

## **Logan County Commissioners Work Session**

**June 7, 2022**

Present: Jane Bauder, Joe McBride, Alan Samber, Ashley Smith, Rhonda Chrisp, Jerry Casebolt, Greg Thomason, Kari Linker, Faith Blankenship, Debbie Unrein, Trae Miller, Diana Korbe, and Jennifer Crow.

Vice-Chairperson Bauder called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS SESSION** – Commissioner McBride moved to approve the minutes from May 31, 2022 as written. Commissioner Bauder seconded and the motion carried.

**REVISIONS TO WORK SESSION AGENDA** – None. Commissioner McBride noted Jerry Casebolt has been working with area chicken flu problems. Those costs are reimbursed by the state. He will be going Wednesday to another outbreak very close to Logan County.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE HUMAN SERVICES SCHEDULE OF BILLS** – Ashley Smith met with the Board to review the Logan County Department of Human Services schedule of bills dated June 7, 2022. The Board approved all bills as presented.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE SCHEDULE OF COUNTY BILLS** – Rhonda Chrisp met with the Board to review the Logan County schedule of bills dated June 7, 2022. The Board approved all bills as presented.

**REVIEW BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA** – Dates were missing from the Chamber of Commerce Special Events Liquor License agenda item. Dates for the Special Events License should be July 1, 8, July 15, 22, and 29. July 2 was added as a Festival Permit Application but should be a separate agenda item. The Board agreed to postpone both items definitely until June 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:30 a.m.

**KIMBERLY ERTLE-CLARK RE – UPDATE MOVEMENT OF RESPECT** – Kimberly Ertle-Clark was not present.

**KARI LINKER SENATOR HICKENLOOPER UPDATE** – Commissioner Pelton talked to Senator Hickenlooper regarding his outreach time, he wanted to congratulate him on being awarded Commissioner of the Year. They talked a lot about the behavioral health initiatives happening through Colorado and in Washington DC. The senator was in town last week and in northwest Colorado talking childcare and loss of jobs in the coal industry in that area. Senator Hickenlooper was in Fort Morgan last Thursday and discussed the broadband affordable connectivity program which is a part of the Infrastructure bipartisan bill. Eligible persons can receive internet for \$30 a month. Viaero has created a whole fiber network underground to become a part of the broadband world.

Commissioner McBride asked where Starlink was at, is it effective and working, and if so, why it is not part of the Broadband discussion. Starlink is more costly than fiber at around \$100 per month. The broadband capital project fund came out of ARPA funds. NECALG recently hosted a regional broadband meeting that was well attended. There are a lot of underserved communities that need better

bandwidth or better fiber. There is a huge contingency on the eastern plains for 911 redundancy. Senator Bennet has been working on accountability for internet providers making sure the affordability number stays intact, making it a level playing field as much as possible without price gouging. Senator Hickenlooper chairs one of the space and science committees and space debris is another project the senator is working on.

DOLA still has the middle mile money that they are working on with the Colorado Broadband Office but no last mile money buildout. The federal government is working on ensuring the supply chain and the workforce are there to take in the money to make the deployment happen or will they need to extend the buildout time. Congress is getting reports on if there's glitches in the supply chain for broadband deployment is happening in the ports with imports and exports especially on the west coast. extend the buildout time for the buildout of the supply chain Bipartisan infrastructure bill.

Other things happening under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill: CDOT should be working with TPRs with money that is coming in. Within the CDOT Ten Year Plan is Road and Bridge money and counties bringing other projects forward with other Road and Bridge Improvements. ARPA funds came through the State and the County got an allocation. Infrastructure money is all going through state agencies. Transportation money has to come down through CDOT. Clean water money has to come through CDPHE and the Department of Natural Resources. Broadband money is going through broadband going through the Colorado Broadband Office. State agencies have hired Meredith Marshall from the Office of Economic Development. She oversees all programs for the State and reports to the Whitehouse. The ARPA funds are finally starting to roll out. Commissioner McBride noted that Logan County spent ARPA funds on Behavioral Health in the schools and the majority on building HVAC improvements.

Commissioner Bauder asked if there were any federal grant funds available for community centers. RFPs will be opened this morning for the design phase. It looks like the addition will cost between \$1.5-2 million. Ms. Linker promised to get back to Commissioner Bauder on the federal grant funds for community centers. Ms. Linker noted a good opportunity to connect in this area for Brownfield project funds with the work happening with the old sugar factory.

The USDA has approved emergency loans for farmers for all 64 counties. Ms. Linker will send the information to the Board to let them know and so they can share with Ag partners.

The meeting recessed at 9:35 a.m. and reconvened at 10:24 a.m.

**COLORADO OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE - GREG THOMASON** – Mr. Thomason gave a presentation on establishing a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Northeast Colorado. The COEDIT is speaking with all six Northeast Colorado Counties and has talked with Ken Mooney, Executive Director of Northeast Colorado Association of Local Governments to essentially become the fiduciary agent for Economic Development.

The Economic Development Administration was authorized under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 which authorized the creation of the Economic Development Administration.

In establishing the EDA, Congress articulated three tenants which remain a part of CEDS today was to create an environment that promotes economic activity by improving and expanding public infrastructure. Next was promoting job creation through increased innovation, productivity and entrepreneurship and finally empowering local and regional communities experiencing chronic high unemployment and low per capita income to develop private sector businesses and attract increased private sector capital investments.

In 2012, Northeast Colorado's Economic Development Director's came together to advance the application with the Economic Development Administration to fund development of a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the six-county region. At the time, the sponsors elected to establish a provisional CEDS eliminating the need to set up an Economic Development District (EDD) to oversee and manage the program in lieu of establishing an EDD to manage and market the goals within the CEDS the NECALG was named the fiscal agent responsible for meeting all reporting requirements. Following the EDA's approval of the CEDS document, it essentially sat on the shelves of the economic development organizations. And was not actively utilized other than when its existence was referenced in two flood relief applications submitted to the EDA by Logan and Morgan Counties following the 2013 floods.

It was also used somewhere in the Northeast region sometime between 2012-2017 in an application referenced to the EDA.

Regions have an opportunity to undertake the development of the CEDS on their own or to hire a consultant, preferably one with experience adhering to EDA guidances when creating a CEDS. Fortunately for this region, the roadmap to resiliency program that was being led by Bohannan and Houston Consulting firm, provides the advantage of reapplying information gathered during the numerous community meetings taking place to the CEDS process, likely reducing the cost and time needed to complete a strategy that reflects the region's goals and needs. Upon completion, the CEDS document will be reviewed by the Economic Development Administration to ensure that it meets the EDA's standards which will include designating the agency that will administer the six-county plan. Plans are required to be managed by a planning organization, typically an economic development district. In Colorado, EDDs typically reside with the regional association of local governments or coalition of governments such as NECALG.

Establishing an EDD is altogether separate from the process of establishing the CEDS and would not begin until the EDA has authorized the CEDS application should the Northeast Colorado region elect to go forward with the proposal.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies reflect a region's commitment to the adherence of a capacity building plan designed to foster regional economic prosperity. Regions that have established active CEDS are eligible to receive a \$70,000 annual economic planning grant. This is a matching planning grant program with a match determined by a formula that the EDA has come up with that measures the region's economic stress. Based on Northeast Colorado's distress score, Northeast Colorado would have a 50% grant match requirement or a \$35,000 annual match requirement needed in order to maintain the CEDS.

In good times, regions with active CEDS cite benefits of the program to include bringing communities together creating a shared vision of where the region is headed and making the region more competitive. During times of disaster or economic hardship, the CEDS becomes a qualifier for making application to the EDA for funding relief. The majority of the grants offered by EDA, HUD as well as the USDA now require proof that an overriding economic development strategy is in place. In the absence of having a CEDS, the EDA will require proof of a CEDS-like document that can be equally onerous to create, as would be the full-blown CEDS at the time of application. If the region continues to operate without a CEDS, there is a likelihood that the EDA will come back and say that they need a CEDS-like document in which case someone would need to go out and collect the data and put together a document that could be submitted to the EDA.

The EDA and USDA support four assistance categories around which they align their grant funding programs. The four categories are: Planning and Technical Assistance, Infrastructure and Broadband Assistance, Entrepreneurship and Business Assistance, and Workforce Development and Livability. From there, there is a wide range of grants administered through the EDA that currently require CEDS for a region or for a county to apply. Even though it's a regional CEDS, Logan County can make application to EDA, HUD or USDA and reference the CEDS for county specific projects. This isn't just for regional projects, it comes down to giving Logan County leverage to be highly competitive when making applications with those three federal agencies. At a minimum, the cost to NECALG for maintaining this CEDS program would be \$35,000. Which leverages an additional \$70,000 for the region to provide NECALG and ultimately the economic development district with an operating budget of \$105,000 annually.

Establishing an EDD to manage the regional CEDS is a non-negotiable requirement now. The EDD will become an advocate to work with the CEDS as well as work with individual counties on their own specific projects and help them apply for grants, etc. Salaries and expenses associated with managing the program can be paid with these funds as well. For several regions, these funds can help hire an economic development planner, as well as a half-time administrator to manage bookkeeping and reporting requirements associated with the CEDS. The overriding priority is to ensure that the CEDS serves your region providing a master plan, that is used in good times to set goals and objectives to aid in attracting new businesses to the region. When disaster hits, the CEDS establishes authorization to move forward with applying for the needed federal funds to help with the recovery effort.

In May of 2020, the EDA announced that every region that had an active CEDS would get an automatic \$400,000 grant to help with Economic Development aid for community businesses, etc. Unfortunately, the community had to also have an active EDD as well. There was no wiggle room according to the regional EDA since there was no active EDD in Northeast Colorado.

The NECALG board will need to make the decision whether to split the \$35,000 evenly between the six counties evenly or pro-rate the fee evenly amongst all six counties.

Commissioner Pelton is Logan County's rep on the NECALG Board and Commissioner Bauder is also Logan County's rep. Commissioner McBride will send an e-mail to Commissioner Pelton and Ken Mooney in stating that he and Commissioner Bauder are in favor of the CEDS.

The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade is offering to provide Northeast Colorado with a \$40,000 grant to assist with the cost of completing a CEDS application. That grant will be set up as a reimbursement grant. As a consultant is paid to work on the application, bills are submitted back to OEDIT, they reimburse up to \$40,000 for setting up the CEDS. Also, a Roadmap to Resiliency Program has been underway for the past nine months, a lot of data that has been collected through that process can be easily transferred to that CEDS application process that is going to be required. Talk among the NECALG economic development directors has been to potentially retain Bohannon Houston to write the CEDS, which they have indicated that they are capable of doing. This would be a uniformity of understanding that has already been established with the work that they have done within the six-county region. This grant does not require a cash match. Forty thousand would be at the upper end of what most CEDS will cost. If the CEDS costs less than Forty thousand, they will retain the balance and it can be applied to goals within the CEDS.

Reporting for the region will be done through the EDD hiring a director for the EDD and a part time administration employee (presumably already on NECALG staff assigned to do the reporting) using the \$105,000 annual budget. Reporting is four quarterly reports one of which is actually the annual report on activities within the region related to the CEDS.

If one county does not fund NECALG for the CEDS, they could technically reference the CEDS but that would be up to NECALG. The goal is regional growth. There are regions that set up independent EDDs. So that could be set up outside of NECALG if necessary. Mr. Thomason has met with five counties so far and has not received any responses to his presentation. Washington County is the final county that he needs to meet with.

The OEDIT grant funds will be available by the end of July. Trae Miller is interested in a couple of different programs with the new owners of the old sugar factory through the EPA/CDPHE Brownfield Assessment Grant to assess the building, etc. and also through the EDA for the railroad yard through the area.

**COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS FOR APRIL 2022** – Commissioner McBride moved to approve the Logan County Commissioners Proceedings for April of 2022. Chairperson Bauder seconded and the motion carried.

**TIENA PRICE PROPERTY CLEANUP** – Commissioner McBride explained the conditions that he and Rob Quint found at the Tiena Price Property last week. He is working but there is insufficient progress. The pile of wood scraps had bricks mixed in and he is working on cleaning the bricks out of the wood. The next inspection will be in August.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.