



BENTON-FRANKLIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MINUTES of BFCG

May 15, 2020 - 10:00 a.m. Meeting

Online Video and Phone Meeting Only (Using Zoom Communications)

Access to meeting by video: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89787390529>

Access to meeting by phone: 1-253-215-8782 (meeting ID#: 897 8739 0529)

1. **Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by President Novakovich.
2. **Roll Call:** Geoff Wagner completed roll call by jurisdiction. President Novakovich indicated a quorum present for BFCG.

BFCG Board Members in Attendance	
Organization	Representative
Port of Kennewick	Skip Novakovich - President
Franklin County	Brad Peck – Vice President
Port of Pasco	Vicki Gordon - Secretary
Ben Franklin Transit	Bob Koch
City of Benton City	Linda Lehman
City of Connell	Lee Barrow
City of Kennewick	Chuck Torelli
City of Pasco	Ruben Alvarado
City of Prosser	Mary-Ruth Edwards
City of Richland	Ryan Lukson
City of West Richland	Kate Moran
Port of Benton	Bob Larson
WSDOT	Todd Trepanier
Port of Walla Walla (ex-officio)	Ron Dunning

BFCG Staff Present:

Stephanie Seamans, Executive Director
 Patrick Pittenger, Transportation Planning Director
 Erin Braich, Senior Transportation Planner
 Tanner Martin, Transportation Planner
 Olivia Meza, Transportation Planner
 Magdelyn Monroy, Receptionist
 Fatima Traore, Economic Development Coordinator
 Geoff Wagner, Transportation Planner

3. Introduction of Guests:

Deb Heintz, Prosser Economic Development Association (BFEDD Member)
 Roy Keck, Port of Benton
 Tiffany Scott, WorkSource Tri-Cities (BFEDD Member)

Kim Shugart, Visit Tri-Cities (BFEDD Member)
Steve Worley, City of Pasco

4. **Public Comment:** None

5. **Approval of Agenda:** A MOTION was made by Chuck Torelli to approve the BFCG Board Agenda, SECONDED by Ruben Alvarado. The motion passed unanimously.

6. **Presentation:** none.

7. **Consent Agenda:** The Consent Agenda consisting of three items: 7A, Voucher Summary April 7 – May 8, 2020 of \$93,860.51; 7B, Executive Committee Actions of March 20 and April 6, 2020; and 7C Approval of Minutes from regular meeting held February 21, 2020; was approved on a MOTION by Chuck Torelli and SECONDED by Linda Lehman. The MOTION passed unanimously.

8. **Reports and Discussion Items:**

A. Executive Director Report

Stephanie updated the Board about the selection of the new building for the BFCG offices and the process of moving into the new building. She provided photos of the layout in the new building. Stephanie stated that construction was anticipated to be complete by April 30th, but COVID-19 caused delay. She then stated that the new building is expected to be complete by May 31st but the move in date for BFCG staff is yet to be determined due to work restrictions and COVID-19.

Stephanie briefed the Board about the majority of BFCG staff working remotely other than Magdelyn and herself. BFCG's bookkeeper has also gone into the BFCG office when needed.

Stephanie then spoke about the procurement process of obtaining a new phone system, server, and furniture for the new building.

Stephanie informed the group about the quadrennial TMA Certification Review for the agency by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT). She stated that the final meeting took place on May 14th. She noted that BFCG staff will receive a summary of their findings in June and the final report will be issued in July.

Stephanie then addressed the BFCG 2019 audit and stated that BFCG has submitted the required documents requested so far for review. The audit entrance conference will take place within the next few weeks and she stated that BFCG Board members will be notified about the entrance conference date when it is provided by the auditors. The due date for all of the audit submittals is May 30, 2020.

Stephanie talked about the development of human resources (HR) policies for the agency and that the policies will be submitted for legal review. After legal review, the policies will be distributed at the Executive Committee, then taken to the BFCG Board by the next

meeting in June hopefully. Staff will provide the policies to the Board for their review and consideration.

Stephanie then talked about the clean-up process of BFCG's current building and the hard work from BFCG staff and especially Magdelyn for her dedication towards cleaning out the BFCG basement this last year and going through BFCG's historical documents. Stephanie also thanked Benton County for awarding BFCG a \$10,000 Historical Preservation Grant to help fund the cleanup process of BFCG's historical documents.

Stephanie stated that BFCG submitted an Economic Development District (EDD) Planning grant in December for the next three years in the amount of \$75,000 for each year with a one to one match and BFCG was notified April 29th of the award of the grant.

Stephanie then talked about two invitations from the EDA for COVID-19 relief grants, one is for a new RLF up to \$1.4 million and a Planning Grant for recovery planning from the economic impact of Covid-19 for the local region. The EDA is distributing \$266 million throughout the region and the money does not require a match. Those matters will be discussed under items 9C and 9D of this meeting with Resolutions for consideration.

B. Transportation Management Area Certification Review Update

Patrick provided information about the Transportation Management Area (TMA) Certification Review Update. The TMA certification review began in January and is scheduled to end in July. Patrick noted that reviewers noted progress with BFCG's work over the last year and a half since management staff changed. He stated that BFCG had provided reviewers with documentation of all work performed over the past four years and all Board agendas and minutes as well. BFCG staff discussed topics with the reviewers about the process of project selection, how bicycle and pedestrian issues are addressed, how BFCG relates transportation to land use issues, how the Travel Demand Model process is going, the readability of BFCG's documents, and how BFCG is going to do financial forecasting for the upcoming Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Patrick noted that the reviewers were pleased to see the progress on communication between BFCG and their local, regional, state, and Federal partners. He stated that one major item of concern from the reviewers was BFCG's Bylaws and Articles of Association and the need for updating both of those documents. He added that USDOT staff has stressed the need for increased transparency in the BFCG decision-making process throughout the certification review. Ruben Alvarado asked what happens if there are findings from the TMA reviewers and Patrick responded that BFCG staff will address any corrective actions as needed. Regarding the Bylaws and Articles of Association, drafts of revised documents were shared with USDOT reviewers and Stephanie would address those in the next agenda item. Patrick then thanked the participation from Bob Koch, President Novakovich, and Pete Rogalsky throughout the meeting as USDOT needs to know not just that BFCG staff is making progress, but that the BFCG Board is aware of its responsibilities.

C. Articles of Association and Bylaws Update Potential Committee

Stephanie updated the Board about the process of adopting BFCG's Articles of Association and Bylaws. She noted that the draft documents are significantly different than the existing documents including changes to provide more clarity between the Board and EDD.

Stephanie then stated that the draft documents have received legal review and they were shown to the USDOT reviewers during BFCG's TMA certification review to assure them that BFCG is in the process of reviewing and adopting new Articles of Association and Bylaws. Stephanie asked for discussion about the process of adopting the draft documents on time. President Novakovich stated that he would like to receive the comments from the Federal reviewers and take the comments to the Executive Committee and then to the Board for review and adoption. Patrick noted that comments had already been received from the Federal reviewers and that most comments were not substantive and BFCG does not anticipate additional comments. President Novakovich stated that he believes the best approach would be to have the Executive Committee review the draft documents at a separate meeting and asked the Executive Committee members if they agreed with that approach. Vicki Gordon mentioned that she would like to review the comments and Bob Koch agreed that BFCG should not rush the process of adoption to ensure the Articles of Association and Bylaws follow the Federal guidelines. Vice President Peck also agreed with the approach. Stephanie stated that Federal reviewers are looking for a schedule from BFCG regarding when the documents will be reviewed and approved. After discussing with President Novakovich, it was determined that the documents would be reviewed by the Board with a plan to adopt new documents by September 2020.

D. Regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP) Update

Erin briefed the Board about the Regional Active Transportation Plan (ATP) Update and noted that BFCG is still in the process of updating the ATP. He stated that WSDOT's Statewide Active Transportation Plan Update is on the same schedule as BFCG's which provides the opportunity of consistency with WSDOT's ATP. Erin concluded that the ATP is a regional approach for bicycle and pedestrian planning and that the timeline for adoption has been slightly delayed due to COVID-19.

E. Regional Federal Functional Classification Review

Geoff provided information on the Regional Federal Functional Classification and requirement of roadways needing to be classified to make them eligible for Federal funding. Geoff noted that BFCG staff met with the TAC to discuss a comprehensive update of roadways for their jurisdictions. TAC members agreed to update their roadways and provide a report within the next two TAC meetings. Any action to make changes would require Board action and a request of WSDOT and USDOT to approve those changes. Patrick added that there are Federal guidelines regarding the number of roadways that can be classified as arterials or collectors which can have an impact on certain jurisdictions' classifications. He noted that the update should be done periodically due to the classification restrictions and it requires communication between all jurisdictions to meet the Federal guidelines.

F. 2020 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Obligation Status

Patrick provided information to the Board on the 2020 TIP obligation status and noted that BFCG receives about \$5 million a year in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – also known as STBG set-aside – funds. This year, BFCG's target for obligation is \$5.17 million and the obligation period started in October and ends in September. For the first five months, no projects obligated but in March, Kennewick and Benton City obligated a total of \$727,169. There have also been

de-obligations, so the net progress toward the regional obligation target as of March 31 is \$473,034. Since the end of March, Pasco, West Richland, and Prosser had notified BFCG staff that a portion of their projects obligated. Patrick noted that BFCG staff is sending a query to the TAC members that have yet to obligate projects in their jurisdiction so BFCG has a timeline of when they expect their projects to obligate.

Patrick then introduced Olivia Meza, the new employee for BFCG and the Transportation Department. Patrick stated that she was filling a position which had been open since fall of 2019. Olivia mentioned that she was excited to be with BFCG and learn more about Transportation Planning in the BFCG region.

G. Travel Demand Model Update

Erin provided an update on the Travel Demand Model improvements that BFCG staff has completed with their consultant. He noted that the model update will provide valuable information for the upcoming Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) update.

9. Action Items:

A. Approve Amendment to the Travel Demand Model Services Contract to extend to June 30, 2021

Patrick stated that BFCG was pleased with the Transpo Group's work on the Travel Demand Model and requested the extension of their consultant contract to June 30, 2021. The Transpo Group will assist BFCG staff with work on the Metropolitan/Regional Transportation Plan, the next Congestion Management Process plan, and provide on-call services. Also, during the May TAC meeting, local jurisdictions requested BFCG to add \$50,000 to the Transpo Group contract to assist local jurisdictions with modeling work. The additional \$50,000 will benefit local jurisdictions because they only have to pay the 13.5% match for the Transpo Group's assistance. Patrick noted that after the proposed extension of the Transpo Group's contract would end in June 2021, BFCG will move to a two-year work program and associated contract cycle as allowed by the Federal Government and to align with the state biennium funding process.

A MOTION was made by Linda Lehman to approve amendment to the Travel Demand Model Services Contract to Extend to June 30, 2021, SECONDED by Chuck Torelli. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Approve Resolution 09-20 to Authorize the Adoption of the BFCG 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Patrick briefed the Board and recommended approval of Resolution 09-20 to Authorize the Adoption of the BFCG 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Patrick stated that the UPWP is the budget and work tasks for 2021 starting July 1st. He then noted that BFCG staff had met with USDOT and WSDOT on April 22nd and BFCG was asked to add a statement of how much carryover funds from 2020 BFCG has. On July 1, 2020, BFCG is expected to have a carryover of over \$600,000 in Federal funds which require a 13.5% match. On June 30, 2021, BFCG is expected to still have over \$525,000 in available carryover. Staff will be working to determine how to use the available funds going forward while maintaining an appropriate reserve.

A MOTION was made by Kate Moran to Approve Resolution 09-20 to Authorize the Adoption of the BFCG 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), SECONDED by Chuck Torelli. The motion passed unanimously.

C and D. Approve Resolution 10-20 to Authorize the Application for Supplemental CARES Act Recovery Assistance from the Economic Development Administration and Approve Resolution 11-20 to authorize the Application for Supplemental Revolving Loan Fund CARES Act Recovery Assistance from the Economic Development Administration

Stephanie briefed the Board and recommended approval of Resolution 10-20 to authorize the Application for Supplemental CARES Act Recovery Assistance from the Economic Development Administration. She stated that the EDA sent out an invite for non-competitive grants to the EDD district with no match required. The amount of this grant is for \$400,000 in additional planning funds to provide assistance on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) and provided an informational overview of what BFCG can do for a scope of work on the economic impact over the next two years due to COVID-19.

Stephanie briefed the Board and recommended approval of Resolution 11-20 to authorize the Application for Supplemental Revolving Loan Fund CARES Act Recovery Assistance from the Economic Development Administration. She stated that this grant from the EDA is for up to \$1.4 million to provide a new Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) for COVID-19 impacted businesses and she noted that an additional 10 percent administrative cost would be allocated to the funding that BFCG would receive in addition to the \$1.4 being applied for.

A MOTION was made by Deb Heintz to Approve Resolution 10-20 to Authorize the Application for Supplemental CARES Act Recovery Assistance from the Economic Development Administration and to Approve Resolution 11-20 to Authorize the Application for Supplemental Revolving Loan Fund CARES Act Recovery Assistance from the Economic Development Administration, SECONDED by Kim Shugart. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Comments/Announcements for the good of BFCG

None.

11. Adjourned – 11:07 a.m.

Next Meeting: *Friday, June 19, 2020*

Location: *To Be Determined*

Meeting starts promptly at 10:00 a.m.

Approved at the June 19, 2020 meeting:



Nicholas (Skip) Novakovich, BFCG President