

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002-4239**

**MINUTES**

**Board of Directors' Meeting  
COG Board Room  
June 9, 2004**

**BOARD MEMBERS, ALTERNATES AND PARTICIPANTS PRESENT AND NOT PRESENT**

**\*SEE ATTACHED CHART FOR ATTENDANCE**

**STAFF**

**David J. Robertson, Executive Director  
Lee Ruck, General Counsel  
Stuart Freudberg, Environmental Programs Director  
Nancy Rea, Health and Substance Abuse Manager  
Terri Braxton, Foster Care/Adoption Manager**

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**1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair Mendelson called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. with a recitation of the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for the passing of former President Ronald Reagan, who died on June 5, 2004.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 12, 2004**

Motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to adopt the minutes of the May 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**3. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

There were no amendments to the agenda.

**a) Presentation of Certificate to James Dyke**

An award was presented to James Dyke, co-founder and first Chair of the Potomac Regional Education Partnership (PREP), for his commitment to education in the COG region and his years of service.

Chair Mendelson informed the Board that they will receive by mail an evaluation form for COG Executive Director Dave Robertson. He asked members to please fill out the forms and return them in a timely manner.

**b) NARC Reminder**

The National Association of Regional Councils will be holding its 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and Exhibition in Chicago from June 25-June 29.

Chair Mendelson introduced Patrick Hogan from the Maryland General Assembly. Council Member Carol Schwartz acknowledged Pat Warren's birthday.

**c) Proposed Regional Gang Initiative**

Mr. Robertson said he'd recently met with Mark Gibb, Executive Director of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC), to discuss coordination between the NVRC and COG, including coordination on the regional gang violence initiative. Board Member Walter Tejada and Supervisor Penelope Gross are leading COG's efforts in this area.

**d) Executive Director's Report**

The Executive Director highlighted activities as of June 2004 by other COG policy bodies, officials and staff.

**4. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

Motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to adopt the consent agenda:

**A) Pension Plan Administrative Committee**

**Resolution R31-04** -Authorizes COG to expand the COG Pension Plan Administrative Committee by adding two additional COG members.

**B) Resolution Authorizing the Executive Director to Execute a Contract With the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to Facilitate the Development of a Regional Health Information Infrastructure System**

**Resolution R32-04** - Authorizes the Executive Director or his designee to execute a contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, not to exceed \$200,000, to fund COG support for the planning and development of a Regional Health Information Infrastructure System.

**5. 3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER FINANCIAL REPORT**

In Council Member Michael Knapp's absence, Mr. Robertson gave the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter financial report. He said that COG's fiscal position continues to be strong and discussed other fiscal matters.

**6. EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Mr. Robertson provided a brief history of the Employee Compensation and Benefits Review Committee and asked the Board to adopt R28-04, which would provide a 2 percent salary structure increase, effective July 1, 2004. He provided background information leading to this recommendation. Motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to adopt Resolution R28-04.

## **7. PRESENTATION ON HUMAN SERVICE POLICY COMMITTEE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

COG Human Services Policy Committee Chair Walter Tejada briefed the Board on the committee's projects, provided a brief history of the committee and introduced other chairs and representatives.

The committee's role is to serve as principal policy advisor to the Board on human services issues, such as foster care, education and public health. He outlined the goals of PREP, which include overcoming the digital divide and building strong regional collaboration in support of education and training. Mr. Tejada also discussed the Wednesday's Child program and special needs children. He briefly reported on health and substance abuse programs, regional health issues in 2004, the new disease surveillance system and housing programs.

At the end of his presentation, Kelvin Robinson asked about the Washington Area Housing Trust Fund. Mr. Robertson said he'd provide updated information to the Board on that issue.

### **A. Briefing on Foster Parent Appreciation Gala and Policy Implications**

Terri Braxton of COG thanked the Board for their involvement in the Foster Care program and attendance at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Foster Parent Appreciation Gala held on May 1. Because of its success, the Freddie Mac Foundation has agreed to sponsor the event for a third year.

For the Board's consideration, she reported on the policy implications of foster care recruitment and support of foster parents, emphasizing the payment disparity for room and board across the region. Several counties pay at a higher rate than the District of Columbia. Additionally, private agencies are also willing to pay more than the monthly county room and board rates. As a result, there is little incentive to be a foster parent in the region because of the high cost of care.

Ms. Braxton asked the Board to consider how the region might implement one room and board rate. She also asked that COG allow staff to use administrative leave to be trained and to train people in member jurisdictions to become foster parents and respite care providers. Ms. Braxton requested that Board members ask their legislators to increase room and board rates and participate in foster care recruitment.

Ms. Gross asked the Human Service Policy Committee to bring forth a recommendation on the payment disparity. She added that public school tuition is sometimes a barrier to placing foster children. For instance, in Fairfax County, families are required to pay county tuition until the kids become residents.

Ms. Braxton agreed that it is very difficult to place kids across the Virginia state line, due in part to an interstate compact agreement, but it is not as big a barrier because interstate placements are rare.

Ms. Gross asked that information requiring legislative action on the payment disparity be submitted by October. Dr. Jacqueline Brown thanked Ms. Braxton for the work she's done for the foster care program at COG and asked whether purchased foster homes are included in the figures. In response, Ms. Braxton said public agencies are included, but not private. Dr. Brown asked for information on purchased foster homes.

### **B. 2004 Regional Homeless Enumeration Report**

Steve Cleghorn, Chair of the COG Homeless Services Committee, briefed the Board on the fourth annual Regional Homeless Enumeration Report. In this year's report, the committee went further than just finding out where the homeless are; they developed two new baselines for measuring

homelessness: the permanently supported and the literally homeless. Over 3,151 people were in permanently supported housing. Their homelessness has essentially ended.

The literally homeless, those in transitional and emergency housing, on the street or looking for shelter, numbered 11,386. The region is doing a good job sheltering the homeless, but the committee is facing a federal mandate to end chronic homelessness by 2012.

Commissioner John Lovell asked why Frederick County was not included in the report. In response, Mr. Cleghorn said that Frederick County does not have an appointed representative who participates on the committee, but that he'd make sure they were included next year if someone was appointed.

### **C. Potomac Regional Education Partnership (PREP)**

Mayor Judith Davis briefed the Board on several PREP projects. PREP plans to issue stipends to teachers in the region, as well as provide mentors in technology and recruitment of new teachers. They'd like to hire a new staff person to help administer the program. Mr. Davis asked the Board to adopt R29-04, which authorizes the Executive Director to revise the PREP FY 2005 work program and budget to include an estimated \$260,000 in grant revenues and to reprogram up to \$50,000 in COG funding support from currently budgeted FY 2004 and FY 2005 funds.

Mr. Fisetto asked where the money was coming from. Mr. Robertson said the funds come from current human services programs and added that it is essentially a work program amendment. Because of additional funds, COG is able to do this program. It's just a more creative use of existing money. Motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to adopt Resolution R29-04.

### **D. Update on Disease Surveillance**

Dr. Charles Konigsberg, Chair of the Health Officials Committee, briefed the Board on the Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-based Epidemics (ESSENCE) system. The Disease Surveillance Annex of the RECP has been updated and was presented to the COG Board for approval.

Dr. Konigsberg said that the ESSENCE system provides traditional and non-traditional methods of reporting and emphasized that the system is not a replacement for traditional reporting. He's very pleased about the collaboration between area health departments, who are instrumental in making sure the system comes together. He briefly discussed emergency coordination and regional health goals, adding that public health coordination must continue to be improved. Additionally, the region must make much better use of colleges as resources. Dr. Konigsberg discussed gang and obesity summits, Health Information Infrastructure System and other matters.

He concluded by saying that health care safety network and access are not just local issues; they are national as well. Mr. Fisetto mentioned a supposed connection between obesity and sprawl. In response, Dr. Konigsberg said the committee can't explore this issue without engaging non-traditional partners. Motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to adopt Resolution R30-04.

## **8. INSTITUTE FOR REGIONAL EXCELLENCE TEAM PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

Mary Gavin, a captain in the Arlington County Police Department, made the first presentation, "Regional Communication System for the General Public." Through research, the group found that each jurisdiction has different communication needs and the media have limitations in meeting these needs. Ms. Gavin proposed setting up a multilingual call-center and web-based information center so people can gain access the hub in which they work or live. Policies for these systems would need to be developed. She asked the Board to set up a site and/or telephone number to provide real-time

information for the public. Mr. Robinson asked for more information, and various Board members asked follow-up questions about the communication system. Mr. Robertson said this information will come before the CAOs committee.

Alfred Lott of Takoma Park gave the second presentation, "Seamless School-to-Careers Opportunities in the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area." The focus was on what businesses needed and how schools could provide it. The challenge is addressed by encouraging cooperation between schools and industries. Mr. Lott recommended cooperation within the jurisdictions as the key to developing a sound program.

Holly Franz gave the final presentation, "Regional Public Education to Reduce Pollution in the Chesapeake Bay." The solutions to the crisis of pollution in the Chesapeake Bay are regional public education and a common message. Ms. Franz recommended that the Board participate in a consolidated regional public education campaign.

Ms. Gross said she hoped the group would have a chance to look at the Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee's work. Voluntary action alone won't solve the problem. She agreed that so far the public has not been involved and they must be. Chair Mendelson asked the group if they'd be willing to meet with the committee, and Ms. Franz said yes.

## **9. STATUS AND NEXT STEPS IN THE REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING PROCESS**

MWAQC Chair Tom Dernoga briefly discussed the legal analysis of section 174 of Clean Air Act amendments and the MWAQC Leadership meeting with the state Secretaries. COG staff held a series of meetings with state representatives concerning MWAQC. Proposals include MWAQC remaining as the major state-local collaborative entity for regional air quality and COG continuing to have a lead staff role in the process. Also proposed is the establishment of a steering committee consisting of state secretaries.

Next steps will involve COG and state staff completing negotiations, for state secretaries to present a status report to Mayor/Governors on June 25<sup>th</sup>, and a likely meeting before June 25<sup>th</sup> with MWAQC leadership and state secretaries. Mr. Fisetto asked where the decision-making power will ultimately lie. In response, COG General Counsel Lee Ruck said that there will be joint decision-making between states and local government. Additionally, the concept of a state steering committee will regularize the process that has always existed at MWAQC.

## **10. THE BOARD WAS REMINDED THAT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING WOULD BE JULY 14, 2004**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.