

Land of Sky Regional Council
April 28, 2021
Regular Meeting



Under S.L. 2020-3, SB 704, Delegates are required 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. Minutes from the March 24, 2021 Regular (Annual) Meeting, held Virtually via Zoom
- VI. Public Comment**
- VII. Recognition of Special Guests**
- VIII. Chairperson's Comments and Delegates Roundtable**
- IX. Presentations**
 - A. NC Senator Chuck Edwards on SB 349/HB 401
 - B. Lew Bleiweis, Executive Director, Asheville Regional Airport
 - C. Matt Chase, CEO, National Association of Counties (NACo)
- X. Old Business**
- XI. New Business**
- XII. Executive Director's Report**
- XIII. Important Dates**
 - A. Next Regional Board Meeting via Zoom is scheduled for Wednesday, May, 26, 2021
- XIV. Adjournment**



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

- Subject:** Consent Agenda
- Item Number:** V. Consent Agenda: Item A. Modification/Approval of Agenda and Item B. Approval of Minutes from the March 24, 2021 Regular Meeting via the Zoom Platform
- Responsible Party:** Zia Rifkin, Administrative Services
- Attachment(s):** Minutes from the March 2021 Virtual Regular Meeting
- Background:** A. Modification/Approval of March 24, 2021 Agenda
B. March 24, 2021 Virtual Meeting Minutes
Quorum was present to conduct business at the March 2021 virtual meeting via the Zoom platform and the minutes provide a recap of the of the Delegates' updates from around the region. Presentations were provided by the Police Chiefs of local jurisdictions regarding Racial Equity in Criminal Justice; Dr. Joseph Fox with myFutureNC regarding the Educational Attainment Goal; and Ginger Hill, Coordinator for the Area Agency on Aging's Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project.
- Staff Recommendation:** Recommend approval of the Consent Agenda
- Suggested Motion(s):** Move to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented.

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom
of the
Land of Sky Regional Council Board of Delegates**

March 24, 2021

Minutes

- I. Call to Order – Chair Volk called the meeting to order at approximately 12:31pm.
- II. Invocation – Mayor Larry Harris gave the invocation.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Volk led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. Roll Call – Nathan Ramsey called the roll. The following members were present: William Lapsley, Terri Wells, Jason Chappell, Larry Chapman, Sandra Kilgore, Maureen Copelof, Daniel Cobb, Jane Alexander, Forrest Gilliam, Brittany Brady, Larry Harris, Albert Gooch, Barbara Volk, Timothy Love, Preston Blakely, Bob Tomasulo, Matt Wechtel, George Morosani, Josh Hallingse, and Jonathan Kanipe

Guests Present – Dr. Joseph Fox, Rich Price, Chief Ron Davis, Chief J. Phillip Harris, Andrew McKinney, Chief Shawn Freeman, Lacy Cross, Dr. Gene Loflin, T. Rodriguez

A quorum was present to conduct business.
- V. Consent Agenda – The consent agenda, consisting of the agenda and the minutes of February 24, 2021 minutes was presented for approval.

George Morosani moved to approve the consent agenda, as presented. Larry Harris seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.
- VI. Public Comment – No public comments were received.
- VII. Recognition of Special Guests – Nathan Ramsey recognized Rich Price with WCU, who has been named the Economic Development and Community Engagement Director for the University. Mr. Price shared his biography with the Board and his appreciation for being at today’s meeting.
- VIII. Chair’s Comments and Delegates Roundtable
Chair Volk requested that Delegates share updates and news of interest in their jurisdictions.

Delegates Roundtable

Commissioner Terri Wells – Shared that Buncombe County is reviewing the American Rescue Plan and how that funding may be used to benefit the community. She expressed her interest to reach out to other jurisdictions in the region. The One Buncombe Fund has provided assistance to businesses throughout the County, enabling them to rehire workers or preserve staff. A key objective of this funding is to support businesses that are not eligible for other funding. Grants have been distributed to minority and women-owned businesses and other historically under-utilized businesses. She also expressed appreciation for the community members who contributed to the fund.

Commissioner William Lapsley – Shared that Henderson County Manager, Mr. Steve Wyatt, has announced his retirement. He has served the County for 15 years and Chairman Lapsley expressed appreciation for Mr. Wyatt’s service. The County is gearing up to begin the process to find a new manager.

Commissioner Matt Wechtel – Shared that Madison County is involved in budget development for the upcoming fiscal year. The County is also searching for a new manager and there is also an opening for the economic development director position. Commissioner Wechtel shared appreciation for Ms. Terry Belamy’s service to the County, as the previous economic development director.

Commission Chair Jason Chappell – Shared that Transylvania County is excited to share that RayBow USA has announced that it is expanding operations in the County, sustaining 26 jobs and adding 74 additional jobs.

Council Member Sandra Kilgore – Shared that the City of Asheville has approved the action plan for the City to complete the purchase of additional land and plans to redevelop Deaverview. The plan calls for an all-inclusive community. The City voted last night to remove the Vance Monument. Additionally, the City approved three new members for the School Board.

Town Manager Jonathan Kanipe – Shared that the Town of Biltmore Forest is engaged in the ARP (American Recovery Act) funding details and awaiting final guidance. The Town is also working on its budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Mayor Larry Harris – Welcomed Police Chief Shawn Freeman, who is providing a presentation later at this meeting. The Town is engaged in developing the budget for next year and working on how the Town can move forward as more people receive vaccinations and things begin to open more.

Council Member Maureen Copelof – Welcomed Police Chief Phil Harris to the meeting and she communicated about the incident that happened in downtown Brevard recently, where several incendiary devices were found. She shared appreciation for the Police and the Fire Departments and the community. A suspect has been arrested in connection with that incident. She also shared that the City Council is taking a look at workforce and affordable housing, which is a real issue in Brevard. The City is looking at options to address this issue including working with their Blue Zone partner on this issue. Additionally, the City has several events occurring this weekend including the Art in March Festival around the City, unveiling the first crosswalk mural and events provide a great way to welcome spring! Museum of the Carolinas is reopening on Thursday and it's a real treasure in the City, honoring the service and sacrifice of Veterans.

Council Member Albert Gooch – Shared that the Village of Flat Rock is happy to announce that the controversial road project is dead.

Council Member Preston Blakely – Shared that the Town of Fletcher has hired a new police chief. The Town had a budget workshop earlier this week and stormwater was discussed to determine how the Town could become compliant with stormwater requirements.

Mayor Barbara Volk – Shared that the City of Hendersonville received two awards at the recent Main Street Conference- one for the Grey's Hosiery Mill, which is now apartments and one for the City's economic efforts during the pandemic with the 'Love Hendo' Campaign. Love Hendo was very popular with many folks and it will continue May 8, which is also the first day of the Farmers' Market. Everyone is gearing up for the season in Hendersonville.

Economic Development Representative George Morosani – Shared that commercial realtors are busy, even as there is a lack of building availability in Buncombe County. Many small businesses are starting up, too.

Economic Development Representative Brittany Brady – Shared that the Partnership has been working with MAWDB on the WorkReady Community initiative through ACT. BRCC, the Chamber, and Henderson County Public Schools are working to help the County meet the Work Ready Community goals.

Economic Development Representative Josh Hallingse – Shared that the Transylvania Alliance is excited to announce the expansion of RayBow and the 74 additional jobs that will bring to the County. Additionally, businesses are expanding in the County.

Ageing Services Representative Bob Tomasulo – Shared that next week, the AARP volunteers will be calling members over 65 to inquire if they have had their COVID vaccination yet and if not, will schedule an appointment for them to receive the shot.

IX. Presentations –

A. Police Chiefs Presentation on Racial Equity in Criminal Justice

Chief Shawn Freeman, Police Chief for the Town of Black Mountain shared about racial equity in criminal justice. Chief Freeman shared that it is law enforcements' responsibility to bring best practices to their communities. He shared that he is proud of the State of North Carolina, and the work being done to improve law enforcement in the state working through the Governor's Task Force. He noted that when events happen in other places, the task force discusses what happened. The goal of the task force is to provide fair

treatment to everyone during encounters with law enforcement. Chokeholds are banned and psychological evaluations may soon be required when officers move between organizations. Work is being done to change the mindset of those entering the profession and of those already in law enforcement. He noted that national accreditation is very expensive, making it difficult for smaller jurisdictions to achieve. In the Town of Black Mountain, policies have been reviewed and in 2017 neck restraint policies were removed. Chief Freeman shared the importance of engaging the community and he noted that all officers in the Town are set to or have already received crisis intervention training. COVID slowed the training down somewhat, but it is gearing up again. Pushing with other agencies to get the accreditation up and running in the State. A community stakeholders group has been developed to bring questions and problems to the Police Department. The goal is to continually review policies and build relationships/partnerships with community members.

Police Chief Ron Davis, with the Town of Weaverville, shared that the State of North Carolina has law enforcement agencies that are ahead of the curve. Chief Davis shared that law enforcement agencies in Buncombe County signed an agreement with the District Attorney's office and the other law enforcement agencies regarding compliance. He noted that many agencies are implementing policies to provide equity.

Police Chief J. Phillip Harris shared that the Police Department in the City of Brevard operates on principles, which are used for every contact and circumstance that the department encounters. Chief Harris shared about Community Policing, which is practiced by the Brevard Police Department. He noted that this system works and includes the principles of working closely with the community: tailoring practices to the needs of the community, listening to the community and being an ambassador to solve problems. Reform is incremental and is iron sharpening iron.

Chief Freeman shared about the importance of the police policing their own. This involves transparency and trust. He reiterated that North Carolina is far ahead of other states with regards to policing. He stressed the importance of police departments continuously evolving and improving.

Chief Davis encouraged community members to engage with their police departments, and the importance of building rapport.

B. Resolution in Support of The Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Collaborative and myFutureNC Post-Secondary Credential Attainment Goal

The Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Collaborative, "The Collaborative," is a regional initiative related to the statewide myFutureNC Commission Educational Attainment Initiative. The focus is to align educational achievements with the employable skill needs of local employers. The overall myFutureNC state goal is to increase the total number of North Carolinians with a post-secondary credential or degree by 2 million by the year 2030. The Collaborative's four-county goal is to increase the number of North Carolinians in WNC with post-secondary credentials or degrees by 10,070, by the year 2030.

Dr. Joseph Fox shared a brief overview of the work of The Collaborative, whose main goal is to connect the resources that lead to educational attainment and career attainment. The Collaborative uses the collective impact model and gathers data from the school systems, the community colleges, the Workforce Board, industry, non-profits, and local and state agencies, etc. Funding to support the initiative has come from the John M. Belk Endowment (JMBE).

Nathan Ramsey shared that myFutureNC is a statewide effort and he read the resolution, which is proposed for adoption.

Jason Chappell moved to approve the resolution in support of The Land of Sky Educational Attainment and Workforce Collaborative's post-secondary educational attainment goal for myFutureNC. Matt Wechtel seconded and the motion carried upon a roll call vote, and without further discussion.

C. Money Follows the Person (MFP) Medicaid Program

Ginger Hill, MFP Coordinator for the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) at LOSRC provided the Board with information regarding this new program offered through the AAA. Money Follows the Person is a North Carolina Medicaid demonstration project that assists people who live in qualified facilities in moving into their own communities with support. MFP supports North Carolinians in having more choices about where they receive their long-term supports. Participation in MFP is voluntary and funded through a partnership between NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. In North Carolina, MFP focuses on the Intellectually/Developmentally Disabled population (served by Vaya Health), older adults and disabled individuals served through the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) at LOSRC, and other organizations providing aging/disability services. The program works to develop community-based long-term care opportunities, with the goal of enabling individuals to participate fully in their communities, etc. The impact of MFP includes that participants report significant and lasting improvements in quality of life; over time, Medicare/Medicaid expenditures decrease by 20% per person in the program. To qualify for MFP, a person must be a recipient of Medicaid, residing in a hospital or skilled nursing facility and must meet the eligibility requirements for the appropriate community-based long-term services. Benefits to the individual include up to \$3000 to assist in transitions and priority access to Client Assistance Program (CAP) services, which is the community alternative program funded through NCDHHS.

So far, during 2021, 162 transitions have been processed. Barriers to MFP transitions include that adequate housing is not available in the participant's desired location, lack of natural supports, lack of physical/behavioral health supports, lack of paid supports and available housing is not suitable.

Currently, there are 14 participants in the program. Three of those individuals have housing but no informal support system. Four have housing and will transition by June 1. One success story involves the youngest client, who is 34 years old, visually impaired and three-years into recovery from a brain tumor. This client plans to move into housing on May 1.

Nathan Ramsey shared that the LOSRC/AAA is one of the only COGs in the state that is offering the MFP Demonstration Project.

X. Old Business

XI. Annual Meeting –

A. Election of Officers/Executive Committee Members

The Nominating Committee submitted their report to the Board. Following is their proposed slate of Officers/Executive Committee to serve during the upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022).

Chair: Barbara Volk, Hendersonville (Henderson)

Vice-Chair: Patrick Fitzsimmons, Weaverville (Buncombe)

Secretary: Maureen Copelof, Brevard (Transylvania)

Treasurer: Norris Gentry, Madison County

County Delegate: Matthew Wechtel, Madison County

Municipal Delegate: Albert Gooch, Flat Rock (Henderson)

Past Chair Delegate: Larry B. Harris, Black Mountain (Buncombe)

Minority Representative Delegate: Preston Blakely, Fletcher (Henderson)

Aging/Volunteer Services Representative: Bob Tomasulo, Regional Aging Advisory Committee

Chair Volk asked if there were any nominations from the floor. No further nominations were forthcoming.

The Nominating Committee's report was submitted in the form of a motion, not requiring a second.

The slate of officers was unanimously elected upon a roll call vote.

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 agenda packet.

- XIII. Important Dates
A. Wednesday, April 28, 2021 is the next regularly scheduled Board of Delegates meeting via the Zoom Platform.
- XIV. Old Business
- XV. Adjournment – Chair Volk adjourned the meeting, as there was no further business.

Respectfully submitted by Zia Rifkin



BOARD OF DELEGATES AGENDA ITEM

Subject: Executive Director's Report

Item Number: XII. Executive Director's Report

Responsible Party: Nathan Ramsey, Executive Director

Attachment(s): Executive Director's Report for April 28, 2021

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

Land of Sky Regional Council
Executive Director's Report
Respectfully submitted by Nathan Ramsey
April 28, 2021

1. Economic Community Development & Transportation
 - a. Planning Services
 - Black Mountain's water/sewer extensions for the future Avadim expansion site have been completed and project closed!
 - Mars Hill's sewer extension to the future Industrial Site has been completed!
 - Staff are working with local governments and partners to develop projects to support the region for transportation connections, resilience, job growth, industry expansion, and place-based development.
 - LOSRC launched the Regional Stormwater Services Program to support small MS4s and interested communities with stormwater management and MS4 stormwater compliance.
 - Staff are reviewing draft Census data in anticipation of Apportionment Data and the Redistricting data later this summer. Please connect with us if you would like to discuss the 2020 Census data timeline.
 - Staff are preparing a Planning Menu of Services. Please contact Erica Anderson erica@landofsky.org if you have comments or requests.
 - Staff are assisting several towns meet the new zoning regulations by the July 1 deadline (known as 160d regulations). Please let us know if you need assistance and want to talk about the next phase of the guidelines – updating planning documents.
 - LOSRC and its Waste Reduction Partners program are hosting an 11-week training course for municipal wastewater treatment operators presented by USEPA. The course covers optimization of nutrient removal and energy savings.
 - Partnering with the Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Support Agencies, nonprofits, and economic developers to assist small businesses through COVID-19 impacts.
 - Broadband Inclusion Planning continues for the region thanks to the BAND NC award.
 - Housing - LOSRC is supporting the newly formed HOME Consortium in Region A and their consolidated planning process is underway.
 - b. Transportation Services
 - RPO staff continues to work with local partners and NCDOT on project design and development
 - RPO staff serving as NCARPO Association President, the NCARPO is the statewide organization representing Rural Transportation Planning Organizations in NC
 - MPO staff is participating on NCDOT's Statewide Resiliency Planning Workgroup to help identify how resiliency challenges to transportation

infrastructure (rockslides, floods, wildfires) can be incorporated into the planning process to evaluate transportation needs and planned improvements

- MPO staff participated on a VMT reduction work group with NCDOT. A final report from the group has been completed.
- The MPO Board approved over \$400,000 in FTA 5310 funds for transportation providers to improve access and transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities
- The MPO Board approved its annual budget, including funds for a Buncombe County Pedestrian Plan, a Haywood County Greenway Plan, and a study for the City of Asheville to potentially extend the Reed Creek Greenway
- The MPO is continuing to work through a Regional Transit Feasibility Study. <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/regional-transit-feasibility-study/>
- The MPO held its final design workshop on the Hendersonville Corridor Study on February 10, 2021. <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/regional-transit-feasibility-study/>
- MPO staff and its consultant team hosted a public input session for the Tunnel Road Corridor Study on Wednesday, April 14th. <http://frenchbroadrivermpo.org/tunnel-road-corridor-study/>
- The MPO recently programmed a number of projects into the Transportation Improvement Program, utilizing its direct allotment of federal transportation funds. These projects include:
 - Engineering and Construction for three phases of the Ecusta Trail
 - Construction funding for improvements on Coxe Avenue
 - Additional funding for construction of the North RAD Greenway
 - Engineering and Construction for the Clear Creek Greenway
 - Construction funds for bike/ped upgrades on Haywood Road in West Asheville
 - Construction funds for an extension of sidewalk on Broadway Avenue
 - Construction funds pedestrian improvements at the I-240/Charlotte Street Interchange
 - Construction funds for pedestrian safety improvements at various sites around the City of Asheville
 - Construction funds to add a signal at Biltmore Avenue and White Fawn Drive
 - Additional construction funds for the Riverwalk Greenway in Black Mountain
- Continuing to work with the City of Asheville on the Close the GAP Plan (Greenways, ADA, and Pedestrian)
- MPO staff is working with the Town of Waynesville on its Richland Creek Greenway Feasibility Study
- MPO staff is working with City of Asheville staff on its Biltmore/McDowell corridor study

2. Finance

- Melissa Lindsey joined the finance team on April 12. Melissa is the new Finance and Administrative Clerk. Melissa worked for many years in the public accounting field.
- Sherry Christenson and Charlotte Sullivan completed the Governmental and Financial Reporting class held by The UNC School of Government. Shout out to Bob Boylan at Western Carolina University – Sherry and Charlotte both received scholarships from the Local Government Training Program.
- The budget process for fiscal year 21-22 is underway. Dr. Jim Myers (long-time volunteer) has developed budget worksheets for departments to use. Charlotte is excited to use these new tools!
- The US Department of Interior approved the Indirect Rate for FY22. The rate will be 44.22% of direct salaries and benefits. We are waiting to receive the official document.
- We are also planning a party for Arlene Wilson's retirement. Arlene has served Land of Sky Regional Council for 30+ years, 20 years as Finance Director. Her departure will be a big loss for our organization and we wish her the best in her next chapter.

3. Aging

Upcoming Aging Events

- Each May, the Administration for Community Living leads the celebration of Older Americans Month. This year's theme is *Communities of Strength*, recognizing the important role older adults play in fostering the connection and engagement that build strong, resilient communities.
- The Regional Aging Advisory Council will meet virtually on Thursday, May 13, beginning at 10:00am. The meeting will feature a presentation from Ginger Hill, Transitions Coordinator, for Money Follows the Person. Contact LeeAnne Tucker for Zoom meeting information.

Family Caregiver Program:

- Recruited Virginia H. Templeton, M.D., Executive Director of MemoryCare, to present *How Memory Works* to the Cheers Group, a support group for people with Dementia.
- Compiled a quarterly report of CARES funding stats from all providers and sent to the Department of Adult and Aging Services
- Facilitated a Technology Committee meeting to review the results of the March series of seminars and plan for future events.
- Completed the Kinship Directory with the help of several AAA interns.

Foster Grandparent Program: National Volunteer Month is April 18-24. To honor our Foster Grandparent volunteers we will provide each volunteer with a small bag of fresh fruit and veggies through Coates Produce, a local company from Madison County. The volunteers will also receive thank you cards and a small gift. Our Federal funder, AmeriCorps Senior, has

extended the temporary stipend allowance to volunteers while our programs are on hold due to COVID-19 through September 31.

Health Promotion/Disease Prevention:

- Asheville Terrace Community Health Workers remain diligent in their efforts to reduce the impact of social isolation by holding bi-monthly outdoor activities that observe proper health precautions while providing residents the opportunity to play games, participate in art, have structured exercise opportunities, and mitigate loneliness.
- Community Health workers completed second vaccine event at Asheville Terrace bringing the total number of vaccinations on site to 103 individuals.
- Two new volunteers have been on-boarded to receive their Community Health Worker training.
- Staff is working closely with Madison County Health Department to reinvigorate both the Walk with Ease program and the A Matter of Balance Tai Chi program in the county.
- Staff represented the Area Agency on Aging at Land of Sky at Wellness Fair held at the Mars Hill Farmers Market on May 22.
- Completion is nearing for another successful 20 session Tai Chi class in Transylvania County that began virtually in December.

Home and Community Care Block Grant Services: March 2021

- Adult day care/adult day health days attended: 4037
- Number of home delivered/congregate meals: 102,683
- In-home aide hours: 16,617
- Legal services hours: 649
- Transportation trips: 21,261
- Home improvement projects: 10

Counties were notified of FY22 Home and Community Care Block Grant and legal funds:

- Buncombe County: \$1,546,335
- Henderson County: \$765,989
- Madison County: \$237,154
- Transylvania County: \$ 318,599

Money Follows the Person: In the month of April, six participants have secured their own housing or will be returning home to live with their families. These participants will transition in the month of May. There are four participants that continue to search for housing which is one of the barriers to transition to the community.

Ombudsman Program: The Ombudsman Program is following current regulations while providing both friendly and complaint visits to facilities. Although the Community Advisory Committee volunteers continue to be unable to visit facilities, new volunteer training and orientation will begin on May 1 and will be taught both in person and virtually. The

Ombudsmen are currently working with facility Administrators and Activity Directors to discuss the best utilization of CARES Act Funding.

Project C.A.R.E. (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty): This month, 14 more caregivers have been enrolled for care consultant and respite funding services in the Western (15 county) Project C.A.R.E. region. 100 percent of the State respite funds (\$47,000) for Project C.A.R.E. clients have been allocated and 94 percent of the federal Lifespan Respite funds have been allocated.

Senior Companion Program: In honor of National Volunteer Month, the Senior Companion Program is celebrating our volunteers over the next few weeks. Staff will provide fresh vegetable and fruit bags, and phone cards to keep them healthy and connected. Though the program remains on pause, some volunteers are beginning to reconnect with their clients and agencies. AmeriCorps Senior, our primary funder, has extended the temporary stipend until September 31. Note that on May 30, the Senior Companion Program will be on the WLOS “Spotlight” at 8:00am.

4. Administration

- Conducted a review of the Craft HR contract with Land of Sky Regional Council.
- Attended webinar “NC Retirement Plans: Navigating Plan Administration.”
- Hosted weekly COVID19 Response meetings with presentations by the Governor’s office, Transylvania Alliance, Brevard/Transylvania Chamber, Visit Madison County, French Broad River MPO and the NC Department of Commerce, Rural Division.
- Met with Dogwood Health Trust regarding multiple projects.
- Attended biweekly NCARCOG Directors meetings.
- Attended Chamber Regional Leadership meeting and discussed how to pay for a regional strategic plan review by an external consultant. We are using EDA funds to pay for part of the study.
- Hosted statewide meeting for ARC’s new Executive Director, Brandon McBride
- Attended NC Retirement Plans: How to Assist Employees in the Retirement Process
- Held biweekly EDI Committee meetings.
- Hosted two staff EDI training sessions offered by Deborah Miles and Dionne Greenlee.
- Attended Two Flexible Spending Account/Section 125 meetings.
- Attended Two Scholarship Review meetings with BCSF.
- Held New Employee Orientation
- Hosted LOSRC Quarterly Managers Meeting with participation from eight local governments.
- Submitted NCLM Rate Renewal
- Attended Social Security 101 for Pre-retirees
- Two intern meetings
- Monthly PAFs
- Held biweekly Leadership Team meetings.
- Participated in the WNCMA call.
- Attended monthly Health Benefits Representative training

- Attended John M Belk Endowment/Blue Ridge Community College Adult Learner meeting.
- Participated in the myFutureNC/LOS Steering Committee meeting.
- Scheduled annual open enrollment for non-LOS provided insurance.
- Made 401k system updates.
- Responded to staff benefits adjustments/inquiries.
- Worked on finance/billing adjustments – MedCost.

5. Workforce

- a. Despite an unemployment rate around twice what it was one year ago, many employers in the region are struggling to meet their workforce needs. Even hospitality and tourism employers are starting to hire and host job fairs, while this sector's job openings are not as great as pre-pandemic there are still large number of job openings in that sector. There have been multiple news reports in the region regarding this topic and we have been quoted in WLOS TV, Asheville Citizen Times and Hendersonville Lightning reports.
- b. We submitted an ARC POWER grant application working with Southwestern Commission and Dogwood Health Trust to increase the number of early childhood educators in our eleven county region. The total funding for this project will be about \$1.2 million.
- c. We hosted the WNC Career Expo with the Asheville Chamber of Commerce from April 14 – 16. On April 15 we held an in-person event with about 50 employers. Overall about 75 employers participated in the virtual and in-person hiring event. Around 400+ job seekers participated in the WNC Career Expo. This was less than previous hiring events but considering the overall labor environment, we are pleased with this turnout..
- d. Christy Cheek, Education and Work-Based Learning Coordinator with MAWDB is working with Buncombe County on possible registered apprenticeship partnerships.
- e. We are working to increase the number of employers who have endorsed the Career Readiness Certification and make Buncombe, Henderson and Madison work-ready certified communities. Transylvania County is already certified as a Work-Ready Community.
- f. We are working with JB Media to lead an effort for NCWorks Dislocated Worker Outreach to connect more dislocated workers with our region's NCWorks Career Centers and community colleges to support them with education, training and employment. The budget for this project is \$40,000.
- g. We are working with Integrative to design the Land of Sky Education & Workforce Collaborative website outreach. The Collaborative oversees our region's postsecondary credential attainment effort aligned with My Future NC. This effort is funded by the John M Belk Endowment. Our region is the pilot in NC for a regional postsecondary credential attainment effort.
- h. We are working on the implementation of our "Recovery to Work" project. ARC will provide almost \$500,000. Dogwood Health Trust provided a professional grant writer for this project and they will generously match the grant award (1:1) from ARC if we are successful. MAHEC is also providing funding for this project so the total project will be about \$1.1 million over three years.

- i. Our Board staff are working closely with multiple partners, including but not limited to the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, NC Community College System and AB Tech, to support the Pratt & Whitney project. We have received approval from our financial monitor for the expenditures that will support pre-employment training and outreach for Pratt & Whitney jobs.
- j. We have submitted a grant request of \$280,000 to the John M Belk Endowment to support our region's postsecondary credential attainment effort. JMBE has already provided \$200,000 for this project.
- k. We have submitted an application to ncIMPACT UNC School of Government to be one of ten collaboratives selected statewide focused on postsecondary credential attainment aligned with my Future NC.
- l. We have developed a professional NCWorks newsletter that is being sent to over 18,000 individuals in our Local Area registered on NCWorks.gov. This is one of our most effective and least costly ways to reach job seekers.
- m. We are submitting a \$50,000 grant request to NC Department of Commerce for additional funding to serve dislocated workers.

6. Mountain Mobility

- Mountain Mobility continues to work with Buncombe County DHHS and private providers to ensure everyone in Buncombe County who needs transportation can get to a vaccine clinic. Since the rollout began in January, we have provided close to 300 trips for community residents to receive the vaccine. These trips are provided at no cost to the passenger.
- The admin team at Land of Sky continues to distribute packets to homebound seniors who are feeling the effects of isolation during the pandemic. These packets contain information on ways to stay connected to friends and neighbors, recipes, health items such as masks and hand sanitizer, snacks and more. Each month, our partners at Meals on Wheels of Buncombe County and the Council on Aging of Buncombe County assist with distribution of 400 packets to both Asheville city residents and those who live in the more rural parts of Buncombe County.
- Mountain Mobility saw its largest ridership during March since the pandemic began last year. We performed more than 7800 trips and traveled more than 85,000 service miles.

7. NEMT

- a. Monitoring Medicaid Transformation to determine the impact on the Council's NEMT contract with Buncombe County. Latest projection from NCDOT is about 85% of clients will not transition to Managed Care.
- b. Buncombe County has budgeted funds to support full NEMT program for FY21-22.