

**YVCOG GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES**  
**December 14, 2016**

**PRESENT:**

Grandview: Norm Childress-M, Bill Moore-A  
Granger: n/a  
Harrah: n/a  
Mabton: n/a  
Moxee: n/a  
Naches: Kit Hawver – M, Wayne Hawver - A  
Selah: Russell Carlson –M,  
Sunnyside: Jim Restucci –M  
Tieton: Dewane Ashbrooks, PC  
Toppenish: Derald Ortloff-A  
Union Gap:  
Wapato: Santos Valdez-A; Jim Gerred – PC; Peggy Gerred - PC  
Yakima:  
Yakima County: Ron Anderson - M  
Zillah:

**ABSENT:**

Grandview: Don Olmstead-PC,  
Granger: Maria Gonzalez-M, Lilia Villarreal-A, Bruce Hall-PC  
Harrah: Pat Krueger-M, -A  
Mabton: Arturo DelaFuente – A, Sophie Sotelo-M  
Moxee: LeRoy Lenseigne-M, David Roy-A  
Naches:  
Selah: Roger Bell -A, Willie Quinnell -PC  
Sunnyside: DeAnn Hochhalter-PC, Julia Hart- A  
Tieton: Matt Johnson – M, Jackie Williams – A, Toppenish: Clara Jimenez –M; Christina Kwan-PC  
Union Gap: Mark Carney-A, Roger Wentz-M, Sandra Dailey, PC  
Wapato: Jesse Farias-M,  
Yakima: Vacant-PC  
Yakima County: Rand Elliott-M; Mike Leita-M  
Zillah: Janice Gonzales-M; Doug Stewart-A; Ardele Steele-PC/A

Note: M=Member; A=Alternate; PC=Planning Commission

**Attendees:** Grandview: Cus Arteaga, Santos Trevino, Joan Souders, Gloria Mendoza Granger: n/a Harrah: n/a; Mabton: n/a Moxee: n/a; Naches: n/a Selah: Sherry Raymond, Catherine Platt Sunnyside: n/a; Tieton: Felisa Cox; Toppenish: Lance Hoyt Union Gap: Dan Olson Wapato: n/a Yakima: n/a Zillah: n/a **Others:** Mary Anderson; Jean Ashbooks, Dale Burgeson; Madelyn Carlson (People for People), John Hodkinson (Almon Realty), Sandee Hodkinson, Carol Hoyt; Dave LaCombe, Jen Mattson, DeLessa Restucci, Jill Shuttleworth, Don Skone, Craig Testerman, Kevin Wickenhagen, Lon Wyrick **Speakers:** Fred Abouselman **YVCOG Staff:** Jessica Hansen, Mike Shuttleworth, Deb LaCombe, Larry Mattson, Crystal Testerman, Chris Wickenhagen

**CALL TO ORDER**  
**INTRODUCTIONS**  
**ROLL CALL**

Chairman Jim Restucci called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. (Dinner break from 7:05 – 7:35 p.m.) The meeting was hosted by the City of Yakima at the Harman Center. A quorum was present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY**

It is the policy of the YVCOG General Membership to accept public comment on agenda items at the time the item is being discussed. Public comments regarding items not on the agenda will be heard at the end of the meeting.

**WELCOMING REMARKS**

Chairman Restucci welcomed everyone to the Harman Center in Yakima, WA and thanked them for attending the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Yakima Valley Conference of Governments. 50 years ago, cities of this county got together and stated that they wanted to make sure that as cities, within Yakima County, developed that they do so in line with the county. This created better communication between the cities and the county and the long-term plan. In the 70s, YVCOG became the MPO/RTPO for the federal government and started handling transportation funding. As of this year, YVCOG is now handling homeless programs for the Yakima Valley. YVCOG can provide any service that the cities want so he encouraged all members to think outside the box and please let us know how we can provide services for the members.

**BUSINESS**

*Executive Director's Correspondence*

Mr. Mattson stated that any partnership that has endured for 50 years is worthy of recognition. Kudos to you - our YVCOG members, Executive Committee, and staff, both past and present - for your work to improve our Valley and our quality of life. YVCOG was, is, and will always remain a member-created, member-sustained, and member-driven organization.

*Approval of Minutes*

Mr. Restucci entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2016 General Membership meeting. Santos Valdez, City of Wapato, moved to

approve the Minutes and Norm Childress, City of Grandview, seconded. The motion carried.

*Reflections of the Past 25 Years.*

Lon Wyrick, past executive director of YVCOG for 18 years, stated that it was an interesting time to be a part of YVCOG. Mr. Wyrick started as the executive director in 1982. At that time, YVCOG had the A95 review, which was mandated by the states for anyone who was given Federal or State money. At that time, YVCOG also managed the LEEA grants, which was law and justice funding. Quite a bit of money was coming in, at that time, so they decided to create a housing rehab program which ended up being very successful. YVCOG also received block grants for street lighting and sewer systems and was able to really help cities across the region.

Cus Arteaga, current City of Grandview city manager, stated that in 1990s he was promoted to the public works director and that's when he became involved with COG. That's 26 years ago now. He stated that the services and support that COG staff provide our cities is priceless. YVCOG is responsive, supportive and most importantly they value the input and recommendations that the cities present. COG has helped Grandview with a multitude of transportation grants and assisted with the growth management planning and reporting. They have also helped with numerous land use questions and they have valued the expertise that is offered. When Walmart distribution center was looking at Grandview, COG was able to help and secure that business which has been a huge help not only to Grandview, but many other communities throughout Yakima Valley. Over 26 years, Mr. Arteaga has worked with numerous executive directors such as Lon Wyrick, Don Skone, Page Scott, and now Larry Mattson. He has also worked with many planners such as Michael Buchanan, Jeff Martin, Drew Miller, Joseph Calhoun, Deb LaCombe, and Shawn Conrad. With all the staff at YVCOG, it wasn't just sending and receiving documents, "it's been like working with family." Whenever Grandview has had a concern, a question or needed some help, YVCOG is there to give the help that is need. In closing, Mr. Arteaga wanted to say that he considers Grandview and YVCOG as partners. It's partnership such as these, that makes this county great.

Don Skone, former YVCOG Executive Director, was with YVCOG for 5 years during the growth management planning years. Mr. Skone is interested in what will be said throughout the evening about regionalism because in the last 10 years he believes that regionalism is slowly fading. He also believes that the recent election has emphasized individualism, tribalism, identity politics and he sees more governments and individuals all going their own direction. He is impressed to see YVCOG is still together, meeting every month and talking about common problems. He encourages YVCOG and its members to keep up that good work. One of the issues that he reads about regularly is homelessness and there is a lot of work and effort that needs to go into that. He is proud to see YVCOG taking on that role.

**PROGRAM**

*Oregon Cascade West Council of Governments.*

Chairman Restucci introduced the keynote speaker Mr. Fred Abousleman, Executive Director at the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments and the past Executive Director at National Association of Regional Councils (NARC.)

Mr. Abousleman stated that he wanted to thank Chairman Restucci for the work he has done on the NARC board. He is a great advocate for local

government and for regions. It's important for the Pacific Northwest that someone regionally participates, especially in Washington DC, because regions are often forgotten about unless you are present. Now that Mr. Abousleman has moved to Oregon, he realizes how important it is to be evident in Washington DC more than ever.

Mr. Abousleman had the honor of working for the trade association that represents the Council of Governments around the country. He had 275 members that came from all different territories like Southern California Associations of Governments, which is approximately 18 million people, to Yakima to Oregon Cascades West. He was able to work with regions all over the country and was an advocate for local governments and regions. NARC made sure that cities and counties got what they needed working regionally. They worked on many issues like the transportation program, the environmental program, and housing. It was a great honor to work with the Chairman Restucci and other likeminded people to really promote this kind of vision for what we think local governments can do.

Mr. Abousleman stated that he thinks people forget what a region is. How do you define a region? We define it as being a common "something" whether that be a demography, geography, history, etc. It's really important when you think back on why you are who you are, what makes you common. There are roughly 700 regional planning organizations if you include things like Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and there are roughly 400 COGs around the country.

Why regions? What makes it powerful to you? Thinking across jurisdictions has made sense for groups that have a larger regional purpose to deliver services cost effectively. Out of the 400 COGs in the nation each one looks similar but is ran completely different. It's up to the members to decided what services they would like a COG to offer. Cost effectiveness is the direction where everything is going, due to declining resources from the Federal and Local governments. COGs can be a cost-effective way of delivering programs because they are coordinated, sit at a neutral table and talk about common issues, they are locally controlled, and responsive. Mr. Abousleman believes that it empowers a region to be more competitive. He has been encouraging OCWCOG to come up with a brand that will help all three counties. What businesses and people want to know is what do we do as a region that will attract business, grow business and be a wonderful place to live. What he knows is anything that comes to the region will be a benefit to everyone in the region so we need to encourage each other to grow. We need to play to each other's strengths.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Restucci announced that unfortunately, the recipient of the 2016 Outstanding Service Award, could not attend tonight's meeting but that the award goes to Yakima County Commissioner Mike Leita. Commissioner Leita was raised in the Yakima Valley and graduated from WSU. He owned and operated two successful businesses and has been married for 43 years. First elected in 2005, Commissioner Leita begins his 4<sup>th</sup> term as County Commissioner next month. During his tenure Mr. Leita has taken a regional leadership role in our future water supply. Commissioner Leita is a member of the Executive Committee for the Yakima Basin Integrated plan. When constructed this plan will ensure water for agriculture, environmental, and municipal uses. Mr. Leita has made several trips to Olympia and Washington DC as part of a larger delegation to convey the importance of funding of the

projects in this plan. Commissioner Leita has also demonstrated a strong regional vision as the homeless program moved from Yakima County's human services department to YVCOG. His knowledge and experience with the program prior to the move has helped YVCOG's executive committee better understand what has worked well and what needs further improvement. For his leadership on regional water issues and bringing the homeless program closer to the cities most effected by homelessness we are proud to present Commissioner Mike Leita with this year's outstanding service award.

LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

City of Sunnyside volunteered for the January 18, 2017 General Membership Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURN

With no further business, Mr. Restucci adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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James A. Restucci, YVCOG Chairman

Date signed: 3/15/17

  
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Jessica Hansen, Office and Communication Specialist