (MSH) program, number of homes completed and/or pending, staffing and time allocation for current staff. Ms. Allison McCoy reported that four homes are currently under construction in Toquerville and two other applicants have been approved. Staff is waiting to qualify two additional applicants prior to proceeding with construction of the next four homes. Current staffing includes Doni Pack (full-time), Allison McCoy (30%) and Jerry Allred (contract employee/construction supervisor). Ms. McCoy explained that Doni Pack does the application intake and outreach for the program. The program is being marketed through word-of-mouth from past participants and associates. This is an ongoing process to locate applicants that meet the income requirements. Commissioner Mike Dalton mentioned that his understanding when the program was initially presented was that Rural Development would forward applicants that did not qualify for other RD programs to Five County to screen their eligibility for the MSH program. Commissioners questioned the need for a full-time person to accomplish application intake and program outreach. Ms. McCoy responded that there are no referrals from RD staff. Five County MSH staff are required to solicit applicants and to determine income eligibility of participants. Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff commented that when the program was initially presented by AOG staff Finance Committee members were assured that the program would not require additional staffing. Hiring additional staff was a concern of Finance Committee members initially as well as in moving forward with the program. Ms. McCoy indicated that it would not be possible for the CFO to operate the program without support staff.

Bryan Thiriout explained that there was a lot of interest in the MSH program when homes were being built in Ivins. Once all of the property in Ivins was used, the program moved to Toquerville and interest in the program has dropped. Three of the applicants dropped out because they did not want to build a home in Toquerville. In addition, homeowners in a subdivision located in Hurricane were not supportive of the program moving there. Commissioner Mike Dalton commented that with four homes currently under construction it would be difficult to drop the program in mid stream. He would like to complete the four homes currently under construction and then reexamine the MSH program. However, it is difficult to see a full-time staff person being required to qualify two additional applicants. Ms. McCoy explained that funds are provided from USDA Rural Development into a custodial account for disbursement by Five County. Billings are submitted in three stages for reimbursement as homes are being constructed and Doni Pack does assist in preparing the billings. She also is responsible to meet with the families to discuss construction progress, provide up front education to families, outreach for new applications, and conduct periodic construction visits with the contractor. The contractor provides all construction management for the MSH program. Ms. McCoy explained that national guidelines require 2.5 equivalent employees to administer the program. Commissioner Mike Dalton indicated there is currently no benefit to other counties within the Five County region and there needs

to be a long hard look at the program. He asked if the contract with Rural Development could be broken without penalty. Ms. McCoy indicated that this was previously asked and the contract can be terminated with no penalty. The current contract runs through December 15, 2015. Commissioner Jim Matson asked about the funding horizon for the MSH program. Ms. McCoy explained that the funds are provided through the 523 program for technical assistance and lending money to clients to construct homes. The loan for each home is \$195,000 and technical assistance provided to Five County for each home built is \$24,950. Construction of more homes at the same time makes the program more efficient. To date, funds provided to the AOG have covered all associated administrative costs. Funding for administration of the program does not take away from the amount of deliverables in terms of the number of homes constructed. Commissioners expressed interest in completing the current contract, but the number of employees needs to be a topic of further discussion. Ms. McCoy indicated that a new grant application would need to be submitted to USDA Rural Development in the April/May time frame. Contracts are for a two year period of time and generally require 13-15 homes to be constructed. The current contract is to complete the grant initially administered by Color Country Community Housing, Inc. It would be much more cost effective to construct six homes at the same time. USDA Rural Development does micro-manage the grant to some extent. Commissioners expressed concern with Five County staff being responsible to market the program and the number of staff required for the program.

**MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER MIKE DALTON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER JIM MATSON, TO COMPLETE THE FOUR HOMES CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND TO BRING BACK INFORMATION TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE AS THE LAST FOUR APPLICATIONS ARE IN PLACE PRIOR TO MOVING FORWARD WITH CONSTRUCTION OF THE LAST FOUR HOMES. Roll Call Votes: Commissioner Jim Matson, aye; Commissioner Mike Dalton, aye, Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff, aye. MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.**

**A. MUTUAL SELF-HELP GRANT RENEWAL**

It was the consensus of Commissioners present to hold off on writing a new grant application to USDA Rural Development. Staff was instructed to provide additional details regarding the time frame of a new application at the March Finance Committee meeting. Commissioner Mike Dalton commented that the MSH program provides a good service, but the question is whether Five County should be the agency that administers the program.

**III. OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL IN GENERAL**

Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff solicited discussion regarding out-of-state travel in general. Mr. Gary Zabriskie reported that the current travel authorization form focuses mainly on the financial information and budget availability. It was his suggestion that the travel form be revised to include a vetting section whereby the two Deputy Directors would outline the reasons for the travel, how the travel request is relevant to perform a certain job and why, and whether it is mandatory training and/or for ongoing program certifications. He shared an example where Levi Roberts, an AOG Planner, attended a mobility management conference in California. This individual shopped for the cheapest air travel and hotel

accommodations, thereby reducing the overall cost. This was invaluable training for mobility management that is provided throughout the Five County region. This is a fairly new realm that staff are moving into at the AOG. He explained that some employees, such as the case managers, are required to attend conferences to maintain their certifications and some grants require attendance at specific conferences. Commissioner Dale Brinkerhoff agreed it would be a good option to have travel authorizations vetted by the Deputy Directors to provide the additional information needed to determine if the travel would be of benefit to the AOG. Commissioner Mike Dalton explained that all out-of-state travel should be necessary and not provided just because money is available in a particular budget. It was the consensus of the group to allow staff to revise the travel authorization form for use with all future out-of-state travel requests to the Board.

**IV. NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION STATUS UPDATE**

Commissioner Jim Matson reported that work has been moving forward to determine the utility of utilizing the former Color Country Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) nonprofit organization at the Association of Governments. This nonprofit organization has been kept alive by Tom Hughes, and there appears to be an opportunity to shift the 501c3 designation over to Five County. Mr. Nate Alder, attorney at law, will be reviewing the existing bylaws of the nonprofit organization and will bring back revised bylaws to shift responsibility to Five County. It is anticipated that additional information will be available within the next six weeks for presentation at a future meeting. It is hoped that this could be a discussion item during the April Finance Committee meeting. It is recommended that initially the board consist of one member from each of the five counties and expand from that point later as the organization develops and moves forward. The five representatives could initially be the same members as the Finance Committee functioning under separate responsibilities tied with the nonprofit organization. Commissioner Matson mentioned that there is approximately \$30,000 in the account of the RC&D nonprofit organization that would cover overhead in the startup phase. Additional information will be presented to the Finance Committee when it becomes available.

**V. OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.