

Land of Sky Regional Council
June 22, 2022
Regular Meeting



When joining the virtual meeting, Delegates are requested to mute themselves and to un-mute for discussion or moving on orders of business.

Delegates are requested to state their names when moving on orders of business. Thank you!

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order (12:30pm)**
- II. Invocation**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance**
- IV. Roll Call**
- V. Consent Agenda**
 - A. Modification/Approval of Agenda
 - B. Approval of the Previous Minutes (June 2022)
- VI. Swearing-In of Executive Committee Members**

Honorable Calvin Hill, Buncombe County Chief District Court Judge, 28th Judicial District
- VII. Comments by the Chair and Delegates Roundtable**
- VIII. Public Comment**
- IX. Presentations/Recognition**
 - A. Recognition of Former Land of Sky Regional Council Finance Director Charlotte Sullivan
 - B. Outdoor Recreation Impact in WNC, Brad Spiegel, Building Outdoor Communities Specialist, MADE X MTNS WNC
 - C. French Broad River Economic Impact, John Hawthorne, Conservation Chair, Land O' Sky Chapter Trout Unlimited
 - D. Legislative Update, Chris Wall, EQV Strategic
- X. Executive Director's Report**
- XI. Important Dates**

Next regularly scheduled board meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 28 at 12:30 pm either in-person at the Land of Sky Regional Council office or remotely via zoom.
- XII. Adjournment**



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** Consent Agenda
- Item Number:** V. Consent Agenda:
A. Modification/Approval of the Board's Agenda for August 24, 2022
B. Approval of Minutes from the June 22, 2022, Regular Meeting
- Responsible Party:** Zia Rifkin, Administrative Services
- Attachment(s):** Minutes from the June 2022 Regular Meeting
- Background:** Item B. June 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes Recap:
Quorum was present to conduct business at the June 2022 meeting and the minutes provide a recap of the Delegates' updates from around the region. Presentations were provided by Morgan Bradley, Development Officer with the WNC Bridge Foundation; Reginal Speight, State Director, USDA Rural Development; and Greg Lowe, President HCA Healthcare North Carolina Division.
- Staff Recommendation:** Recommend approval of the Consent Agenda
- Suggested Motion(s):** Move to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

**Land of Sky Regional Council
Board of Delegates
Regular Meeting**

June 22, 2022

Minutes

- I. Call to Order – Vice Chair Fitzsimmons called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30pm.
- II. Silent Invocation – A moment of silence was observed.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance – Vice Chair Fitzsimmons led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Roll Call – Nathan Ramsey called the roll. The following members were present: Tim Love, William Lapsley, Jason Chappell, Larry Chapman, Sandra Kilgore, Jonathan Kanipe, Maureen Copelof, Barbara Jeter, Preston Blakely, Deb Bridges, Daniel Cobb, Jane Alexander, Patrick Fitzsimmons, George Morosani, and Bob Tomasulo

Guests Present – April Riddle, Robert Williams, Greg Lowe, Robin Ramsey, Town Commissioner Hazel Thornton, Michele Pilon, Reginald Speight, Morgan Bradley, Michael Ledford, and Melissa Driver

A quorum was present to conduct business.

- V. Consent Agenda – The consent agenda, consisting of the Board’s modified June agenda, to move old business to a future meeting, and the minutes of the May 25, 2022, meeting was presented for approval.

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda as modified. George Morsani seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

- VI. Public Hearing – Vice Chair Fitzsimmons opened the public hearing for the Fiscal Year 2022/23 Budget Ordinance for Land of Sky Regional Council. No public comments regarding the budget were forthcoming, and the public hearing was closed.

- VII. Chair’s Comments and Delegates Roundtable

Vice Chair Fitzsimmons requested that Delegates share updates and news of interest in their jurisdictions.

Delegates Roundtable

Tim Love – Shared that Buncombe County approved its FY23 budget including a flat property tax rate, a pay and compensation study and the request to bring all Buncombe County and Asheville City Schools employees up to a living wage compensation.

Commission Chair William Lapsley – Shared that Henderson County passed its \$180 million budget and Commissioners finalized the budget and selected the architects for the Annex to the Courthouse; a necessary addition that is due to the growing community and increased activity in the judicial system.

Commissioner Jason Chappell – Shared that Transylvania County passed its budget for FY 23 with no tax increase and including quite a few major projects planned.

Council Member Sandra Kilgore – Shared that the City of Asheville would pass its budget at their meeting next Tuesday (June 28, 2022) and that they were able to make changes to the budget to get the City’s \$17.00 per hour jobs increased to \$17.70 for FY 23.

Town Manager Jonathan Kanipe – Shared that the Town of Biltmore Forest passed its FY 23 budget last week included a 6% COLA and significant funding for stormwater and park improvements. The Town is getting ready for the Fourth of July fun.

Barbara Jeter – Shared that the Village of Flat Rock enjoyed a wonderful ice cream social on June 4. The Village passed its FY 23 budget, which includes a a 10% COLA for staff.

Mayor Maureen Copelof – Shared that the City of Brevard passed its budget with no tax increase, a 7% COLA for staff and the addition of new staff to the City's Administration. Also, the City approved the final design for the new boutique hotel on Broad Street and the project can move forward to construction. Signed a 50-year lease with Conserving Carolina for the City to take responsibility for the Ecusta Trail. There's lots of work associated with that project and grant funding has been applied for. Also made a change to the UDO to address the housing issues in the City that would allow multi-family dwellings. A new Interim City Manager (Larry Faison) is starting Monday. The City hosted a wonderful Juneteenth celebration, and the new community center is getting very close to opening. Big event planned for Fourth of July so come to Brevard to celebrate the holiday.

Mayor Preston Blakely – Shared that the Town of Fletcher has passed its budget and is adding new police officers and staff will receive a 6% COLA. Mentioned the incident that happened that led to a suspect passing away while in custody. It's a very heartbreaking situation and the SBI is involved in the investigation.

Town Commissioner Deb Bridges – Shared that the Town of Laurel Park passed its FY 23 budget last week and it includes \$1.74 million for roads and stormwater projects. The Town is trying the best as possible to improve the roads. Also working on the UDO, which has been quite challenging to come up with stormwater requirements for steep and very steep slope development. She shared appreciation to the Town Planner for their work on this issue. Additionally, she announced the new Assistant Town Manager- Jordan Jones, who has just joined the Town. Hosting the LGCCA meeting this coming Monday and she invited all Henderson County jurisdictions to share items for the agenda. Town dinner on Tuesday night and everyone is welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Town Hall.

Manager Daniel Cobb – Shared that the Town of Mills River is holding its public hearing on Thursday evening for the FY 23 budget and planning to add positions to the Planning and Zoning Department. In the past week, five employees in the Town have come down with covid, leading to a challenge with maintenance. 3% COLA for staff is included the budget and work is continuing on the Park improvements and lots of development is going on, which is a good thing and challenging.

Nathan expressed appreciation to the Town of Mills River for their willingness to host the BBQ on July 29. Everyone is welcome to attend!

Town Commissioner Jane Alexander – Shared that the Town of Montreat passed its budget for FY 23, which is bare bones and covers the basics. Working on the Comprehensive Plan, which will be done by the end of the year. She also shared that the Town changed to a Council/Manager arrangement. The annual parade is coming up for the Fourth of July.

Town Commissioner Elisabeth Ervin – Shared that the Town of Woodfin's Greenway and Blueway Project received its biggest single award yet; specifically, a \$7.6-million-dollar federal grant for construction of the planned greenway. The Town's Board is holding a Town Hall Meeting on June 28 at 5:00pm at the Woodfin Community Center to solicit ideas and suggestions from constituents. Topics will include whether there is a need for a "Town Center" and to address concerns regarding short term rentals.

Aging Advisory Board Representative Bob Tomasulo – Shared that the next RAAC meeting is July 21 at LOSRC, and the Ombudsman Program will have a presentation on the agenda. He noted that Ombudsman staff are planning to return to the facilities by late summer. Everyone is welcome to attend the upcoming RAAC meeting, just reach out to LeeAnne Tucker to RSVP.

VIII. Public Comment -

Vice Chair Fitzsimmons called for public comments. No public comments were made.

IX. Presentations/Recognition –

A. Morgan Bradley, Development Office, WNC Bridge Foundation -

Mr. Bradley shared that the WNC Bridge Foundation is a nonprofit organization that focuses on assisting in the healthcare of residents in WNC. Formally known as the CarePartners foundation, it exists to connect communities to a healthier future by serving all 18 counties in the western region. The organization looks at needs in each county, focusing on the social determinants of health. Specifically looking at elder care and

youth development. Lack of healthcare coverage across the region is significant and affects at least 10% of the population. He shared that a lot of privately insured households cannot access the providers they used to leading to further health issues when transportation is a challenge. The WNC Bridge Foundation maintains several funds (Children's Services, WNC Greatest Needs, and You're Special) which are meant to enhance the daily lives of community members through the provision of necessary supports to increase the ability to engage fully in daily life and the community. WNC Health scholarships provides sponsorships to students with the hope that they will return to their local communities after training in the healthcare field. The Rathbun House provides a home-like setting for families and caregivers accompanying a patient who is receiving medical care or treatment at an Asheville area healthcare facility. The program is hoping to expand to include services for children in foster care. The WNC Bridge Foundation also provides grants including NOW grants, IMPACT grants and AIM grants. Grants focus on elder care, youth development and wellness support. In addition to other fundraising efforts, the organization also has thrift stores and provides many volunteer opportunities. He requested local officials to contact him in an effort to provide services as individuals cannot apply for assistance directly, rather, they must be referred for assistance. Turn around for the provision of assistance is usually 3-4 weeks.

B. Reginald Speight, State Director, USDA Rural Development –

Mr. Speight shared appreciation to attendees at the meeting who are involved in the daily work of assisting rural development. Regarding his work with Rural Development, which includes housing development and rehabilitation for rural residents, Mr. Speight noted that there are nearly 50 programs in the agency's portfolio, mainly through grant assistance to small businesses, rural utility services (water/wastewater, high speed internet, etc.), and community programs, among other programs. He shared that USDOT/NCDOT has invited Rural Development to the table to discuss the development of EV charging stations in rural areas. The Rural Partners Network is in demonstration stage in rural New Mexico and is designed to assist rural areas to access a "one-stop" shop for grant funding through the provision of grant navigators accessible by phone. He also shared his mobile number (919-939-0314) and encouraged folks to reach out with needs in the rural areas.

Discussion occurred regarding the 504 programs in the region that are administered through Rural Development.

Discussion also occurred regarding how rural jurisdictions can partner with state agencies to develop incentives for developers of affordable housing. Mr. Speight shared that some of the issues around the provision of affordable housing in rural areas lies with the Agency and he noted that there is a Special Projects point of contact that can engage with rural jurisdictions. Nathan Ramsey assured he would share those contacts with the Board.

C. Greg Lowe, President, HCA Healthcare North Carolina Division –

Mr. Lowe provided a presentation regarding Mission Health's 2021 Impact Report (https://missionhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/508_COMENG0172021ImpactReportTAG.pdf). He noted that Mission Health has a footprint that covers WNC and includes services in 18 counties through 8 hospitals including 1295 licensed beds, 10,500 staff and over 1600 physicians. Telehealth is part of the Mission Health footprint and there have been over 40 thousand encounters through that mode of healthcare. He reviewed HCA's economic impact and investment in the region including the addition of a third helicopter to the MAMA fleet, four robots for minimally invasive surgery, and iMobile technology that enables secure care team communications throughout the system through hospital-based smartphones and increased telehealth opportunities, among other investments. The HCA is shaping the future of medicine through residency and fellowship programs. He shared about the HCA StaRN program, which includes a mini nursing school, funding for nursing school faculty, a CNA training program, and the Galen College of Nursing, which is coming to the Asheville campus. Mission Health provides services to many community care programs through the utilization of staff volunteers that provide support for time and money donated. Mission is also involved with community efforts through the provision of food to WNC partners, unwanted

medication collection opportunities and the provision of thirty-two thousand Stop the Bleed Kits to schools and buses. He reviewed the organization's equity, diversity, and inclusion investments. He concluded by reiterating that Mission provides the only Level II Trauma Center in the region, the only pediatric ER and hospital and he reviewed the many recognitions received for quality, patient centered care. The HCA system is expanding in the western region in Asheville, Franklin, McDowell County, and southern and western Buncombe County.

Discussion occurred regarding the Telehealth Program and how rapidly it expanded in response to the pandemic.

X. Old Business –

A. Approval of FY 2022/23 Budget Ordinance

Charlotte Sullivan provided a recap of the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year 2022/23, which totals \$17,203,951. She noted that the first budget amendment for FY23 would have the actual amounts for grants and include carry-over funding. A 7% COLA for staff is proposed for FY23 as the top priority is to retain and recruit the most capable staff possible so that Council can effectively serve local governments and the LOSRC region. Council is facing the same personnel challenges as local governments and other employers; with less interest in job postings by job seekers; this is an attempt to adjust salaries for certain positions to reflect market conditions. With significant funding from the State of North Carolina and Dogwood Health Trust as well as ample funding from programs a 7% COLA is sustainable this year and in future years.

Charlotte Sullivan shared that health insurance costs are increasing, and the LOSRC indirect rate has decreased for FY23 to 38.5%.

Nathan Ramsey noted there would not be a dues increase for FY23.

George Morosani moved to approve the FY 2022/23 Budget Ordinance for Land of Sky Regional Council as presented. Jason Chappell seconded, and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

XI. New Business – ***(Agenda modified to move items to a future meeting due to time constraints)***

A. Proposed Bylaw Amendments

B. Proposal for Local Dues to Change Based on Population Growth Every Five Years

XII. Executive Director's Report

Delegates and guests were encouraged to reach out to Nathan Ramsey with any questions or comments regarding the report, which is available in the meeting packet.

XIII. Important Dates –

A. The next Board of Delegates is August 24, 2022 (no meeting in July). On July 29, 2022 Land of Sky Regional Council is hosting a BBQ at the Town of Mills River Community Park from 11:30 – 1:30pm.

XIV. Adjournment –

Vice Chair Fitzsimmons adjourned the meeting as there was no further business.

Respectfully submitted by Zia Rifkin



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

Subject: Executive Committee Swearing-In

Item Number: VI. Swearing-In of Executive Committee Members

Responsible Party: Honorable Calvin Hill, Chief District Court Judge, 28th Judicial District

Attachment(s): none

The Executive Committee elected by the Board of Delegates for FY21-22 is to be sworn in for the current term of office.

Chair, Honorable Patrick Fitzsimmons, Mayor, Town of Weaverville
Vice Chair, Honorable Norris Gentry, Commissioner, Madison County Board of Commissioners
Secretary, Honorable Maureen Copelof, City of Brevard Council Member
Treasurer, Honorable Preston Blakely, Mayor, Town of Fletcher
Past Chair, Honorable Barbara Volk, Mayor, City of Hendersonville
County Delegate, Honorable Matthew Wechtel, Commissioner, Madison County Board of Commissioners
Municipal Delegate, Honorable Sandra Kilgore, City Council Member, City of Asheville
Minority Representative, Honorable Jason Chappell, Chair, Transylvania County Board of Commissioners
Aging Delegate, Bob Tomasulo, Area Agency on Aging Chair

Staff Recommendation: N/A.

Suggested Motion(s): N/A



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** Executive Director's Report
- Item Number:** X. Executive Director's Report
- Responsible Party:** Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director
- Attachment(s):** Executive Director's Report for August 24, 2022
- Background:** The Executive Director's Report provides updates and relevant information regarding projects and initiatives for LOSRC Departments/Agencies.
- Staff Recommendation:** N/A.
- Suggested Motion(s):** N/A

1. Finance

- Patricia Rosenberg joined us as our Interim Finance Director on August 8. Patricia is highly qualified and we are excited she has joined our team. Charlotte will continue to help us with this transition by working 1-day each week at LOSRC. We anticipate interviews for the Finance Director position in September and naming the permanent Finance Director in October.
- LOSRC is adding more modules to our finance system to support payroll and encumbrances. Finance staff and all staff have participated in training.

2. Economic & Community Development & Transportation Planning

Kudos!

- Congratulations to Mars Hill for their recent Rural Transformation Fund Grant – to acquire a vacant Main Street building.
- Congratulations to Brevard for receiving a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant for engineering and design for Ecusta Trail in Transylvania County.
- Congratulations to Madison County for Building Reuse for Highland Metalworks.
- Congratulations to French Broad Electric Co-Operative for their GREAT grant in Madison County
- Congratulations to Zitel Broadband for their GREAT grant in Transylvania County
- Congratulations to City of Asheville for their \$4.2M Low-No grant to support clean transportation fleet technologies.
- Congratulations to VW Grant Awardees in the region:
 - Transylvania Economic Alliance
 - Transylvania Habitat for Humanity
 - Town of Waynesville
 - Town of Hayesville

1. Transportation

- a. MPO & RPO staff continue to work with local partners and NCDOT on project design and development.
- b. Staff is assisting in TAB, STIP and CTP development and Board meetings.
- c. RPO staff serving as NCARPO Association President, the NCARPO is the statewide organization representing Rural Transportation Planning Organizations in NC.
- d. RPO staff is also serving on the new NCDOT EV/Clean Energy Committee.
- e. RPO, MPO and ECD staff are assisting several communities write grants for transportation projects, including RAISE, FLAP, and the IJJA Discretionary Funds.
- f. MPO and RPO staff are serving on the state's Prioritization Workgroup with other representatives from MPOs, RPOs, and NCDOT.
- g. The MPO is providing funding to several special studies in the region getting ready to being in FY 2023: Fonta Flora Trail Feasibility Study, Reed Creek Greenway Extension Feasibility Study (City of Asheville), Patton Avenue Corridor Study, and the Buncombe County Multimodal Master Plan.
- h. The MPO is managing the Haywood County Greenway Master Plan with public meetings planned for June 6th-June 8th

- i. The MPO has completed corridor studies on Hendersonville Road and Tunnel Road, in cooperation with the City of Asheville, Buncombe County, and NCDOT. The Studies can be found here: <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/local-plans/>
- j. The MPO is providing funding for on-going studies at the City of Asheville, including the Close the GAP Plan, the purchase of bicycle and pedestrian counters, and the Biltmore/McDowell study.
- k. MPO staff is serving on a Locally Administered Projects Program committee with NCDOT to provide policy recommendations to achieve better success rates and more on-time delivery of LAPP projects.
- l. The MPO is considering providing an additional \$23 million in funding for projects across the region, including:
 - i. Ecusta Trail (US 64 to the Transylvania County Line)
 - ii. Woodfin Greenways
 - iii. Swannanoa Greenway
 - iv. Riceville Road Sidewalks
 - v. Texas Road Pedestrian Bridge

2. Broadband

- a. LOS partnered with NC DIT and the Division of Rural Health to distribute hotspots with 12 months service and digital literacy training for telehealth programs in WNC. To date 146 hotspots have been distributed to programs in three counties.
- b. LOS is partnering with the Institute of Emerging Issues and Dogwood Health Trust to assist development and implement Digital Inclusion Plans in WNC with COGS across the region.
- c. LOS received funding from Buncombe County to provide Wi-Fi in several Housing Authority of the City of Asheville (HACA) residential buildings. Staff received an update from the sub-consultant, Elawuit, that installation has begun in the first residential building.
- d. LOS is working with NEMAC to develop a broadband planning tool. The tool is aimed to consolidate many of the various data sources into a project planning catalyst for future broadband projects in the region.
- e. LOS staff worked to set up public WIFI in the Broad River area of Buncombe County. Staff partnered with fire department and Skyrunner to implement this project.
- f. LOS staff supported providers in the region with GREAT grant assistance leading to 21 applications across the region.
- g. LOS is supporting hot spot access to 325 individuals across WNC through Student Connect program thanks to the support of

3. Community Development/Water, Sewer, Stormwater Infrastructure

- a. Staff is attending the RC2 training with Mars Hill and Rosman sponsored by NC Commerce's Rural Transformation Fund. The training is being held in Boone and remotely by Appalachian State. The towns will be identifying a vision and priorities for economic and community development.
- b. 2nd Round of DEQ grants for water/sewer infrastructure will be due in September. Please let us know if you have any projects you'd like to discuss.
<https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-infrastructure/i-need-funding>
- c. DEQ has a round of ARPA stormwater funding due in September. Please connect with us if you'd like to discuss project ideas.
- d. LOSRC deployed a new instance of the new MS4 mobile app for Montreat and assisted with their MS4 audit. Staff continues to support several communities with their stormwater permit compliance needs.
- e. LOSRC submitted a letter of interest to the NCLWF (Land and Water Fund) Flood Risk Reduction Grant Program on behalf of COH, and is continuing to support project development.

4. Housing
 - a. LOSRC was awarded a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, matched with a grant to Southwestern Commission from the Dogwood Health Trust, to create a WNC Housing Asset Inventory for the western 18 counties. This project will be completed through a multi-COG effort.
 - b. LOSRC was awarded a grant from Cares at the UNC-CH School of Social Work in partnership with North Carolina Money Follows the Person (MFP), for the initiative titled Building Capacity for Home and Community Based Services through Collective Impact. The project is called Remain at Home - Accessibility Assessment Program, in partnership with the Institute for Preventative Care and Advocacy, Mountain Area Health Education Center, RL Mace Universal Design Institute.
 - c. LOSRC has completed an Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice for COH and is working on one for Buncombe County in the context of their CDBG grants.
5. Economic Development/Workforce
 - a. Draft planning documents for the Creative Manufacturing Sector Development plan are currently being reviewed by the core steering committee.
 - b. The Draft report for the Regional Economic Collaboration and Analysis led by the Region's Chambers of Commerce and business sector is under review by the Advisory Committee. Ernst and Young was selected as the Consultant for this effort and is being funded by the EDA and Dogwood Health Trust. Full results will be shared broadly.
 - c. Staff and partners have completed the analysis and final products with Outdoor/Recreation Sector manufacturers to determine opportunities in supply chains, workforce and economic diversity in cooperation with High Country Council, Southwestern Commission and Riverbird Research.
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/291e98f0291643c49a6462395ec3e6e5>
 - d. We continue to partner with the Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Support Agencies, nonprofits, and economic developers to assist small businesses through COVID-19 impacts.
 - e. The TDM Coordinator is working with Workforce, Inspire, and employers to develop a vanpool for under-resourced individuals to access job sites.
 - f. LOSRC's Waste Reduction Partners program is providing free water-use management assessments for large customers of the City of Asheville's Water Resources Department. These on-site assessments help identify utility costs savings for the City.
6. Resilience/Hazard Mitigation
 - a. Staff is serving as a Steering Committee member for the statewide RISE project and for the NC Resilience Clearing House, both for for NC Department of Public Safety, NC Office of Recovery and Resilience
 - b. Staff attended the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Workshop at NCDPS in Raleigh.
 - c. NCDPS is seeking letters of interest for the FEMA BRIC and Flood Mitigation Assistance 2022 funding round, these are due on 10/3/2022. Please contact Mary Roderick to discuss project ideas.
 - d. LOSRC has developed a work plan for the COG Disaster Recovery Grant, and will be reaching out to communities to provide a range of hazard recovery and resilience services over the next two years.
7. Clean Cities/Clean Vehicles
 - a. Clean Cities Program is assisting local governments prepare for VW Settlement projects. During the first round of settlement funding released in 2020, the Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition helped the region bring in more than \$4.1 million in grant funding to support purchases of new clean vehicles and EV infrastructure. During the second round of funding, all of the applications that LOS staff assisted with under the Level 2 Public Access Program were funded. Staff also assisted with applications for the DC Fast Chargers and Level 2 Multi-Unit Dwelling programs. Please contact Sara Nichols with questions on how to

apply for more than \$68 million in state funding available for clean fleets:

sara@landofsky.org

- b. LOS received CMAQ funding to continue support of air quality outreach initiatives in WNC.
 - c. Staff are working with French Broad Electric on a CFAT grant application.
 - d. Staff supported applications for the EPA school bus rebate for Buncombe and Madison County Schools.
 - e. Clean Vehicles has been participating in outreach events across the region including City of Asheville Parks and Recreation Truck City, Evergreen Charter School Better World Day, Careers on Wheels, Cherokee Electric Bus Ribbon Cutting.
 - f. Cherokee Clean Vehicles participated in the first electric school bus in North Carolina ribbon cutting, including a visit from Governor Cooper and Administrator Reagan.
 - g. Staff are partnering with the Cherokee Tribe on an electric bus drag race to showcase the functionality of the electric bus.
 - h. Staff participated in electric vehicle car shows in Hendersonville, Waynesville, and Rosman.
 - i. Staff are partnering with the Blue Ridge Electric Vehicle Club to host an electric vehicle car show for National Drive Electric Week.
 - j. CVC staff, Paul Moon, applied for and was accepted into the DOE national equity program to deep dive into equity in alternative fuel conversations with leading experts.
8. Planning Services
- a. Staff are working with several communities for planning and zoning assistance including Hot Springs, Mars Hill, Marshall, Montreat, Woodfin, Flat Rock, Maggie Valley, Montreat, Clyde, Canton and Andrews. We are partnering with Region A staff to assist with communities in their region, and recently signed a contract with the Town of Clyde.
9. Grants & Project Development
- a. Staff are working with several jurisdictions to support ARPA projects and administration. Please connect with Erica if you would like to learn more: erica@landofsky.org ARPA information can be found here: <https://www.nc.gov/agencies/pandemic-recovery-office/american-rescue-plan-act-information-and-resources>
 - b. Staff have been working with Sister Councils of Government on ARPA, Resilience and Multi-regional projects. Partnerships include sharing ARP policies, ordinances, and guidance; grant development; developing scopes of work and project delivery for ARPA State funds; budgeting and project development for housing, transportation and broadband tech assistance.
 - c. Staff continues working with several local governments and partners on applications for economic development, community development, transportation, and infrastructure implementation with BRIC/FEMA, EDA, and foundations. These projects will support transportation connections, resilience, job growth, industry expansion, and place-based development.
 - d. The NCGS 160D requires all Comprehensive Plans be updated to meet the new guidelines by July 1, 2022. (i.e. Municipalities and Counties must have a “reasonably-maintained” [updated within last 5-10 years] Comprehensive Plan in effect in order to legally continue having local zoning/development regulations. At minimum, a reasonably updated Land Use Plan must be in place by July 1, 2022 as a rational nexus to zoning/development regulations. (see Town of Canton’s phased-approach, Phase 1: Land Use Plan by July 1, 2022; Phase 2: Other Comprehensive Plan elements to be included after July 1, 2022) Please contact erica@landofsky.org if you have questions or would like assistance updating your plans.

3. Aging

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) - The Area Agency on Aging staff received the final Administrative Letter from NC Division of Aging and Adult Services. The goal is to increase access to services to older adults in our region. There is approximately \$300,000 in Supportive Services monies. Current providers received a Request for Funding application to apply for these funds. Applications are due August 31, 2022. Staff will review proposals in September and award funds to begin October 1, 2022.

COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach

- Staff organized Executive Director Nathan Ramsey to help record a radio ad about Covid-19 which is now playing on three different radio stations through Buncombe County (105.9 The Mountain, 97.3 Pure Oldies, and 105.5 The Outlaw) which has reached over 100,000 in both July and August, about half of the 100,000 are people 55+.
 - Staff is working with Madison County to get two radio stations to play the ad along with Transylvania WSQL Radio Station.
- Staff continues to think of new ways to connect with homebound older adults and get the message out about Covid-19 vaccines and boosters.
- Staff is scheduling times to present Covid information to different groups (Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program, and Senior Centers).
- Staff is working on getting more swag bags and free covid testing kits out to older adults in all four counties. Staff has created and given out over 800 bags and 1,600 Covid-19 at-home testing kits.
- Staff is connecting with Disability Partners again for another vaccine clinic in September to include flu and covid vaccines.
- Staff has connected with YMCA nutrition outreach to give covid rack cards to clients.
- Staff has worked with the state to make Land of Sky Regional Council a *Community Access Point*, giving out free Covid-19 at-home testing kits. Thus far, LOSRC has given out 350 tests to the community through this program.
- Staff has worked with other organizations within our region to get them registered as a *Community Access Point* for free Covid-19 at-home testing kits.

Family Caregiver Support Program

- Staff co-sponsored with AARP, “Powerful Tools for Caregivers” online. This is a 6-week session to assist caregivers. There were 15 participants registered for this summer session which began on the first week of June.
- Staff provided training for a provider’s new staff on the Family Caregiver Program.
- Staff did a presentation on the Area Agency on Aging and its programs with an Ombudsman at the Transylvania County Roundtable.
- Staff helped facilitate in-person caregiver and care receiver support groups for the first time since the pandemic began. There were three caregivers and two care receivers who participated.

Foster Grandparent Program

- Number of active volunteers: We have 27 volunteers are serving in-person with children ages infant to 13 years old.
- Number of volunteers waiting on paperwork, placement, etc.: 26 volunteers wait for their schools to reopen to volunteers so that they can return to service. Three potential volunteers are in the process of enrolling in the program.
- Number of active stations (schools, day cares, etc.): 7

- Number of stations waiting to sign MOU, volunteer placement, etc.: 11 of the schools, Head Start Centers, and child care centers have not yet allowed volunteers to return to service, three of which we are working to renew MOUs with.
- Recruitment efforts (press releases, presentations, etc.): Volunteer recruitment efforts are currently on pause until we have schools open to be able to place them. We are currently looking for new stations in Henderson County.
- Exciting news came July 2022 when our AmeriCorps Seniors grant increased the hourly stipend pay for our volunteers to \$3.15 an hour.
- In-service/training update: On July 19, Foster Grandparent volunteers attended in-person in-service training at Land of Sky Regional Council. The in-service topic for July was Juneteenth. Volunteers learned more about the history of Holiday and shared about what the Holiday meant for them personally.
 - The Sept in-service will be a back-to-school recognition event. We will also have a presentation from Diane Trainer on Medicare Fraud.

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

- Lakeview Active Aging Center has been recertified as a “*Center of Excellence*” after completing their Senior Center Operations and Program Evaluation.
- Staff completed “Belonging and Empathy (BE)” and “Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)”.
- Staff has partnered with Western Carolina University Physical Therapy Doctoral Program to deliver Walk with Ease classes in the region. Data from this partnership will be used to detail program effectiveness.
- Evidenced-Based Health Programs are returning in the area with multiple delivery options for participants including virtual (zoom), phone, and in-person opportunities. Current and upcoming classes include Tai Chi, Living Healthy with Diabetes, Living Healthy with Chronic Conditions, and Walk with Ease.
- Staff is working with senior centers and program leaders to provide educational monthly “hands-on” demonstrations of Tai Chi for senior center guests.
- Leadership training and post-COVID recertifications continue with additional leaders in the Living Healthy and A Matter of Balance being added as trained volunteers.
- Staff will be participating in the WNC Fall Prevention Conference on September 9th in partnership with WNC Fall Prevention Coalition and MAHEC.
- Staff, working with Blue Ridge Pride Generations Plus, is featuring a Tai Chi Lunch and Learn in August at LOS, promoting evidence-based health programs.
- Staff is working with Generations plus assisting with planning the “Senior Prom” and PRIDE festivities. As well as offering continued support with AARP for monthly YouTube *Rainbow Inspiration* segments.
- Staff and Asheville Terrace Community Health Workers continue to partner with MANNA and OLLI volunteers to bring nutrition to residents. In June and July combined, 140 bags of groceries were distributed to residents, and 285 “Neighbor Knock” visits were conducted.

Home and Community Care Block Grant: July 2022 Report of Services Provided

- Adult Day Care/Health Days = 235
- Meals – delivered/congregate = 17,448
- In-home Aide hours = 1,056
- Legal Services hours = 165
- Transportation trips = 3,848
- Home Improvement Projects = 0

Money Follows the Person (MFP) Community Inclusion

- Provided webinar training on Money Follows the Person for the Buncombe Aging Services Alliance (BASA) including members from surrounding WNC counties.
- Completed In-person visits to all Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) in Jackson, Haywood, Polk, Rutherford and McDowell, Henderson, Burke, Caldwell Counties. Partial Completion of Buncombe County.
- Provided MFP training to Burke County DSS Long Term Care Medicaid team including Director.
- Educational email campaign to inform SNF social workers on Local Contact Agencies and how to make referrals.
- Haywood County SNF visits. Provided one on one training with 2 new SWs and provided application packets. Expecting two applications from Haywood Rehabilitation (SW - Sydney)
- Attended professional social workers networking meeting for WNC participating in education on Palliative and Hospice care.
- Attended multiple training sessions on different aging topics including the Olmstead Institute (Guardianship Topic) Webinar

Money Follows the Person (MFP) Transition Program

Western counties: Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, Polk, Madison, McDowell, Rutherford, Mitchell, Madison

- The current caseload for the Western counties is 10.
- All but one of the participants are currently waiting for housing before they can transition.

Central counties: Forsyth, Davidson, Surry, Davie, Stokes, Yadkin

- The current caseload for the Central counties is seven.
- Five clients are trying to locate housing before they can transition.
- Three clients are scheduled to transition September 1, 2022.

Ombudsman Program

- The Community Advisory Committees are in the process of re-entering facilities. The Henderson County Advisory Committee has visited five facilities since the beginning of August.
- Staff presented “What is an Ombudsman?” at the July Regional Aging Advisory Council Meeting.
- Staff presented two Resident Rights In-services to facility staff.
- The Ombudsman Program provided outdoor activity kits, cleaning supplies, and personal care items to Family Care Homes.

Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty)

- Staff has distributed \$14,500 in State respite funding among 27 dementia caregivers since beginning of new fiscal year.
- Since beginning of new fiscal year staff has completed 15 intake forms for dementia caregivers who are now on waiting list for respite funding and care consultation services. There are currently 57 caregivers awaiting these two services while having received information/assistance/referral services. There will not be enough State funds this year to provide relief to all who are on the waiting list.
- Staff has applied for ARPA funds to use for caregiver respite.
- Staff provided information/assistance/referral services to 72 callers in July.
- Staff arranged for professional photographer to photograph caregiver/care receiver in Madison County. Photos will be provided to the family and used by Land of Sky for marketing purposes.

The Senior Companion Program

- Number of active volunteers: 53
- Number of volunteers waiting on paperwork, placement, etc.: 4 volunteers were welcomed on 8/15/2022. There are 3 who are interested and completing the application process.
- Number of active stations: 12
- In-service/training update: September- Housekeeping & games. It has been awhile since our volunteers have just had a fun day.
- As of July 1, 2022, the hourly stipend rate was increased to \$3.15 per hour. AmeriCorps-Senior is excited about this increase.
- The Senior Companion Program is in process of applying for funding through Dogwood Health Trust for the continuation of our Support Specialist for FY24-FY26.
- The Senior Companion Program recently worked with ARPA funding within Land of Sky to consider award funding from October 2022 to September 23 for the purpose of reimbursing mileage to our volunteers who transport their clients.

4. Administration

- Staff transition for the former Deputy Director's position is going well with staff assuming these roles with new enthusiasm and professionalism.
- Nathan made a presentation to Buncombe County Board of Commissioners on July 19 with an update about LOSRC. Nathan also met with the Buncombe County Manager and Intergovernmental Relations Director to discuss possible changes to local Council dues.
- Nathan attended several forums in Transylvania County hosted by SCORE regarding workforce development and affordable housing.
- We hosted the WNC Rebounding Stronger Summit on Tuesday, August 9, 2022 in partnership with Southwestern Commission and Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. Around 150 people attended the summit at the Cherokee Convention Center in Cherokee, NC. Governor Cooper attended and spoke at the event.
- Almost 250 people attended the Land of Sky Summer BBQ at the Town of Mills River Community Park on Friday, July 29. The lunch was catered by Daddy D's Soulfood in Hendersonville.
- Hosted monthly LOSRC DEI and staff meetings.
- Attended the Blue Ridge Community College Patton Building ribbon cutting.
- Met with East Tennessee Development District in Alcoa, TN about a two-state USDOL grant.
- Made a presentation to the Council of Independent Business Owners about the local economy and workforce.
- Attended the COG Directors and NCARCOG Forum meetings in Charlotte.
- Joined other COG Directors in WNC at a meeting with leadership at Dogwood Health Trust.
- Mountain Xpress is planning an article about LOSRC and Regional Councils of Government, we have shared much data with them and Nathan was interviewed by the reporter.
- Met with WNC Health Network about possible partnerships.

5. Workforce

- Region's unemployment rate of 3.4% for June 2022, metro is tied for the #1 lowest unemployment rate in NC. Our region now has more people working, more jobs and more people in our labor force than at any time pre-pandemic.
- Region's NCWorks Career Centers were certified by the NCWorks Commission.
- \$19 and Beyond Job Fair on June 29 attracted around 350 job seekers with just over 70 employers.
- Work/Life Balance Job Fair on August 11 attracted just over 200 job seekers with almost 90 employers.
- WNC Talent Survey covering 10-counties in Western North Carolina will be released at the Asheville Chamber's Economic Development Coalition of Asheville – Buncombe on August 26.

- Workforce team participated at the United Way of Buncombe County's Back to School event at Pack Square Park in downtown Asheville.
- We did not receive the EDA Good Jobs Challenge grant submitted in partnership with Dogwood Health Trust, AB Tech and Blue Ridge Community College. The focus was on the advanced manufacturing and healthcare sectors, the request is for \$10 million. This was an incredibly competitive grant with over 500 applications submitted and only 32 awarded.
- We are awaiting news on the ARC WORC grant.
- We are partnering with East Tennessee Development District (ETDD) for the USDOL GROW grant to serve youth in 11-counties in NC and 10-counties in TN.
- We are hosting a NCWorks business roundtable on August 22.
- Our application for the NC State Workforce Development Leadership Academy was approved. Six individuals from the region will be participating including representatives of Land of Sky P-20 Council, Western Carolina University, Blue Ridge Community College, Asheville Chamber, Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development and Transylvania Alliance.
- We are hosting the September meeting of the NC Workforce Development Directors in Asheville.
- We will continue our partnership with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce to host the WNC Career Expo in the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023.
- Regional workforce survey results will be released at the board meeting of the Economic Development Coalition of Asheville-Buncombe on Friday, August 26.
- Brandon Priester joined the board staff full-time on July 1 as a Business Services Representative focused on youth ages 16 – 24.
- Finish Line Grant (FLG) program will be transitioning to the NC Community College System with the state allocating federal ARPA funds. Previously FLGs were supported with WIOA funding. FLGs helped students with supportive services who were 50% or more complete in their academic program.
- Board staff are working closely with county economic developers on several expansion or new business recruitment with the NC Job Ready grant.
- WNC Rebounding Stronger Summit was held on August 9 in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, Southwestern Commission and Land of Sky Regional Council. Our workforce team was engaged as talent development was one of the topics on the summit agenda.

6. Strategic Initiatives

- Mountain Mobility saw a 15% increase in overall passengers in FY22, adding a total of 880 clients to our database. The service also provided 103,678 trips, up more than 12% over FY21.
- NEMT (Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation) currently has 1,318 active clients in Buncombe County and recorded 7,728 scheduled trips in July 2022. Scheduled trips were up 8.5% over the same period in 2021.
- Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program – our newest program at Land of Sky – is a ground-breaking program that provides non-medical transportation services to qualifying Medicaid recipients (different from those served by NEMT). Since the program began in May 2022, Land of Sky has provided transportation services to 10 Buncombe County residents.
- INspire Program – WNC Recovery to Career serves the needs of individuals who are leaving treatment centers and ready for career/life skills. Overall, INspire has served 190 clients with educational training, employment services and purchases of other wrap-around durable supports (shoes, cell phones, vital records, etc.) that are necessary for long-range employment success.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) work - Land of Sky is planning a series of Lunch 'N Learns to introduce community programs and services to LOS staff. Our first event is planned for Wednesday, October 5th, with a presentation by Inclusive Hiring Partners, a program sponsored by the Asheville Chamber of Commerce seeking to close the opportunity gap between employers and job seekers with barriers.