

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

**MINUTES  
Board of Directors' Meeting  
COG Board Room  
May 12, 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  
Joan Rohlfs, Air Quality Planning Chief**

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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.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2004**

Motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to adopt the minutes of the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**3. AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA**

Chair Mendelson announced that agenda item 7, a presentation on the Washington Area Housing Partnership, was canceled due to the absence of the presenter because of a medical emergency. He said that Council Member Nancy Floreen would offer an amendment to the agenda during that presentation's time slot.

**a) Highlights of Foster Parent Gala**

Chair Mendelson thanked all those who attended the second annual Foster Parent Appreciation Gala on May 1<sup>st</sup>. More than 800 people attended, and there was a great turnout from elected officials. COG's Office of Public Affairs distributed a video Public Service Announcements to local TV stations.

**b) Selection of FY 04 Auditor**

**c) Executive Director's Report**

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

COG General Counsel Lee Ruck briefed the Board on recent changes at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that may concern COG. The FCC is currently undertaking new rulemaking, which may impact local governments across the country. Pending is a broad potential deregulation of telecommunications services. Several entities, including some COG jurisdictions, are filing joint comments. Some of the regional implications that aren't being address may affect public safety, and emergency communications surrounding homeland security and emergency response. These things are the subject of potential consideration by the FCC.

The CIO Committee will meet on May 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss implications, if any, affecting COG. Comments have to be filed before May 28<sup>th</sup>, and COG would file such comments in conjunction with the CIO Committee.

Supervisor Penelope Gross asked for a memorandum. Mr. Ruck said that in the next week or so, he'd circulate a narrative memorandum before any comments are filed. He added that COG needs to make sure the FCC is aware of some of the regional implications of their actions.

**4. ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS**

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

**Resolution Authorizing the Execution of a Contract with the Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory for the Fiscal Year 2005 Operation of the Chain Bridge Monitoring Station**

**Resolution R27-04** - Authorizes the Executive Director to execute a three-year contract with the Occoquan Watershed Monitoring Laboratory for continuation of the Potomac River water quality monitoring program at Chain Bridge.

Chair Mendelson recognized Ms. Floreen, who introduced an amendment to the agenda. She said that the issue of economic development came to her as she participated in various COG committees, and suggested a summit where elected officials and business leaders could get together and talk about the issues. Although the Board may not reach a consensus, it could be useful for COG to sponsor such a gathering to understand each other's priorities.

Economic development issues drive many of our conservations in various contexts, and Ms. Floreen mentioned "Region Divided" as an example. COG could at least initiate a dialogue with regional leaders to discuss some of the local expectations. She recommended that staff give some thought to the matter and make suggestions.

Mayor Judith Davis said it is a good idea but expressed concern that the issue may take away resources from COG's current Work Plan and Budget. Mr. Robertson stated that it would not, and that the idea is consistent with the focus of this policy year and with the purpose of COG. In response, Ms. Floreen said there is no need to move quickly, but it's important we get some stakeholders involved.

He added that COG is the one and only place for regional officials to get together and talk about these issues, and if it requires extra resources, we need to identify that. Various Board members agreed that economic development is important, but suggested that COG discuss it at the July retreat.

Commissioner John Lovell said if COG is going to have a summit on this issue, he'd rather see it done at the secretary level rather than at the governor level. COG's purpose is to support the infrastructure within the members, which would foster economic development. Supervisor Gerald Connolly thanked Ms. Floreen for bringing the topic to the Board, and added that economic development affects many issues at the local level, which COG cannot control.

In conclusion, Ms. Floreen said the Board shouldn't consider this issue not to be a priority of COG. She requested preliminary advice from staff as to what steps they anticipate, and said she'd like to have as many COG members involved as possible. Chair Mendelson asked staff to develop the issue further.

## **5. PRESENTATION ON THE WASHINGTON AREA HOUSING TRUST FUND**

Council Member Carol Schwartz briefed the Board of the status of the Washington Area Housing Trust Fund (WAHTF) and provided some background on her involvement in WAHTF.

Ms. Schwartz identified housing as COG's priority focus until the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, became a higher priority. Under her watch, WAHTF has developed informational resources, secured two federal allotments totaling \$900,000 with broad support from congressional delegations, and created a much-needed low interest loan rate. With COG's support and the effort of the working group, WAHTF was incorporated in 2002.

After acknowledging several Board members, both present and absent, Ms. Schwartz said that the fund's operating framework allows it to provide funds at a substantially below-market interest rate. The fund has already received FY 2005 payments from two governments, and several other jurisdictions have included the trust fund contribution in their annual budgets.

Ms. Schwartz outlined some of the functions and accomplishments of the trust fund and discussed the fund's first loan, which has now been repaid in full. She credited COG, WAHP and individual local governments, and encouraged the Board to let their community know about the fund and its resources.

Robert Peck, president of the Greater Washington Board of Trade (GWBOT), began his report by briefly mentioning the lack of affordable housing's effect on air quality, transportation, etc. He expressed concern that teachers, police officers and other workers have a difficult time living where they work. GWBOT is looking for corporate leaders with significant name recognition who would contribute to the fund and ask their colleagues to contribute as well. Mr. Peck asked the Board to contact WAHP president Peggy Sand if they have suggestions.

Chair Mendelson asked which congressional members have not supported the fund. Ms. Sand said that U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski has not signed on but expressed support, and added that every member of the U.S. House of Representatives have said they'd commit.

Ms. Davis asked if the home ownership component is required for a fund loan, and Ms. Schwartz stated that such is a goal but is currently not a requirement. Delegate James Scott expressed appreciation to Ms. Schwartz for her leadership and to Mr. Peck for reinstating housing efforts.

Ms. Schwartz acknowledged WAHTF former chair, Kerry Donnelly, who currently serves as a vice-chair. Mr. Connolly added that Fairfax County recently launched an affordable housing initiative, and

a summit is scheduled for June 2. Fairfax County created housing for firefighters and intends to expand the program. Only 22 percent of firefighters live in the county.

Mr. Robertson said COG is in the process of putting together a file of affordable housing practices that other jurisdictions are engaged in.

**6. PRESENTATION ON THE WASHINGTON AREA HOUSING PARTNERSHIP'S REPORT, "CAN YOU AFFORD TO LIVE HERE?"**

This presentation was canceled.

**7. UPDATE REGARDING CHESAPEAKE BAY TRIBUTARY STRATEGIES AND THE CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM BLUE RIBBON FINANCE PANEL**

CBPC Vice Chair Ms. Gross briefed the Board on the May 5<sup>th</sup> Blue Ribbon Finance Panel meeting, which was hosted at COG. The panel has formed subcommittees for specific recommendations, and those for wastewater financing are due on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Gross sits on the local and state funding subcommittee.

Ms. Gross added that the Chesapeake Bay Commission met with White House aides and requested that the Bush Administration designate the Chesapeake Bay a "national treasure." The Commission is also seeking COG's support. Additionally, funding strategies as released by Maryland and Virginia fall short and lack specific information about how actors in each sector will achieve these goals. There is no schedule for strategies or information on how they will be funded. The Bay committee intends to work with COG's Water Resources Technical Committee to review state strategies to determine how they could be more meaningful.

**8. UPDATE ON THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIR QUALITY COMMITTEE'S RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND NEW CHALLENGES, AND REPORT ON CHANGES TO AIR QUALITY FORECAST AND REPORTING SYSTEM**

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) Chair Tom Dernoga briefed the Board on the background and current status of MWAQC. Major accomplishments this year included the completion of a new plan to meet air quality standards. The Washington area did not meet required standards by the November 1999 deadline because of Midwest pollution. Consequently, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) categorized COG as a severe non-attainment area.

MWAQC has developed a new plan in two stages: the first phase began in August 2003 and the other in late February 2004. Mr. Dernoga discussed various aspects of the air quality plans, and added that overall pollution levels are getting lower. The next challenge is meeting the 8-hour ozone standard. The region is in moderate non-attainment of the 8-hour standard. The deadline for compliance is 2010, but the plan is due in 2007.

Because transport causes a big pollution problem, the EPA proposed to reduce it by adopting a rule called the Interstate Air Quality Act. MWAQC believes the rule should be much stronger, however, requiring reductions much sooner. Mr. Dernoga discussed the new issue of the structure of MWAQC. The states propose changes to MWAQC to improve planning for new air quality standards, and the committee leadership and the states are meeting to discuss these improvements. Basically, the changes involve removing local jurisdictions from decision-making to advisory.

Several Board members asked for clarification on the 8-hour and 1-hour standards, and Mr. Dernoga and Joan Rohlf of COG provided detailed information.

Ms. Rohlfis updated the Board on air quality forecasting. The region does not meet health standards for ozone under the Clean Air Act amendments. Air quality is monitored at 17 regional locations and meteorologists conduct daily forecasts to predict the next day's air quality. Ms. Rohlfis discussed new resources for air quality data and added that the public is encouraged to take actions to improve air quality. She outlined local government actions for Code Red days, such as encouraging the use of public transit and refueling after dusk. Ms. Rohlfis went into detail about the EPA's new standards and some of the differences between the two. The new forecasts will address both ozone and particle pollution.

Mr. Fisette asked for clarification on the issue of MWAQC's structure. Mr. Dernoga said that the states are concerned about the current process. The District asserts that the committee's process does not promote equity, but said the District's proposed solution doesn't address the issue. Additionally, some transportation agency personnel believe MWAQC holds too many meetings and thinks less meetings handled at the state level would be more efficient.

Several Board members asked for updates and a memorandum on this issue.

#### **STATUS REPORT ON THE TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD'S REGIONAL MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY STUDY**

This presentation was canceled.

#### **9. THE BOARD WAS REMINDED THAT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING WOULD BE JUNE 9, 2004**

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