

**MINUTES OF THE
SEAGO EXECUTIVE BOARD
ZOOM MEETING
AUGUST 21, 2020**

OFFICERS PRESENT: Ortega, Richard – Vice Mayor, City of Safford (*Chair*)
Gomez, David – Supervisor, Greenlee County (*Secretary*)

MEMBERS PRESENT: Barlow, Bill – Mayor, City of Tombstone
Bracker, Bruce – Supervisor, Santa Cruz County
David, Paul – Supervisor, Graham County
English, Ann – Supervisor, Cochise County
Gray, Rachel – Mayor Pro-Tem, City of Sierra Vista
Richards, Shaylee – Representative, Greenlee County Private Sector
Richardson, Barbara – Representative, Cochise County Private Sector
Sedgwick, Antony – Representative, Santa Cruz County Private Sector

STAFF PRESENT: Curtiss, Dina – Accounting Manager
Dennis, Keith – Community Development Program Manager
Glenn, Heather – Administrative Assistant
Heiss, Randy – Executive Director
Porter, Maria – Economic Development Manager
Villa, Laura – AAA Program Director

GUESTS: Adam, Kevin, RTAC

- I. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Pursuant to A.R.S. §38.431.03 Subsection A.1., the Executive Board may adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of evaluating the performance of the Executive Director.

Chair Ortega adjourned the meeting to Executive Session at 9:00 a.m. for the purposes of evaluating the performance of the SEAGO Executive Director.

II. PUBLIC SESSION CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/INTRODUCTIONS

Vice Chair Ortega called the Public Session of the Executive Board meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and roll was called.

- a. Discussion and possible action relating to the performance of the Executive Director.

Supervisor English advised the group that there is very high regard for Mr. Heiss from the Executive Board and made a motion to honor the employment contract and give Mr. Heiss a 4% raise.

Motion: Supervisor Ann English
Second: Supervisor David Gomez
Action: Unanimous

Supervisor English made a motion to direct staff to move forward with what was discussed in Executive Session.

Motion: Supervisor Ann English

Second: Mayor Bill Barlow

Action: Unanimous

III. MEMBER ENTITIES' DISCUSSION

Supervisor Ann English advised that Covid is still a challenge, stating that they are hoping we have seen the worst. She commented that she is always grateful to the SEAGO entities providing support to get the Southeast Arizona communities in an upward trajectory. Mayor Luis Montoya stated that Greenlee County met all benchmarks for schools and businesses reopening. They will continue their diligent work to stay safe. Mayor Richard Ortega commended Mayor Montoya on implementing their mask policy. Mayor Ortega says he is confused about wearing masks; he wears his in public just to set an example and believes we should do that.

IV. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No one from the public spoke.

V. PRESENTATION : Greenlee County Road Ownership Study

Link to Greenlee County ROS Website: <https://greenlee-county-road-ownership-study-seago.hub.arcgis.com/>

Mr. Keith Dennis gave background and history of roads in Greenlee County, which is the youngest county in Arizona. SEAGO personnel hunted down historical documents from many sources (400,000 documents and 30 gigabytes). Mr. John Merideth provided an overview of the GIS database which has many levels and is very comprehensive. Mr. Dennis mentioned that there was nothing currently available like what has been created when the project started and because of that, the project took longer to complete. Supervisor Gomez commended and thanked SEAGO staff for their hard work.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

1. Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of the May 15, 2020 Minutes

MOTION: Supervisor David Gomez

SECOND: Ms. Shaylee Richards

ACTION: Unanimous

- b. Nomination(s) to the Advisory Council on Aging

Chair Ortega called for a motion to approve Mr. Donald H. Behnke to fill the vacant position representing the City of Sierra Vista on the Advisory Council on Aging.

MOTION: Mayor Luis Montoya

SECOND: Supervisor David Gomez

ACTION: Unanimous

2. Discussion and possible action to reappoint Barbara Richardson as a Cochise County Private Sector Representative on the Executive Board, retroactive to February 21, 2020.

Mr. Randy Heiss first directed members to the document showing participation from the Administrative Council which was suggested by Shaylee Richards. Mr. Heiss then apologized for not placing Ms. Richardson's nomination on the May meeting agenda. He announced that this is the final meeting for Patrick O'Donnell from Greenlee County and he is looking for recommendations to fill the Greenlee County Private Sector Rep Executive Board seat.

Chair Ortega called for a motion to reappoint Ms. Barbara Richardson to a two-year term as the Cochise County Private Sector Representative on the Executive Board.

MOTION: Supervisor Ann English
SECOND: Mayor Luis Montoya
ACTION: Unanimous

3. Discussion and possible action to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Northern Arizona University Economic Policy Institute

Mr. Heiss described the \$1.5 million specifically for economic recovery from Covid 19. SEAGO applied for a grant for \$400k; they were just informed that SEAGO was awarded the funds. Mr. Heiss explained that SEAGO collaborated with the Central Arizona Governments Cog and NACOG compare economies and draw conclusions. SEAGO contacted NAU and they agreed to help facilitate the rewriting of our 5 year CEDS due next May and help strengthen resiliency strategies; research, technical resources to develop an Economic Development toolbox. Paul David noted that \$400,000 is budgeted; however, under the budget proposal there is \$205k committed and inquired if the remaining funds will be used. Mr. Heiss responded that SEAGO is hiring a staff position to assist in the coordination of economic recovery which will use the remaining funds. He added that SEAGO is still negotiating the amount on the IGA, so it may be less.

Chair Ortega called for a motion to approve the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement between SEAGO and the NAU Economic Policy Institute as presented by staff.

MOTION: Supervisor Bruce Bracker
SECOND: Mayor Luis Montoya
ACTION: Unanimous

4. Discussion and possible action to approve a proposed update to the SEAGO Classification Plan

Mr. Heiss advised that there would be no additional costs to member entities. The position is grant funded, so when funding runs out, the position can be reduced or eliminated entirely.

Chair Ortega called for a motion to approve the proposed Classification Plan Update as presented by staff.

MOTION: Mayor Luis Montoya
SECOND: Supervisor Bruce Bracker

ACTION: Unanimous

5. Discussion and possible action to approve a proposed update to Section 7.6 Drug-Free Workplace Policy of the SEAGO Policy Manual.

Mr. Heiss began by thanking Dina and Heather for their work on researching and updating the existing drug policy. He explained that two employees were involved in a vehicle accident last year and SEAGO is expecting the workers comp insurance rates to increase as a result. The current policy only covered reasonable suspicion drug testing, which is not sufficient for the insurance carrier 5% discount; SEAGO is looking to add new hire and post-accident testing. When the Administrative Council reviewed the policy, they inquired whether there were some positions that could be exempted. A couple of entities shared their drug policies and it was decided that no SEAGO positions could be exempted, so the end result is exactly what the Administrative Council reviewed. Chair Ortega commented that the 5% discount will really help. Mr. Heiss explained that 5% may wash out because of the costs of drug testing, but he believes it is good to qualify for the discount.

Chair Ortega called for a motion to approve and adopt the proposed update to Section 7.6. Drug-Free Workplace Policy as presented by staff.

MOTION: Supervisor David Gomez

SECOND: Mayor Luis Montoya

ACTION: Unanimous

6. Discussion and possible action to approve the 2020 CDBG Regional Account applications

Mr. Keith Dennis explained that the SEAGO bylaws require that the Executive Board approve any fees or assessments, which is the reason for this item. He stated that the regional account CDBG funds increased approximately \$60,000 this year because Pinal County went to entitlement and that altered the funding for the entire state. The Department of Housing stated that 5 Colonias grants were submitted this year, which is the most ever received and 3 were from the SEAGO region: Bisbee for Tintown drainage and street improvements; Tombstone for waterline replacement; Nogales for waterline and pavement replacement. Mr. Dennis thanked the Board and their communities for going after Colonias funds. Regional Account projects include Duncan for road improvements; Huachuca City park improvements; Thatcher right of way and sidewalk improvements near the high school; Nogales waterline and pavement replacement. He added that a State Special Project grant was applied for to rehabilitate the Old Firehouse Senior Center in Tombstone, but it did not get approved. Overall, 8 projects were submitted instead of the usual 4. Supervisor David Gomez commended Keith for going after the greater share.

Chair Ortega called for a motion to approve the 2020 CDBG project applications and grant SEAGO the ability to charge to administer the grants.

MOTION: Supervisor Ann English

SECOND: Ms. Barbara Richardson

ACTION: Unanimous

7. Discussion and possible action to approve Resolution No. 2020 – 03 relating to SEAGO's Title VI Plan

Mr. Chris Vertrees explained that SEAGO. Annual approval for a Title VI Plan is something that the FHWA and FTA have required since 2011. The purpose of the plan is so that disadvantaged people have access to our services.

Chair Ortega called for a motion to approve Resolution No. 2020 - 03.

MOTION: Supervisor David Gomez

SECOND: Ms. Barbara Richardson

ACTION: Unanimous

VIII. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Future Meeting Dates

Mr. Heiss explained that he hopes that SEAGO can host a group of 10 people in person for the November meeting and others can join by Zoom. He provided an overview of the future meeting dates and reminded Board officers that there may be items to discuss at the next Joint Committees meeting on October 1.

B. Strategic Plan Implementation Progress Report

Mr. Heiss stated he is proud of the progress that has already been made on the strategic plan. Because of Covid, some of the items cannot be implemented at this time. Shaylee thanked the SEAGO staff for all they have done to work on the strategic plan and then exited the meeting.

C. Quarterly Finance Report

Ms. Dina Curtiss presented her report. Mr. Heiss pointed out to Mayor Montoya that our accounting system does skew the percentages for some reason.

D. Community Development Program Update

Mr. Keith Dennis provided an overview of the CDBG funding rounds for next year. Mayor Montoya asked why Willcox is not currently designated as a Colonia. Mr. Dennis explained that the program was changed a number of years ago where communities had to recertify. Willcox did apply to recertify, but the process was never finished. Criteria for Colonias is that they have to be located 150 miles or less from the border; must have demonstrated historic problems with water infrastructure, wastewater, and lack of sanitary housing and the problems must be documented from before 1990.

E. SEAGO Economic Development Program Update

Ms. Maria Porter provided a synopsis of the Economic Development Program and answered questions.

A. AAA Program Updates

Ms. Laura Villa provided an overview of AAA programs and answered questions.

B. Transportation Program Updates

Mr. Chris Vertrees provided an update on the Transportation programs and responded to questions.

I. RTAC REPORT

Kevin Adam advised that March through May it was anticipated that there would be very significant job and revenue losses but they weren't as dire as expected. The State was predicting a \$1.1 billion loss at 3 years; but it was adjusted down to \$700 million in May. They had started to see jobs and revenue coming back in June until the end of the month when Covid restrictions were put back in place. Unemployment claims increased in the past three weeks after they had slowed. It was the 20th straight week of more than 1 million new unemployment claims. The federal jobs report for July is expected out tomorrow; unemployment still at record levels. The State Board in June decided to defer approving a program update. \$155 million in scheduled bond measures to be deferred along with \$711 million in revenue losses. They made some relatively minor adjustments to continue with the programs. The actual losses were closer to \$90 million. A couple of projects were removed from the program; repaving in Tucson and housing development in Wickenburg. They also suspended the HURF exchange program and they will not be awarding any new projects until they assess the HURF exchange in September/October. He does not foresee anything at the State level. There is a great deal of disagreement among the lawmakers about holding a Special Session. It appears the state is going to be able to limp through the remainder of the year without the legislature having to come back until January. There is a lot of activity at the Federal level regarding transportation. The next round of Covid 19 relief is the big issue, but there is a great deal of disagreement as to what amount will be authorized and for what. Mayor Bill Barlow expressed his displeasure at the increase for driver ID fees and how it was implemented where the public had no input.

II. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS / CURRENT EVENTS

Ms. Villa mentioned that AAA has been receiving calls for mortgage and rent issues. Staff did some research where people might be able to get assistance. She encouraged members to reach out to AAA if they start receiving calls. Mr. Heiss advised that the information had just been posted on the SEAGO economic development section for small business assistance. He advised that he assisted Douglas with an EDA grant for the Douglas port of entry infrastructure work. Mr. Heiss advised he will be out of the office all of September, and then introduced Maria Porter, SEAGO's new Economic Development Program Manager. Chair Ortega asked that the EDA information be distributed for small businesses. Mr. Heiss will have the small business information and AAA rent and mortgage information emailed to the Executive Board members.

III. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Heiss noted the following items for future agendas: appointing a Graham County representative to replace Patrick O'Donnell; HURF resolution; public safety issues; update policies and principles document.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ortega welcomed Maria to SEAGO and then adjourned the meeting at 12:10 pm.

