

**MINUTES OF
THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MEETING
9:00 A.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2023
VIA ZOOM
COCHISE COLLEGE BENSON
1025 HWY 80, BENSON, ARIZONA**

OFFICERS PRESENT: Brown, Heath – Town of Thatcher (Treasurer) **(In-Person)**
Rapier, Derek – Greenlee County **(Zoom)**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Batty, Vernon – Town of Pima **(In-Person)**
Bigman, Barney – San Carlos Apache Tribe **(Zoom)**
Blaschke, Caleb – City of Willcox **(Zoom)**
Cassella, John – City of Safford **(In-Person)**
Dickie, Ed – City of Nogales **(In-Person)**
Fulton, Stephanie, Town of Huachuca City **(In-Person)**
McLachlan, Matt – City of Sierra Vista **(Zoom)**
Hinton, Terry – Town of Duncan **(Zoom)**
Perez, Rudy – Town of Clifton **(Zoom)**
Urquijo, Ana – City of Douglas **(Zoom)**
Vivian, Vicki – City of Benson **(In-Person)**
Welker, Dustin – Graham County **(In-Person)**

STAFF PRESENT: Curtiss, Dina – Accounting Manager **(In-Person)**
Dennis, Keith – Community Development Program Manager **(In-Person)**
Heiss, Randy – Executive Director **(In-Person)**
Merideth, John – GIS Analyst **(Zoom)**
Peterson, Stephen – Economic Development Program Manager **(In-Person)**
Vertrees, Chris – Transportation Program Administrator **(In-Person)**
Laura Villa – AAA Program Director **(In-Person)**

GUESTS: Adam, Kevin – RTAC **(Zoom)**
Fickett, Patty – San Simon Fire District **(Zoom)**
Kissinger, John – City of Nogales **(In-Person)**

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / INTRODUCTIONS

Secretary Brown called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m. Those physically present introduced themselves and at the request of Secretary Brown, Randy Heiss read the names of those attending electronically into the record.

II. MEMBER ENTITIES' DISCUSSION

Ed Dickie, City of Nogales reported on the progress of the repairs to the International Outfall Interceptor – the sewer line that conveys wastewater from Nogales, Sonora to the wastewater treatment plant in Rio Rico. **John Cassella, City of Safford** reported that the City was considering a rate study to inform updates to the City's utility rates due to increases in costs experienced over the past several years. **Stephanie Fulton, Town of Huachuca City** reported on behalf of Suzanne Harvey, City Manager, regarding the Town's CDBG project, upgrades to the broadband infrastructure serving the Town, and the Town's new community garden and walking path. **Matt McLachlan, City of Sierra Vista** reported on a number of planning processes underway within the City including updating the City's strategic plan, the City's General Plan update that will go before the voters next year, and its CDBG consolidated plan. **Caleb Blaschke, City of Willcox** reported that the City would be updating its strategic plan the following day with a focus on housing, street infrastructure, and water issues. **Rudy Perez, Town of Clifton** reported that the City has kicked off its CDBG funded

comprehensive pavement assessment study that is projected for completion at the end of March. **Terry Hinton, Town of Duncan** reported the Town is working with ADEQ on a plan to interconnect the Town's two water systems and is in the process of changing out the Town's old water meters to new meters that can be read automatically. **Derek Rapier, Greenlee County** reported that the County's focus has been on how to provide more housing options, identifying water resources to serve the new residences, and expanding broadband in the County. **Vicki Vivian, City of Benson** reported they are working toward completion of their City Hall annex, and that the yellow billed cuckoo has come up in the environmental review for two grants the City is working on. **Barney Bigman, San Carlos Apache Tribe** reported that the Tribe is in the process of updating its long-range transportation plan for the Tribal Reservation and is working with Bureau of Indian Affairs to co-locate with the Tribe's Transportation Division.

III. CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No one from the public requested to speak.

IV. ACTION ITEMS

1. Consent Agenda
 - a. Approval of the November 3, 2022, minutes
 - b. Nomination(s) to the Advisory Council on Aging

Note: Consent items were addressed separately as follows:

a. Secretary Brown called for a motion to approve the November 3, 2022 minutes. Ed Dickie made the motion; second by Vicki Vivian.

MOTION: Ed Dickie
SECOND: Vicki Vivian
ACTION: Unanimous

b. Laura Villa briefed the Council on the qualifications of Ms. Susan M Lange to represent the Town of Patagonia and Ms. Eva T McElroy to represent the City of Sierra Vista on the ACOA and offered to answer any questions. Secretary Brown called on for a motion to approve the nominations as recommended by Ms. Villa. Ed Dickie made the motion; second by Matt McLachlan.

MOTION: Ed Dickie
SECOND: Matt McLachlan
ACTION: Unanimous

2. Discussion and possible action to recommend the Executive Board authorize staff to publish Request for Proposals for a Compensation Study

Randy Heiss informed the Administrative Council that SEAGO's compensation plan had not been updated since 2005. Since that time, SEAGO has worked its way through the grade and range structure in the current plan. In addition, the COVID pandemic increased mobility in the workforce and intensified competition between employers. As a result, over time, SEAGO's compensation plan has become increasingly uncompetitive when compared to other COGs, MPOs and many of our member entities. SEAGO has also added positions to the classification plan that didn't exist in the original version without the benefit of knowing what a similar position would pay the southeastern Arizona job market. These conditions have resulted in turnover of SEAGO employees and along with that, the training and experience SEAGO has invested in them. Randy mentioned that he would prefer to procure a consultant under cooperative purchasing as that would be a more efficient way to get a compensation study done, and had looked at the State cooperative purchasing contracts to find a qualified consultant perform study, but was unable to find an HR consultant listed for that purpose. Randy asked if any of the member entities have recently used a consultant to do this for them, and if

so, if the consultant was procured with cooperative purchasing in mind. John Kissinger responded that the City of Nogales has used Public Sector Personnel Consultants for many years but they had used an RFQ process for professional services to do so. Randy stated that he would continue to explore cooperative purchasing but that he expected the costs to exceed the \$20,000 threshold in SEAGO's purchasing policy requiring Board authorization and that is the purpose of this item.

Ed Dickie made a motion to recommend that the Executive Board authorize SEAGO to issue a request for proposals for a compensation study; second by John Cassella.

Matt McLachlan asked what percentage of SEAGO employee compensation is covered by grants and if there is capacity within those grants to increase compensation. Randy responded that nearly 100% of SEAGO salaries are paid out of grants or agreements with State agencies. Any increases in compensation are estimated for each program during the budget process. Matt referenced the last paragraph of Randy's memo requesting authorization to enter into a contract with the most qualified consultant and asked if there would be a stipulation to bring the contract back to the Board for approval. Randy stated that if that was the intent of the motion, he would be happy to bring approval of the contract back to the Board for authorization at the May meeting.

MOTION: Ed Dickie
SECOND: John Cassella
ACTION: Unanimous

Note: Although the stipulation to bring the approval of the contract back to the Board for authorization was not included in the motion, staff intends to honor the intent of the Administrative Council.

3. Discussion and possible action to recommend approval of Resolution No. 2023-01 serving notice of SEAGO's intention to de-designate as a planning agency under Section 208 of the Clean Water Act

Randy Heiss gave a lengthy presentation on the many reasons to de-designate as an areawide planning agency under Section 208 of the Clean Water Act. He stated that once SEAGO de-designates, SEAGO's water quality management plan (WQMP) could become irrelevant and ADEQ would be responsible for administering the program for the SEAGO region. He further stated that the State's WQMP had not been updated since 1979 and its Continuing Planning Process since 1993. Matt McLachlan stated that the City of Sierra Vista was in the process of updating its wastewater master plan to remove several stand-alone wastewater treatment facilities and direct flows to its Environmental Operations Park instead. He asked how the process would be handled under the State's plan and expressed a preference to remain under SEAGO's WQMP. Randy stated that he could not answer the question due to ADEQ's reticence to articulate its vision for the 208 Program.

After considerable discussion, a motion was made by John Kissinger, on behalf of Ed Dickie to recommend approval of Resolution No. 2023-01 to the Executive Board. After further discussion, the motion was seconded by John Cassella.

Caleb Blaschke stated that the City of Willcox was seeking EPA funding for a number of infrastructure projects and asked if de-designation would impact the City's eligibility for funding. Ana Urquijo stated that the City of Douglas was looking at changes to its water and wastewater service areas and expressed that she was uncomfortable with the unknown conditions of operating under the State's WQMP. Randy stated there would be a meeting of the Statewide Water Quality Management Working Group the following week and he would forward the meeting information to the Administrative Council so those with questions about ADEQ's process under their 1979 plan could be addressed by ADEQ staff. He suggested that the motion and second could be withdrawn and another motion introduced to table the item so that the members' questions could be answered before making a decision. Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Cassella withdrew their motion and second to the motion. A motion was then made by John Cassella to table the item; seconded by John Kissinger.

MOTION: John Cassella
SECOND: John Kissinger

ACTION: Unanimous

Note: Randy Heiss explained that Kevin Adam was in between meetings at the Capitol and had a short window of time to deliver his RTAC report at this time. He asked Secretary Brown if it would be permissible to deviate from the agenda so Kevin could deliver his report. Hearing no objections, Secretary Brown asked Kevin Adam to give his report. Kevin Adam presented the RTAC report and answered questions. Secretary Brown then returned to the remaining action items on the agenda.

4. Discussion and possible action to recommend approval of the SEAGO 2023 – 2027 TIP Amendment #4

Chris Vertrees reported that the Transportation Advisory Committee had approved the 2023 – 2027 TIP Amendment #4 at their regular meeting on January 19th. The TIP Amendment involves an HSIP project for Santa Cruz County that is programmed for construction in FY2023 for \$424,350 in Federal funds. The bids for the project greatly exceeded the amount programmed. The shortfall for Santa Cruz County is \$348,903. SEAGO has \$125,000 in unused FY23 STBG that can be used to offset Santa Cruz County's costs. If approved, an additional \$125,000 in Federal funding combined with \$7,556 local funding would be added to the TIP with Santa Cruz County responsible for the remaining balance of \$223,903 to complete the project.

John Cassella made a motion to recommend approval of SEAGO 2023 – 2027 TIP Amendment #4; second by Vicki Vivian.

MOTION: John Cassella
SECOND: Vicki Vivian
ACTION: Unanimous

V. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Future Meeting Dates

Randy Heiss mentioned that the next meeting of the Administrative Council will be held May 4, 2023. He also mentioned that there would be a need for the Administrative – Executive Committees to meet March 30th telephonically to conduct program related, time sensitive business between regular meetings of the Administrative Council and Executive Board. The business would involve approval of the 2024 – 2028 Draft TIP for public comment and the approval of the FY 2024 and 2025 Work Plan Agreement with ADOT. He asked the officers to please mark their calendars.

B. Quarterly Finance Report

Dina Curtis provided an update on SEAGO's finances and responded to questions.

C. Community Development Report

Keith Dennis provided an update on Community Development Programs and responded to questions.

D. SEAGO Economic Development District Report

Stephen Peterson provided an update on Economic Development and responded to questions.

E. AAA Updates

Laura Villa provided an update on AAA programs and responded to questions.

F. Transportation Program Updates

Chris Vertrees provided an update on Transportation Programs and responded to questions.

VI. RTAC REPORT

Kevin Adam provided his report earlier in the meeting as noted in these minutes.

VII. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS / CURRENT EVENTS

Randy Heiss mentioned SEAGO had partnered with the Arizona Eastern Railroad on an application to the Federal Rail Administration to improve the resiliency of the AZER rail line by replacement of trestles constructed with wood with steel trestles and the addition of water tanker cars that could be used for wildland fire fighting on the San Carlos Reservation. SEAGO is anticipating announcement of grant awards in April 2023. Randy also mentioned that SEAGO had entered into an agreement with Willcox Theater and Arts to assist with the administration an EDA grant. The assistance would consist of conducting procurement activities to Federal standards, wage rate monitoring of the selected contractor(s) to ensure compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act, and providing general technical assistance with the grant administration.

VIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Randy stated that he intends to present items necessary for approval of the FY 2024 budget, possible de-designation as an areawide planning agency under Section 208 of the Clean Water Act and/or an assessment or updated fee schedule for the 208 Program, and approval of the Area Plan on Aging at the May Administrative Council meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Secretary Brown called for adjournment of the meeting at 11:08 a.m.