
**EASTERN PLAINS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Executive Committee Strategic Planning
June 28, 2016
418 Main St. Clovis, NM**

Chairman Fidel Madrid conducted the meeting with roll call.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Fidel Madrid, Chairman, Curry County-Clovis, Wesley Shafer, Treasurer, Curry County-Grady, George Gonzales, De Baca County, Cynthia Lee, Quay County, and Oscar Robinson Vice-Chair, Roosevelt County.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Roman Garcia, Guadalupe County and Robert Aragon, Harding County.

STAFF PRESENT:

Sandy Chancey, Executive Director, Ray Mondragon, Economic Development, Vincent Soule, Transportation Planner, and Mary Gray, Executive Assistant.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

THAT the June 28, 2016 Executive Committee Strategic Planning agenda be approved with the above amendments being made.

MOTION: Wesley Shafer

SECOND: Cynthia Lee

MOTION CARRIED

MISSION STATEMENT REMAINS THE SAME:

The Fundamental mission of EPCOG is to facilitate economic growth, providing services vital to the region's sustainability.

Sandy commented these are the strategic planning goals that were developed when we had the Strategic Planning Workshop in 2011. Hubert Quintana, of Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District COG (SNMEDD) facilitated the workshop for us. The EPCOG staff reviewed these July and updated them.

Increased participation and integrate the regional planning process.

Sandy began by saying one thing we would like to do, to the extent that the three of us can, is to increased participation and integrate the regional planning process. The three of us have been cross training in order to be able to backup one another to assist our communities to the best of

our ability. Raymond and I have attended some transportation and planning organization meetings with Vincent. Vincent has attended some meetings with Raymond and I. We are really making an effort so that we are not siloed to any one particular program. If someone has a community development question Vincent will have the knowledge to let them know what funding source to apply with, etc.

We will continue to attending as many meetings as possible at the state level as well as municipal, county, chamber of commerce, and economic development meetings within our region. With our schedules that has been tight, but we will continue to attend as many of these meetings as possible.

We want to focus on professional development for staff, with our current budget that is going to be very difficult. We will continue to look for funding to assist in this area, maybe through webinars, etc.

100% community participation membership in EPCOG; we have four not dues paying members. They are Des Moines, Village of Mosquero, Village of House, and Santa Rosa. We have been working with House and Mosquero because they have some needs we can help them with. Roosevelt County hasn't paid their dues, but the membership resolution is to be on their upcoming agenda. Their budget is extremely tight at this time.

Wesley Shafer asked about Des Moines stating they used to be very active. Sandy commented she has not been able to find anyone in the office when she's there or get any response to her email or phone calls. Sandy said when she was there in March the office was closed for the week of Spring Break.

We will be adding one more special district. The Fort Sumner Irrigation District has decided they would like to join. They will pass their resolution and their dues will be \$250.00. Sandy commented she will be helping them through their first ever ICIP process. They are really excited about doing some planning and having EPCOG help them with that.

They were really frustrated because they have never received any legislative capital outlay. Sandy said she asked what they had requested and they didn't know, so she asked to see copies of their capital outlay request and they said they didn't know they had to fill anything out. Sandy said she told them that's why they haven't received any capital outlay, because they haven't asked for any.

Sandy stated we would try to increase communication with the communities. She stated with our budget being so tight a lot of that communication would be through phone calls, emails, and getting over to visit as often as possible. Until we can find some type of funding to increase our budget we will be somewhat limited in the amount of traveling done.

In the Legislative process; EPCOG does maintain regular communication with our legislators. With our budget being as tight as it is this year we most likely will not be able to go to Santa Fe as often in this upcoming session, but we will do as much as we can.

Wesley Shafer commented that the phone system works great between here and Santa Fe. Sandy

said she is required under our State Grant-In-Aid to attend Jobs Council meetings, but will have to be very conservative with the budget, while still fulfilling the obligations of the contract.

EPCOG will still host a Legislative Forum. Ray commented his thoughts are to have day one in Portales and an evening one in Tucumcari. He said the evening forum in Tucumcari worked really well and was very well attended.

Sandy commented with the way the House of Representatives districts are split we have different representatives for Portales, part of De Baca County, and Curry County than we have up north.

EPCOG will continue to assist with capital outlay in any way needed.

Improve the region's infrastructure.

Improving the region's infrastructure is a hard one, with money getting tighter and tighter all of the times. Sandy said we have a goal of assisting with 3 CDBG applications, this year she assisted with four. We had a total of six applications submitted; San Jon withdrew their application, which would have been seven. All six communities from the EPCOG were fully funded. Out of the twenty seven applications submitted, Portales had the number one rated application.

Oscar Robinson commented that their application was for \$500,000.00.

Attending CDBG Application Workshop is a part of the contract.

Oscar Robinson asked if there is anything, under Improving the Region's Infrastructure, that can help Portales with their water lines issues. He said John and Susan tell him there's nothing available to fund that type of project.

Sandy said there is, but it has to be phased. Also, with the way CDBG works it has to benefit low to moderate income citizens. She said she thought, when numbers were run for this year, Portales was just over the 51% required. There is the Water Trust Board funding and USDA, which both of these would be a loan. As far as actual grant funding; USDA is a grant loan combination. Sandy said it depends on the medium income and population. We would have to ask USDA what percentage of loan to grant it would be. Sandy said there is funding, but to do the whole city it would be extremely costly; it would need to be phased and done a piece at a time.

Sandy commented that a few years ago Vaughn passed an addition gross receipts tax and dedicated that percentage to infrastructure. They were in the same situation with their water lines and their streets.

Sandy said there's always capital outlay.

Wesley Shafer commented if they qualify for CDBG that capital outlay is a good way to go. He said don't hold off until you get enough to do the complete project. Request \$300,000 - \$400,000 and do what that will do, then the next year request capital outlay to do another phase of the project. Wesley said it took about four years to get the water lines in Grady changed out.

Sandy commented that Melrose has been on the same track for several years. They apply for CDBG grant and do what can be done with that funding then the next year they apply for CDBG to complete another phase of the project. They have been working on this for about four years completing it one phase at a time.

Wesley Shafer commented if they fall into the low to moderate income they never get the CDBG for the project.

Sandy told Oscar she'd have to look back at the numbers, but she believes Portales was at the 54%, which takes them over the low to moderate income requirements.

Oscar appreciated the information shared and said he would visit with Susan on the subject.

Raymond commented he filled out a capital outlay request for Melrose for water lines and they were denied.

Cynthia Lee stated San Jon dropped out of CDBG because they received a 90/10 grant loan.

Wesley suggested visiting with the New Mexico Rural Water Association and check to see what they might be able to assist with. Suggestions were given as to difference organizations to check with on grant/loan assistance.

Sandy said one thing the state wants to see more of is an asset management plan. She commented an asset management workshop is on the top of the list for training. She stated the first step is to know how big the problem is and then start breaking in down into manageable task/projects.

Sandy said she asked to be put on the Portales City Commission meeting agenda for the first of July.

Sandy said she would help with any part of the CDBG application, public hearings, etc. She stated she always attends the application hearings and is there to back up those presenting their projects to the development council. One new item they have this year is a housing set aside specifically for housing rehab. Sandy said she thought she sent that out in an email to everyone and she'll continue keep communities informed.

Sandy stated she contacted RCAC to see if they would have a grant writing workshop and an asset management workshop in Clovis within the next few months. When she hears back from them and things are in motion she will let all know.

Sandy asked, in addition to these two workshops, is there any other types of training the board would like to have.

Oscar Robinson asked what the cost of attending a workshop. Sandy said, if RCAC would do it, it would be a free workshop.

Oscar asked if the workshop would be just for communities or would it be open to other

organizations, such as a new one just starting up, like Meals-On-Wheels.

Sandy said she would visit with RCAC about that, but since they don't charge any registration fees to most of the workshops, she thought that would be a possibility.

Sandy said another training source for organizations is the United Way of Central New Mexico out of Albuquerque. She said they provide all types of training for non-profits.

Sandy commented she has applied to a couple of grants for training, but not being a 501c3 we didn't qualify. Sandy said applying for 501c3 status might be a move we want to look at.

Fidel Madrid said it wouldn't be that hard to get a 501cs.

Sandy said when she applied Crime Stoppers for a 501c3 it cost around \$800 plus lawyer fees coming to about \$1,500.00. She said some of the other COGs are now 501c3 and she's waiting to see if it benefits the other COGs or not. There are more requirements and reporting to be done when having 501c3 status. She needs to visit with Erick about this.

When she asked Hubert, of Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District COG, if he had been able to get other funding he said no, but he also hasn't really tried.

Sandy said ICIP canceled the workshop scheduled this year and that was a big discussion at the NewMARC meeting in May. They want to talk with DFA and see if there is a way to work this differently. They've asked DFA to train the COGs and let each COG train their communities; but DFA doesn't want to do that. They will be talking more with them, because like everyone else they have cut their travel funds, which rules out regional workshops.

The Mid-Region COG in Albuquerque has the ability to broadcast workshops by webinar. NewMARC has talked about possibly setting up some locations where the communities could participate in training via webinar. Something has to change, because everyone has to cut traveling expenses due to cut in funding.

Cynthia Lee commented that she personally does not like webinars. She said had they known the Tucumcari ICIP was going to be cancelled they could have attended the one in Albuquerque or Roswell.

EPCOG still represents the Northeast and Southeast Region Transportation Planning Organization. Vincent is available to assist in anyway with questions concerning transportation. Transportation like all other programs is taking funding/budget cuts.

Sandy said they've been working on trying to get the NE to cut the number of meetings they are having from monthly to possibly every other month. The upcoming meeting is June 29th and the meeting schedule is on the agenda.

Sandy commented that all of the programs are taking a budget cut, such as the \$3,900.00 cut to our State Grant-in-aid budget. When these cuts happen, for the most part it has to come out of travel, because that's the only place we could cut it out of.

Sandy said one good thing is with the Federal Funding Bill is it is providing more funding for freight routes. A lot of discussion took place on roads that need improvement and the number of accidents occurring on US 60/84.

Vincent said they've had word that WalMart, Swift, and some others are authorizing extra mileage for their drivers so they can pass US 60/84.

Much discussion took place concerning the roads, the finished product and it not lasting more than nine months, and the hazards of many of the roads.

George Gonzales asked what it would take for Curry County, De Baca County, and others to contact the highway commission about that road. Would it help to send letter, etc. He said it worries him for his safety as well as the other drivers' safety.

Sandy said the curves on US 60/84 need to be made no passing.

Vincent said the best thing to do is for all to ban together, gather the information on accidents and make it into solid data, and send letters. Safety is what DOT takes pride in so any data with backup documentation on safety or lack of will be the best way to inform DOT.

There will be a new co-manager for transportation, Delores Gonzales with the Northcentral COG, is replacing Lesah. Lesah is moving to the AAA Program.

Information dissemination will continue through email, facebook, and EPCOG website. Raymond keeps facebook updated with events and meetings attended. We are working to create a better looking more user friendly website.

Sandy said asked if the Board wanting us to continue printing all of the material that goes into the Board packet. All of the Board was in agreement that the Board packet information can be emailed and each member can print a copy and bring it with them to the meeting. It was suggested that a memo be put in the body of the email reminding members to print the information and bring it with them to the meeting. We'll try this and see how it works out.

Oscar asked if Orlando talked with EPCOG about the vacant Coke Plant in Portales. Sandy wasn't sure and said that would be a question for Ray. Some discussion took place concerning that vacant building.

George Gonzales asked about the funding cuts to the AAA budget cuts. Part of the cuts had to do with elderly housekeeping and yard work. George said the gentleman taking care of this project was going out and taking care of the yards himself.

Wesley stated if you weren't already in the program under housekeeping and/or yard work you couldn't get in. He said all Grady has is a meal site; nothing else to assist the elderly.

AAA discussion took place concerning assistance and having a certified nutritionist at every meal site.

Sandy said she doesn't know the AAA program at all, but she is going to start attending meetings, trainings, and is going to learn the program so she can better assist the communities. We'll do the best we can do with the tight budget that we have.

Cynthia stated one problem with AAA is the waiting period they have to get reimbursed for funds used. It's hard to balance their budget because they have to use fund from their general fund while waiting to get paid. It is the end of June and they are still waiting on their May payment.

Sandy said she'll check into AAA and maybe it is a program to add to EPCOG?

Cynthia said they were also going to have to submit an ICIP for each Senior Center. Sandy commented they are fighting that, because there isn't any reason for the Senior Centers to have to submit a separate ICIP since they are under the city or county.

Wesley commented that Senior Citizen Centers can't own real property; the property belongs to the city or county.

Discussion took place concerning gross receipt tax on online purchases. Vincent stated this has to do with the size of company etc. and he believes it doesn't have to do with the state, but comes from the federal level. More discussion took place.

Fidel said when he went to Santa Fe he heard they thought they were going to be able to get the tax back on medicines because medicare was going to be short. They think they will get this because the doctors want it now so they can get paid. If the tax isn't there they won't get paid.

Improve the quality of life.

Oscar asked about the Job Fairs and if there was a way to have something to help those people in need of a job, but who don't have transportation and/or can't pass the drug testing.

Sandy said there are some who work with those citizens and we'll try to get more counseling/rehab type business to future Job Fairs. This is challenging and has been a continuing problem. A lot of discussion took place regarding ways to help these citizens. Sandy said Goodwill has/had a program to help ex-convicts re-enter society. She also commented we would continue to work with the colleges, communities to find ways to provide support for these citizens.

EPCOG will check into resources and have information available to assist those who need drug and emotional rehab.

Discussion took place concerning rehab and housing. The funds available would figure to about .02 cents an hour and that isn't feasible for having an employee or business to turn out the work needed for implementing housing.

Future Programs

Sandy asked what future programs they would like for EPCOG to have such as AAA or something like the Teen Parent Program. Wesley, and others, stated there really isn't any reason to cover new programs at this time as there isn't any funding for new programs. This can be revisited at a later date if and when funding becomes available.

Sandy asked if the Board would want to get into housing or rehab again. The Board was pretty much in agreement that we do not need to be in the housing business.

Oscar Robinson made the comment that he wasn't sure how a staff of four could complete everything on the Strategic Plan and continue with all they are already doing. This will take a lot of dedication.

Rental Properties

Sandy said the Rio Pecos apartments have never cash flowed and runs about a \$2,500.00 a month lose and always have. There are a lot of outstanding bills on Rio Pecos. What we do now is take the income we receive from Ruth Visage and San Jon, which totals about \$11,000.00 a year. The property management company cuts us that as owners draw and we turn around and send them a check for that amount so they can deposit it into the Rio Pecos account. The Board agreed EPCOG should let the Rio Pecos property go when and if we ever have an interested buyer.

Sandy stated Rio Pecos was built with tax credits and those tax credits expired December 31, 2015. Those tax credit partners want to end that agreement; they do not want to be the limited partner anymore. The tax credit partners are represented by Michael and Associates out of Boston. JL Gray is willing to become the limited partner. Bobby Griffith, with JL Gray, talked the limited partners down to \$8,000.00, which JL Gray will pay and they will become the limited partner. This will be between Michael and Associates and JL Gray and isn't something Sandy needs to bring before the Board at this time.

The mortgage on this property has been ridiculous it's a 542c Risk-Share loan at 8.84 per cent interest. The lock in on this expires November 1, 2016, at which time we can refinance it, and bring that payment down from about \$7,000 to about \$4,000.

Sandy said in her discussions with Bobby Griffith she asked him if JL Gray would be interested in acquiring the Rio Pecos property. He said if they could get it refinanced JL Gray would most definitely be interested in acquiring it. That would remove a huge burden from EPCOG. Sandy stated we had passed a resolution to sell Ruth Visage and San Jon a couple of years ago, but ended up not selling. We could take the \$11,000 from these and put it back into our base budget and improve our operating budget.

Sandy said she needs to do some research and see what our options are for selling. She said we will never get back all of the money we have invested into Rio Pecos. Sandy stated we just need to get out from under the burden of Rio Pecos.

The Board was in agreement with Sandy as to letting this property go. Sandy said she'll check

with the State Auditor's Office.

There was a fire at San Jon; all of the repairs are done and the apartments are full.

Office Repairs and Improvements

Sandy said the mortgage on the EPCOG office building will be paid off in 2019 and she would like to do some repairs to the building such as, replace ceiling tiles, painting, replace back doors, the heating & air is so old only one company will work on it, and a new phone system. These are some things we can discuss later. She is thinking maybe taking out a small loan to work on these repairs and updates.

EPCOG's next board meeting is August 10, 2016

ADJOURNMENT:

Since there is no further business to come before the board the meeting was adjournment at 12:10 p.m.



Fidel Madrid, Chairman

*Copy of the Strategic Planning Goals 2016-2017 is filed in the Board Minutes File.