

Land of Sky Regional Council
January 22, 2020
Regular Meeting



Please mute all electronic devices, including cell phones, laptops, tablets, and recorders. Delegates are requested to state their names when moving on orders of business. Thank you!

AGENDA

Special Presentation: Dogwood Health Trust Overview- Antony Chiang & Janice Brumit (12:45pm)

- I. **Call to Order (1:15pm)**
- II. **Invocation**
- III. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- IV. **Roll Call**
- V. **Modification and Approval of Agenda**
- VI. **Public Comment**
- VII. **Recognition of Special Guests**
- VIII. **Chairman's Comments and Roundtable**
- IX. **Approval of Minutes from the October Regular Meeting and December Awards Meeting**
- X. **Consideration and Approval of Consent Agenda Items**
- XI. **Presentations/Recognition**
 - A. Years-of-Service Awards – Nathan Ramsey, Interim Executive Director
- XII. **Old Business**
- XIII. **New Business**
- XIV. **Executive Director's Report**
 - Written Report Provided with Agenda Packet on Tuesday, January 21, 2020
- XIV. **Important Dates**
 - A. Next Regional Board Meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2020
- XV. **Adjournment**



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** October 2019 Board of Delegates Meeting Minutes
- Item Number:** X. Approval of Minutes from the October Regular Meeting
- Responsible Party:** Zia Rifkin, Administrative Services
- Attachment(s):** Minutes from the October 2019 Meeting
- Background:** A quorum was present to conduct business at the October 2019 meeting and the minutes provide a recap of the special presentation by the US Forest Service regarding their Land Management Plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests. Erica Anderson, Director of Economic and Community Development provided an update on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) and announced the opening of its 30-day public comment period. Justin Hembree announced the annual awards presentation and the LOSRC Open House planned for December 4 as part of his report.
- Staff Recommendation:** Recommend acceptance of the October 2019 meeting minutes
- Suggested Motion(s):** Move to approve the October 2019 minutes as submitted

**Meeting of
Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates
October 30, 2019**

Minutes

Special Presentation – US Forest Service- Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests Land Management Plan, Alice Cohen, US Forest Service – Alice Cohen shared information about the US Forest Service's new Land Management Plan for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests. She communicated that the development of the new plan has been going on for some time and today's presentation represents the first public presentation of the draft plan. She communicated that the new plan would cover the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, which are huge recreation destinations and include the 18 western-most counties. The plan covers multiple uses of the forests. Based on public input, the plan includes the importance of the forests to the surrounding communities, reflecting the values of these communities.

During the development process for the new plan, many other plans were reviewed for National Forests. In addition, many types of public outreach were conducted including outreach to Tribal, Governmental and local jurisdictions, leading to heavy collaboration on the front end of the plan's development. Over the past 1.5 years, public input has been incorporated into the new plan, which required much analysis. The next step is the public review period for the new plan; including additional meetings with local units of government, among others. After the public review of the draft, a public comment period is required. The givens (what the plan would accomplish): are clean air and forest-wide direction for air-quality for forests and management areas, among other things. The plan also requires an environmental impact statement. Hard copies of the draft plan would be distributed widely to public organizations. One goal of the plan is to generate more jobs (economic development) to create win-win scenarios for surrounding communities. Alice Cohen noted that the US Forest Service has been working closely with collaborators to promote the message of the plan, which is complex and requires interpretation of the plan's contents. She provided a reader's guide, which delegates could review at their leisure.

Discussion occurred regarding the Appalachian Trail, which is its own Management Area. Alice Cohen shared that the current plan has 26 Management Areas, which have been narrowed down to 16 Management Areas in the new draft plan.

Discussion occurred about the level of visitors to the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, which is the highest in the nation. Ms. Cohen shared about the outdoor economy conference that was recently held, which could generate economic development in the areas surrounding the National Forests. She also shared about other tools and ways for the US Forest Service to collaborate more with local communities. Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (LOSRPO) staff requested visitor numbers for the National Forests. Erica Anderson noted that LOSRC participated in the process to develop the draft plan, which included many advocacy organizations, to conserve the forests.

Discussion occurred about the wildfires in California and what is being done in the region to prevent forest fires. Alice Cohen noted that highly trained firefighters are available to assist with the current wildfires in California.

- I. Call to Order – Presiding Chair George Goosmann called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00pm.
- II. Invocation – Presiding Chair Goosmann gave the invocation.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance – All stood as Presiding Chair Goosmann led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Roll Call – Justin Hembree called the roll. The following members were present: Matt Wechtel, George Goosmann, Jonathan, Albert Gooch, Bob Davy, Nathan Bennett, Nancy Allen, Patrick Fitzsimmons, John Mitchell, George Morosani, and Gaylyn Justice. The following guests were present: April Riddle, Alice Cohen, and Dr. Arthur Salido. Justin Hembree announced a quorum was present to conduct business.
- V. Modification and Approval of Agenda – The agenda was presented with no modification requested.

Patrick Fitzsimmons moved to approve the agenda as presented. Albert Gooch seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

- VI. Public Comment – No public comments were made.
- VII. Recognition of Special Guests – Presiding Chair Goosmann recognized April Riddle (NCDOL) and Dr. Arthur Salido of Western Carolina University (WCU).
- VIII. Chairman's Comments and Round Table – Jonathan Kanipe – Shared that in the Town of Biltmore Forest, there have been several events lately that were very popular. The Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony is scheduled for early December. Bob Davy – Shared that the Town of Fletcher would again have a Christmas event in the Park this year. The Town has now officially acquired all of the property in front of the Town Hall. He also shared that he has a new granddaughter. Albert Gooch – Shared that the Village of Flat Rock had a great event at The Park. He also noted that a highly contested election is coming up. Gaylyn Justice – Shared that the WNC Bridge Foundation has awarded a grant to the Senior Companion Program (SCP) to expand transportation for seniors served by the program. Patrick Fitzsimmons – Shared that the Town of Weaverville has been asked to establish a dog park. April Riddle – Shared that it is open enrollment for Medicare and she provided informational handouts for distribution. She also shared that Extra Help is a program to assist with co-pays and prescription costs for older folks who cannot afford their medicine. In addition, she provided information on inquiries regarding Medicare fraud, which the North Carolina Department of Insurance (NCDOL) could investigate. John Mitchell - Shared that a new school is going up in Henderson County with a ribbon cutting planned around mid-December. Also, the County is moving forward on the new Hendersonville High School project and a new facility a Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC). Additionally, the County is beginning the budget process again. Lastly, he shared a big announcement – the Street Treat is moving to Fridays. Matt Wechtel – Shared that Madison County is looking forward to the holidays and the County appreciates that the Town of Mars Hill is joining the Christmas Parade again. In addition, he shared that the County is working collaboratively with the Towns on projects to draw in more visitors and increase economic development. Nathan Bennett – Shared that the Town of Mars Hill would have a holiday parade on December 7. Everyone is invited to attend. He also shared that good projects are going on including partnering with the Town of Marshall on a water quality study. Nancy Allen – Shared that the Town of Marshall is having a safe treat event tomorrow night and the Christmas Parade on December 14. There's also a Veterans' Day program planned for November 11 on the Madison County Courthouse steps. There's a lot going on in Marshall! She also shared the Town's appreciation to be working with the County and the other Towns on several projects.
- IX. Approval of Minutes from the September Regular Meeting –
Bob Davy moved to approve the minutes of the September 2019 meeting as submitted. Albert Gooch seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.
- X. Consideration and Approval of Consent Agenda Items –
- XI. Presentations/Recognition –
A. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Overview & Announcement of Public Comment Period – Erica Anderson, Director of Economic and Community Development, shared that something new is being tried for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update this year- the CEDS is moving into a web-based format, which allows for spatial interacting with the CEDS. The goal is to create a living document that people can use, rather than having a plan that sits on a shelf. The open data portal is a way for folks to access data without interacting with staff. This new format allows for online mapping features and graphical elements and covers all requirements of the CEDS. She noted that the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) requires the CEDS. Today, she presented accomplishments to date on the CEDS update and announced the beginning of its 30-day public comment period. She reviewed the impacts that LOSRC has had in the region concerning the CEDS goals.

Erica Anderson reviewed the SWOT analysis, which provided the opportunities for growth that the CEDS update focuses on. She identified top priorities, which includes affordable housing, broadband, waterways and infrastructure, among other things. She noted that each community in region has a snapshot in the online CEDS. Economic resilience is another focus of the CEDS and is required by the US Department of Transportation (DOT) and EDA and exams long-term costs and economic return. Threats to the region include wildfires and other long-term issues. The CEDS provides an action plan with goals and strategies to meet those goals. The evaluation framework is the piece that measures progress on the four goals in the CEDS. She concluded by noting that the final part is the case studies, which are highlighted in the CEDS. Erica Anderson requested comments and feedback on the CEDS update.

XII. Old Business –

XIII. New Business –

XIV. Executive Director's Report –

A. Council Award Nominations – Justin Hembree shared about the three awards that Council gives out every year. He noted that the nomination forms are included in the agenda packet, along with the criteria for each of the awards.

B. Holiday Open House – Justin Hembree announced that December 4 is the annual awards presentation and the LOSRC Open House. There will not be a regular Board of Delegates meeting. The awards presentation is scheduled to begin at 1:00pm and the Open House is planned from 2 to 4pm.

XV. Important Dates – The next regular LOSRC Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 22, 2020.

XVI. Adjournment – Presiding Chair Goosmann adjourned the meeting, as there was no further business.



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** December 2019 Board of Delegates Meeting Minutes
- Item Number:** X. Approval of Minutes from the December 2019 Meeting
- Responsible Party:** Zia Rifkin, Administrative Services
- Attachment(s):** Minutes from the December 2019 Meeting
- Background:** A quorum was present to conduct business at the December 2019 meeting and the minutes provide a recap of the special presentation by LOSRC's Aging Program Specialist, Stephanie Stewart on Preventing Falls in WNC. The meeting also provided the opportunity to recognize the recipients of the following awards: The Charles H. Cambell Regional Leadership Award, the Robert G. Parrish Intergovernmental Relations Award; and, the Robert E. Shepherd Excellence in Local Government Award. Outgoing Executive Director Justin Hembree was also recognized for his leadership of LOSRC and was presented with a farewell gift. Immediately following the Board meeting, the Regional Board and LOSRC staff hosted the Holiday Open House.
- Staff Recommendation:** Recommend acceptance of the December 2019 meeting minutes
- Suggested Motion(s):** Move to approve the December minutes as submitted

**Meeting of
Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates
December 4, 2019**

Minutes

Special Presentation – Preventing Falls in Region B – Stephanie Stewart, Aging Program Specialist with the Area Agency on Aging shared about programs that help seniors and others learn to prevent falls. She communicated demographics information for adults 65+, noting that there are many seniors in Region B. Buncombe County has the highest level of older adults at home alone, followed by Transylvania and Henderson Counties. The higher the number of older adults, the higher the level of deaths of seniors caused by falls. Most falls occur in the home- 58% in NC. In Buncombe County, for example, 29% of older adults live alone. In one week, in the state, over 1000 falls occur. Falling is not a natural part of aging; there are physiological changes that occur as we age that make falls more likely. By countering physiological changes, some falls could be prevented. Some seniors are hesitant to talk to their healthcare providers about falling as they fear a loss of independence. Stephanie Stewart noted there is much work being done to raise the awareness about falls including the WNC Fall Prevention Coalition. The NC Center for Health and Wellness is also involved in piloting a referral process with Mission Health Systems for fall prevention. She also noted programs operated by the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) that assist with programs designed to prevent falls, including Tai Chi for Arthritis and A Matter of Balance, which have both generated high interest. These programs are not only health education programs; these programs provide opportunities to reduce fall risks, which could include increasing physical activity, rearranging the home, and learning strategies to help a senior get up after falling. Stephanie Stewart introduced Jane Kennedy, one of the Tai Chi for Arthritis instructors.

Jane Kennedy shared that Tai Chi for Arthritis is based on a certain style of Tai Chi. She noted that Tai Chi is beneficial for a host of conditions. Moving in Tai Chi is slow movement, in harmony with the body, meant to develop core strength. Gentle resistance and keeping the posture upright are other elements of the type of Tai Chi used for preventing arthritis. She noted that almost every chronic condition could be traced back to not breathing correctly. Jane Kennedy led two LOSRC staff in some of the movements used for Tai Chi for Arthritis. The class lasts for twenty sessions, which is the length of time necessary to see positive change in a health condition. She noted that the Tai Chi for Arthritis class is offered free by the AAA through a grant from the Older Americans Act.

Discussion occurred about Tai Chi and Jane Kennedy noted that once the steps are known, those may be incorporated into daily life and living. She noted that daily practice of Tai Chi is recommended and the optimal daily length of practice is the amount of time one could comfortably walk. Discussion also occurred about whether there is a service that older adults could use if they fall and Stephanie Stewart noted that many seniors use Life Alert but, there are also ways to prevent the consequences of falling alone, which could include seniors asking neighbors and friends to check on them frequently. Jane Kennedy communicated the importance of practicing Tai Chi every day as the weekly class does not provide enough exercise to see physical improvement quickly. Discussion occurred about volunteers who could instruct other volunteers so that more programs could run in the region.

- I. Call to Order – Chair Harris called the meeting to order at approximately 1:15pm.
- II. Invocation – Chair Harris gave the invocation.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance – All stood as Chair Harris led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Roll Call – Justin Hembree called the roll. The following members were present: Larry Rogers, Norris Gentry, Matt Wechtel, Forrest Gilliam, George Goosmann, Jonathan Kanipe, Larry Harris, Albert Gooch, Bob Davy, Barbara Volk, Nancy Allen, Jerry Vebaun, John Mitchell, and George Morosani. The following guests were present: April Riddle, Robin Ramsey, and Freddie Harrill. Justin Hembree announced a quorum was present to conduct business.
- V. Modification and Approval of Agenda – The agenda was presented with no modification requested.

George Morosani moved to approve the agenda as presented. Norris Gentry seconded and the motion carried without further discussion.

- VI. Public Comment – No public comments were made.
- VII. Chairman's Comments and Round Table – Albert Gooch – Shared that the Village of Flat Rock has a new Council coming in a week from Thursday. Maureen Copelof – Shared that she is the new primary delegate to the Regional Board from the City of Brevard. Barbara Volk – Shared that the City of Hendersonville has two new Councilwomen being sworn in tomorrow night and lots of Christmas activities in Hendersonville coming up. John Mitchell – Shared that in Henderson County, the new Edneyville Elementary School is ready to open. He also shared that there was a great toilet paper cutting for the new public restroom facilities in the City of Hendersonville. Lastly, he shared the County's appreciation for Justin Hembree's leadership and wished him well in his new adventure. Bob Davy – Shared that the Town of Fletcher has a new Councilman- Preston Blakely. He also shared that the Continental Teves plant has announced its closure (in two years) and the Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development (HCPED) is working to find new tenants for the property. Also, the Town has instituted a no-burning ban. In addition, he shared that just north of the Town Hall is a big piece of property that would soon be developed for multi-family housing. Lastly, Christmas in the Park is coming up and everyone is invited. Jonathan Kanipe – Shared that the Town of Biltmore Forest has its tree lighting event this Friday evening; it's the Town's fifth year doing so. Matt Wechtel – Shared that Madison County is facing many challenges keeping good folks hired and everyone is looking forward to the three upcoming Christmas Parades in the County. Nancy Allen – Shared that the Town of Marshall would have its Christmas Parade this Friday and the live Christmas Story on Saturday. She also expressed appreciation to Justin Hembree for his service, noting that it was he who encouraged her to become a delegate. Larry Harris – Shared that the Town of Black Mountain has its Christmas Parade coming up.
- VIII. Holiday Service Project – Justin Hembree shared about LOSRC's Holiday Service Project. He noted that in the past, the organization did a poor job of communicating with Member Governments about the annual service project, which changed last year when it was discovered that most everyone wants to help. This year, the focus of the Holiday Service Project is Kinship Caregivers. These are wonderful people who are raising their grandchildren. This year, LOSRC is going to provide Christmas for the Kinship Caregivers- children and grandparents alike. Ruth Price, Caregiver Support Specialist for the AAA, shared about one kinship caregiver, who is struggling a lot, who said that as long as the grandchildren were covered, she didn't need anything. Justin Hembree noted that these kinds of projects could have a huge impact on people in our region and he encouraged folks to review the list that was recently shared with Member Governments by email (and would be shared again). Gifts and cash donations are due by Friday, December 13, to allow time for using cash donations to purchase gifts and time for wrapping and delivering gifts. Staff is happy to pick up gifts or deliveries could be sent to LOSRC.
- IX. NADO Impact Awards – Justin Hembree shared about the three NADO Impact Awards that LOSRC recently received. The awards recognize best practices of regional councils that could be duplicated by other COGs across the country. The specific projects that received NADO Impact Awards are the ECD's Building Regional Resilience, Workforce Development's Mountain Area Careers and the ECD's Congestion Management Process (CMP). He extended appreciation to LOSRC staff for their fine work that resulted in these three NADO Impact Awards.
- X. 2019 Awards Announcements and Presentations –
- A. Robert E. Shepherd Excellence in Local Government Award – This award was established in 2015 in honor of the first Executive Director of LOSRC, Robert Shepherd. The award honors a local government

professional who has benefited the region. This year, two local government professionals are being honored: Jonathan Kanipe, Manager, Town of Biltmore Forest and Forrest Gilliam, Manager, Madison County. Justin Hembree shared that Jonathan Kanipe is being honored for his leadership and work ethic and Forrest Gilliam is being honored for his leadership on the WestNGN initiative and also for his service to the citizens of Madison County and for his work with the French Broad Electric Membership Corporation.

B. Charles H. Campbell Regional Leadership Award – This award was established in 1983 in honor of Mayor Campbell of Brevard. The purpose of this award is to recognize local leaders who work to solve regional challenges. This year's recipient is Alderman Larry B. Harris, Town of Black Mountain, who has worked tirelessly to improve the region for its citizens. Chair Harris shared his appreciation for Justin Hembree and for his leadership of LOSRC during a time of great change for COGs. He noted that Land of Sky Regional Council is a special place because it's an opportunity for local leaders to convene.

C. Robert G. Parrish, Sr. Intergovernmental Relations Award – This award was established in 2000 in honor of Mayor Parrish, who was the first Mayor of the Town of Fletcher when it was incorporated. This award recognizes someone who excels in intergovernmental relations. This year's recipient is Jerry Vehaun, long-time Mayor of Woodfin, who has served as the Director of Emergency Management for Buncombe County for many years. Chair Harris shared that Jerry Vehaun is looked-up-to in the County and in addition to his work with Buncombe County EMS, serving people in difficult times; he has served with two national organizations that led him to serve during 9/11 and other national emergencies.

Chair Harris presented Justin Hembree with a token of appreciation and a farewell gift from Council- a framed photograph of Cold Mountain. Justin Hembree shared that the decision to leave the mountains and LOSRC is the hardest decision he has ever made. He promised not be a stranger.

XI. Adjournment – Chair Harris adjourned the meeting and the Holiday Open House commenced.



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** LOSRC Employee Service Awards
- Item Number:** XI. Presentations/Recognition; Item, A.
- Responsible Party:** Nathan Ramsey, Interim Executive Director
- Attachment(s):** None
- Background:** Each year, the Council recognizes employees' years of service milestones. This year, the following employees are being recognized:
- Dee Hanak – 10 Years
 - Vicki Jennings – 10 Years
 - Tristan Winkler – 5 Years
 - Stephanie Stewart – 5 Years
- Staff Recommendation:** N/A
- Suggested Motion(s):** N/A



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** Executive Director's Report
- Item Number:** XIV. Executive Director's Report
- Responsible Party:** Nathan Ramsey, Interim Executive Director
- Attachment(s):** Executive Director's Report for January 22, 2020
- Background:** The Executive Director's Report provides highlights and accomplishments from LOSRC Departments/Agencies.
- Staff Recommendation:** N/A.
- Suggested Motion(s):** N/A

Land of Sky Regional Council
Interim Executive Director Report
Respectfully submitted by Nathan Ramsey
January 22, 2019

1. Economic Community Development

- NEMT proposal has been accepted by Buncombe County for July 1, 2020 going forward. It is anticipated LOSRC will continue providing NEMT services for Buncombe County at the current level until the state proceeds with Medicaid reform. Most likely, that change will happen in 2021.
- Regional Resiliency Project/FEMA Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) – partnering with UNC Asheville’s NEMAC, Asheville-Buncombe Economic Development Coalition, EDA and NCDOT to determine high priority assets and risks to economic and infrastructure systems throughout the region.
- Received Z Smith Reynolds support for the Regional Resilience project.
- French Broad MPO staffing and salary proposal is to increase staff capacity for transportation.
- WestNGN Broadband Summit – January 27 at UNC Asheville
- ECD staff will be featured at the Emerging Issues ReConnect forum “Reconnect to Technological Opportunity” in Raleigh on February 10.
- WestNGN broadband county profiles and implementation plans for the region are now available at <http://www.landofsky.org/westngnbroadband.html>.
- Launched in 2020 by Land of Sky Regional Council, the Land of Sky Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy is a 5 year plan designed to support economic and community priorities across our region. 2000-2019 impacts include \$151 million in private investment, over 4,000 jobs created or retained, and \$300,000 in public investment to date around four focus areas: Competitive Advantage, Regional infrastructure, Healthy & Vibrant Communities, and Innovative People.
- Community Development Block Grants – projects include Brevard and Hendersonville (Grey Hosiery property redevelopment).
- Infrastructure – Projects in Mars Hill (WWTP infrastructure and access road), Enka (Enka Commerce Park access road), and Black Mountain (water, sewer and access road). Funding for these projects include Golden Leaf Foundation, ARC, EDA, NCDOT, MSD and private sources.

2. Workforce Development

- USDOL ETA \$5 million grant submitted by the NC Department of Commerce to serve 16 counties (15 counties in WNC + Cumberland) including the Land of Sky region. DHT provided a professional grant writer.
- Computer Science for NC (CS4NC) – January 14 at WCU Biltmore Park hosted by Epsilon with Lieutenant Governor, Tom Looney, The Friday Institute at NC State, NC School of Science and Math (NCSSM) and about 20 regional tech employers.
- MAWDB staffing adjustments during LOSRC executive director transition while Nathan is serving in the two leadership roles at LOSRC and MAWDB.

- Submitted a grant request to DHT for \$25,000 in training funds to support low-income adults.
- Received a \$200,000 grant from the John M Belk Endowment to support the Land of Sky region's postsecondary credential attainment effort, which is consistent with the statewide My Future NC goal. Our region is the first in NC to lead a multi-county postsecondary credential attainment collaborative effort.

3. Administration

- Nathan attended the COG Directors meeting in Winston Salem. At that meeting, I became aware that LOSRC traditionally has not had a Council member participate in the COG Association. We will reach out to Council to see if LOSRC would like to be represented.
- Danna made a presentation at the Red River Leadership Institute last week in Texarkana, AR, invited by the University of Arkansas Little Rock and travel expenses paid by the University of Arkansas.
- ReConnect WNC – five county Chambers of Commerce, Danna working with Samantha Cole at the Asheville Chamber on this effort. This effort would be a business led regional conversation on the major challenges and opportunities for the region.
- Healthy Opportunities – proposal to be submitted by DHT end of this month, Danna is leading this effort on behalf of LOSRC. Vicki Jennings and I met with DHT and we will submit a NEMT proposal covering 18 counties.
- LOSRC indirect cost proposal has been submitted to the federal government by Charlotte.
- Local Government Commission unrestricted fund balance update – we have had conversations with our outside auditors and the LGC. Staff will adopt a policy to limit the number of contracts that cover two consecutive program years, which will reduce our year-end encumbrances and increase unrestricted fund balance available for appropriation.
- Large Conference Room AV system – received approval from state workforce monitors and on the Executive Committee agenda for vendor approval. We have applied for a DHT grant for an assistive listening system in the Large Conference Room as part of the AV upgrades.
- Rural SUD workshop hosted by federal agencies, Danna is leading this project and working with The White House Office of Drug Control Policy and Appalachian Regional Commission.
- Cannon & Company, the LOSRC outside auditors, have informed us that they will no longer be providing governmental audit services. We are preparing a RFP to be released to request proposals for audit services.

4. Aging

- Staff is working on the next five-year aging plan for our region.
- Staff has signed up with NCCare360, the new referral platform for North Carolina. Land of sky will host an NCCare360 training session.

- Submitted two proposals to DHT and Pisgah Health Foundation to expand the Council's two volunteer programs (Senior Companion Program and Foster Grandparent Program) with a special focus in rural counties.

5. Mountain Mobility

- We have applied for a DHT grant for software that will facilitate a volunteer transportation network in any of the four counties to supplement current transportation options.
- Two of the Mountain Mobility staff members are trained in the NCCare360 platform and are currently using the system to provide/receive referrals for services.
- Our Trailblazer routes (Black Mountain, Enka-Candler and North Buncombe) have been modified to provide better linkages to the City of Asheville ART System as a result of ART's updated routes and scheduling.