

**Draft MINUTES OF  
THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING  
10:00 A.M., FRIDAY, November 17, 2023  
VIA ZOOM  
NOGALES CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
777 N. GRAND AVE. NOGALES, ARIZONA**

OFFICERS PRESENT: Budge, Ken – City of Bisbee (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair) **(Zoom)**  
Gomez, David – Greenlee County (Chair) **(In-Person)**  
Ortega, Richard – City of Safford (1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair) **(Zoom)**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ahmann, Steve – Greenlee County Private Sector Representative **(Zoom)**  
Barlow, Bill – City of Tombstone **(In-Person)**  
Blake, Alex – Town of Duncan **(Zoom)**  
Bojorquez, Hector – City of Nogales **(In-Person)**  
Bryce, Randy – Town of Thatcher **(Zoom)**  
David, Paul – Graham County **(Zoom)**  
English, Ann – Cochise County **(Zoom)**  
Floyd, Heather – Cochise County Private Sector Representative **(In-Person)**  
Huish, Donald – City of Douglas **(Zoom)**  
Lopez, Edmund – Graham County Private Sector Representative **(Zoom)**  
Montoya, Luis – Town of Clifton **(Zoom)**  
Nozie, Eugene – San Carlos Apache Tribe **(Zoom)**  
Valle, Dan – Cochise County Private Sector Representative **(Zoom)**

STAFF PRESENT: Curtiss, Dina – Accounting Manager **(In-Person)**  
Dennis, Keith – Community Development Program Manager **(In-Person)**  
Dumas, Robin – Senior Planning Specialist **(Zoom)**  
Gibbons, Carrie- SEAGO AAA **(Zoom)**  
Heiss, Randy – Executive Director **(In-Person)**  
Merideth, John – GIS Analyst **(Zoom)**  
Miller, David – Community Coordinator **(In-Person)**  
Vertrees, Chris – Transportation Program Manager **(In-Person)**

GUESTS: Adam, Kevin – RTAC **(In-Person)**  
Molera, Rudy – Santa Cruz County **(In-Person)**  
Torren, Sharma- Ag-Conserve Consulting **(In-Person)**

**I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / INTRODUCTIONS**

**Chair Gomez** called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and **Keith Dennis** led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. At the request of the Chair, **David Miller** read the names of those physically present and those attending electronically into the record. **Vice-Mayor Hector Bojorquez** welcomed the board to Nogales. **Supervisor Rudy Molera** also welcomed the board to Santa Cruz County and thanked Executive Director Randy Heiss for his fourteen years of service to the board.

**II. MEMBER ENTITIES' DISCUSSION**

**Chair Gomez** called on **Supervisor Ann English** who reported that the City of Douglas has broken ground on the well that will provide water to the new point of entry that is currently under construction. **Supervisor Paul David** provided an update on his discussions and efforts on a legislative bill focused on food safety. Randy Heiss agreed on this issue and reminded the board how much food comes in and out of our borders.

**III. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Dan Gabiou from the Federal Highway Administration (Zoom) thanked the board for the opportunity to listen in on the meeting.

**IV. PRESENTATION:** Efforts to Conserve a ranch in SE Arizona.

**Chair Gomez** introduced **Sharma Torrens**, owner of Ag-Conserve Consulting, LLC. Sharma gave a presentation to the board on a property known as Elquen Ranch. Sharma presented the board the options of becoming either a 'CE' Holder or writing a Letter of Support.

**V. ACTION ITEMS**

1. Consent Agenda
  - a. Approval of minutes:
    - Regular Meeting August 18, 2023
    - Special Meeting September 11, 2023

**Chair Gomez** called for a motion to approve the minutes.

**MOTION:** Heather Floyd  
**SECOND:** Luis Montoya  
**ACTION:** Unanimous

2. Discussion and possible action to recommend approval of the proposed Calendar Year 2024 SEAGO Policy Principles

Randy Heiss gave an overview of the proposed Calendar Year 2024 SEAGO Policy Principles. Randy stated that once again SEAGO updated our policy principles document for each program for the next calendar year. This is a tool that's used to empower SEAGO staff to support or oppose policies or issues or legislation, etc. at the state and federal level that could impact the delivery of our programs and our effectiveness in serving you our member entities. So members could also use this and state that this is SEAGOs position that we've taken collectively, or elected officials could do the same. There have been some minor updates to the principles this year. Randy briefly discussed a few bullet points under each Program's section, and offered to answer any questions.

Representative Heather Floyd requested an addition under 'Economic Development' to include support for the Arizona Commerce Authority. Randy Heiss made a note of the request, and will have that language added to the Policy Principles.

**Chair Gomez** called for a motion to approve Calendar Year 2024 SEAGO Policy Principles.

**MOTION:** Heather Floyd  
**SECOND:** Bill Barlow  
**ACTION:** Unanimous

3. Discussion and possible action to approve Resolution No. 2023-03 urging state elected leaders to modernize transportation funding sources and opposing diversions of HURF to the State General Fund

**Randy Heiss** discussed SEAGOs position on Resolution No. 2023-03 urging the Governor and Legislature to modernize Arizona's transportation funding sources and declaring opposition to diversions out of HURF and into the State General Fund above the \$20 million authorized by statute. Randy once again spoke to the State's budget deficit which brings more challenges when it comes to Arizona's fuel tax.

**Supervisor Paul David** asked if there would be any language of specific support. **Mayor Luis Montoya** voiced a concern that more language than needed could be viewed negatively. **Mayor Ken Budge** stated he was worried about including any mention of taxes. **Kevin Adam** of RTAC informed the board that SEAGO was consistent with the language used by RTAC.

Mr. Heiss offered to the board that he was happy to take direction and add or remove any language to the Resolution.

**Chair Gomez** called for a motion to approve (pending amended language) Resolution No. 2023-03.

**MOTION:** **Bill Barlow**  
**SECOND:** **Edmund Lopez**  
**ACTION:** Unanimous

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

Randy Heiss gave an overview and stated he was pleased with the work of HR KNOW, the consultants hired by SEAGO to identify new salary ranges and classifications for SEAGO employees. Randy highlighted the new starting, mid and maximums of salaries making SEAGO more competitive in the market. Randy also stated the classifications weren't as far behind as compensation was. Vice-Mayor Bill Barlow commented that this item was imperative to approve, as this is a prominent issue that has fallen behind.

**Chair Gomez** called for a motion to approve the SEAGO Classification and Compensation Plan update.

**MOTION:** **Bill Barlow**  
**SECOND:** **Heather Floyd**  
**ACTION:** Unanimous

5. Discussion and possible action to approve the 2023 CDBG Regional Account applications

Keith Dennis gave a brief overview of this year's application process and provided an overview of CDBG applications to the Arizona Department of Housing. The bylaws require approval of fees and assessments-including CDBG contracts and this is the purpose of this item.

**Chair Gomez** called for a motion to approve the 2023 CDBG Regional Account applications.

**MOTION:** **Luis Montoya**  
**SECOND:** **Hector Bojorquez**  
**ACTION:** Unanimous

6. Discussion and possible action to authorize staff to solicit proposals for a consultant to assist in designing the REAP program

Keith Dennis introduced a new partnership with the USDA in the field of economic development.

The REAP program benefits and technologies are considered by USDA to be significantly under-utilized in Arizona and in the SEAGO Region. SEAGO applied for and is scheduled to be awarded a \$150,000 REAP Technical Assistance Grant before the end of this calendar year. The purpose of the REAP TAG is to help SEAGO assist farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses take advantage of underutilized energy efficiency technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines. In addition, energy efficient heating and cooling systems, lighting and insulation, and energy efficiency upgrades for irrigation systems are eligible activities. Forty percent of the overall cost for these improvements is given back to these businesses as a rebate once complete.

**Chair Gomez** called for a motion to authorize staff to solicit proposals for a consultant to assist in designing the REAP Program.

**MOTION:** Bill Barlow  
**SECOND:** Heather Floyd  
**ACTION:** Unanimous

## **VI. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### A. Future Meeting Dates

Randy Heiss presented the board with the meeting dates for the 2024 calendar year.

Randy Heiss also mentioned that the next joint meeting of the Administrative- Executive Committees has been cancelled due to there not being program related, time sensitive business.

### B. Strategic Plan Progress Report

Randy Heiss outlined the attachment within the packet of SEAGOs implementation and outcomes of strategic goals and responded to questions.

### C. Quarterly Finance Report

Dina Curtiss informed the board that SEAGO just completed a zero finding audit and responded to questions.

### D. Community Development Report

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

### E. SEAGO Economic Development District Report

Keith Dennis mentioned a request for proposals for the REAP/TAG grants was nearing publications and responded to questions.

### F. AAA Updates

Carrie Gibbons provided SEAGO AAA updates and responded to questions.

### G. Transportation Program Updates

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

## **VII. RTAC REPORT**

Kevin Adam provided the RTAC report and responded to questions.

## **VIII. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS / CURRENT EVENTS**

Keith Dennis reported that he had just finished his CPM program, and thanked Randy Heiss for encouraging him to take those classes and for being such a great mentor.

Several board members offered well wishes and thanked Randy for his fourteen years of service.

Randy Heiss thanked the board for all of their hard work over the years. He also wanted to again congratulate Dina Curtiss on the accomplishment of a zero finding audit. He also notified the board of Laura Villa's resignation and that the job opening was posted November, 20<sup>th</sup>. Randy also informed the board of a partnership SEAGO is involved with in Benson on a piece of property that potentially will offer twenty-five units of affordable housing.

## **IX. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Randy deferred to incoming Executive Director Keith Dennis. Keith stated the most pressing matter was election of officers.

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

**Chair Gomez** called for adjournment of the meeting at 12:50 p.m.