

YVCOG General Membership Video Conference
Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2021

JURISDICTION	PRESENT	ABSENT
GRANDVIEW	Bill Moore-M;	Cus Arteaga-A
GRANGER	Lilia Villarreal-M	Julie Sharp-A; Veronica Bermudez-PC
HARRAH	Pat Krueger – M	
MABTON	Arturo Dela Fuente - A	Sophie Sotelo – M
MOXEE		David Mullen-M; Greg LaBree-A
NACHES	Kit Hawver – M;	Wayne Hawver - A
SELAH	Jacquie Matson-M; Sherry Raymond-A	Lisa Smith-PC
SUNNYSIDE	Dean Broersma-M;	Francisco Guerrero-A
TIETON	Ed Marquand-M	Amy Oberrender-A
TOPPENISH	Clara Jimenez-M; Naila Duval – A; Al Hubert-PC	
UNION GAP	Jack Galloway-M; Sandy Dailey-A	Mike Moore-PC
WAPATO		Keith Workman – M; Margaret Estrada - A
YAKIMA CITY	Brad Hill-M	Holly Cousens-A
YAKIMA CO.		Ron Anderson – M; Amanda McKinney-M; LaDon Linde-M
ZILLAH		Janice Gonzales-M; Doug Stewart-A; Ardele Steele-PC/A

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

Speakers: Representative Chris Corry – 14th Legislative District; Representative Jeremie Dufault – 15th Legislative District; Senator Jim Honeyford – 15th Legislative District

Additional Attendees: Others: Gloria Mendoza, Diana Jennings (Grandview); Hilda Guzman (Granger); Mike Battle (HLA Engineering); Larry Mattson (Jacobs Engineering); Laura Vazquez (Mabton); Madelyn Carlson (People for People); Joe Henne (Selah); Jim Restucci (Sunnyside); John Clary, George Garcia, Lance Hoyt, Debbie Zabell (Toppenish); John Hodkinson (Union Gap); Patricia Byers, Bob Harrison (Yakima); Jon Smith (YCDA); Todd Trepanier (WSDOT); Vicki Holleman-Perez, Mike Kay, Joan Souders, Autumn Torres

YVCOG Staff Chris Wickenhagen, Alan Adolf, Lynn Deitrick, Jeff Watson, Vicki Baker, Jodi Smith, Shane Andreas, and Tami Hayward.

CALL TO ORDER: James Restucci, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 6:06 p.m.
INTRODUCTIONS AND ROLL CALL The meeting was hosted via ZOOM. 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 Gloria Mendoza, Mayor of the City of Grandview, opened the meeting with an update on recent and upcoming achievements and happenings in Grandview.

BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes – May 19, 2021 General Membership Meeting **The City of Selah moved to approve the [Minutes from May 19, 2021](#). The City of Union Gap seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

YVCOG General Membership Special Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2021

A recording of this meeting is available

[Tax Increment Financing: TIF Workshop](#)

Jon Smith, Yakima County Development Association

Mr. Smith provided information on the upcoming (10/7/21) TIF Workshop being hosted by Yakima County Development Association and YVCOG.

A new tool for funding infrastructure – done without raising taxes, using taxes that are in place. This training is to learn the nuances of how this money can be used. Funding will be available for cities, courts, and counties.

Informational

[Proposed Amendment to the YVCOG 2021 Balanced Budget](#)

Chris Wickenhagen, YVCOG Executive Director

The purpose of this amendment is to increase the bottom line of YVCOG's 2021 Balanced Budget. The reason for the increase is that YVCOG received funds in 2021 that were in the 2020 budget (general assessment and matching funds). We also received additional transportation funds, and a contract with YCDA for zoning maps.

The new Balanced Budget amount is \$1,485,518.00.

The City of Toppenish moved to approve the amendment to the 2021 Balanced Budget. Sherry Raymond seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

[Homeless Housing and Assistance Program](#)

Chris Wickenhagen, YVCOG Executive Director

Ms. Wickenhagen provided a brief background of YVCOG's history with the Homeless Housing program:

- Summer of 2014 – Commissioner Kevin Bouchey approached YVCOG with a proposal that YVCOG bring the Homeless Program under their umbrella. He believed the homeless problem is a city problem and that the cities have jurisdictional authority over how the issue should be handled. He also said the program was a black hole at the County and would have better oversight at the COG.
- September 2014 – Commissioner Leita and Commissioner Bouchey, along with the Yakima County Homeless staff, proposed YVCOG overseeing the Homeless Program to the YVCOG General Membership, who voted unanimously for YVCOG to take on the program.
- January-June 2015 – YVCOG worked with the County on the transition of the program staff, along with state, federal and local funding, along with service providers contracts.
- July 2015 – YVCOG brought over only two of the Yakima County Homeless staff. We honored all service provider contracts and services and reimbursements continued seamlessly.
- January 2016 – DOC awarded YVCOG with the state and federal Homeless funds. The County Commissioners retained legal authority over the local 2163 funds collected by the Auditor's Office.
- YVCOG learned that, previously, the Homeless program staff believed they worked for the Homeless Network, consisting of service providers.
- YVCOG distanced from the Homeless Network, believing that it isn't appropriate to work under the service providers – our job was to provide

oversight to the providers, administer the program and keep the program compliant with requirements, which our audits show we did successfully.

- YVCOG created a new advisory committee consisting of cities, law enforcement, business, faith communities, service providers, county, a current or previous homeless person, and a non-affiliated public representative.
- August 2016 – the previous county homeless program manager left YVCOG and we hired a previous state auditor to manage the program. We learned at this time that the program had been out of compliance for over 3 years. A region is required to have Coordinated Entry, and her first job was to bring the program into compliance and begin Coordinated Entry. YVCOG implemented Coordinated entry, brought in a low-barrier shelter, capital projects and outreach.
- The previous service providers did not always welcome new providers because it substantially cut their funding. There is still conflict in this area.
- While YVCOG administered the program, YVCOG's previous Executive Director and the previous Homeless Program Manager were under constant fire – the service providers saw YVCOG as being cold-hearted but in reality it was our job to administer the program on behalf of our cities, carrying out their wishes while meeting requirements of the funders.
- YVCOG was free of all audit findings. The only recommendation from the auditor is that we would update our scope of work if we modified future contracts.
- YVCOG does not advocate or become political, we serve our cities and the county by administering programs for them.
- December 2017-February 2018 – all of the cities and Yakima County, by resolution, appointed YVCOG to administer the Homeless and Housing Program.
- December 2018 – Yakima County informed YVCOG they would be taking the administration of the program back. They extended the contract with YVCOG to add 6 months to transition the program back to the county, asking that we assist them in preparing the application for the state funding.
- April 2019 – Former Homeless and Housing Program manager, Crystal Testerman resigned her position, declining Commissioner Leita's offer to transition to Yakima County as a Human Services Director. Esther Magasis was moved into the Homeless Program Manager position.
- July 1, 2019 – Esther and Lance Larson transitioned to Yakima County.

Do our members want us to continue communications with the Commissioners regarding COG administering the program, or if the cities are happy with the administration of the program at Yakima County and each of the cities would like to sign a resolution turning the administration of the program back to Yakima County?

There was discussion regarding the fact that several of the cities are not satisfied with the way the county is running the program. We want to be sure the county is working with the cities. The 2017 document is the governing document.

Joe Brusica has requested this letter, to present to the Commissioners.

Mr. Restucci read the attached letter to Yakima County Commissioners, asking them to reconsider returning the Homeless and Housing Program to YVCOG.

Further discussion by community members about how YVCOG took on the program and made it successful. There were checks and balances at the COG that are not happening at the county level. Habitat for Humanity has withdrawn from the county program. Camp Hope is also contemplating withdrawing from the county program.

The City of Toppenish moved to approve YVCOG Chair James Restucci sign the letter to the Yakima County Commissioners regarding the administration of the Homeless Housing and Assistance program. The City of Yakima seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL

Jim Restucci, YVCOG General Membership Chair

- Executive Committee member elections coming up in February. Nominating committee will be appointed at the December General Membership Meeting. Executive Committee members will serve a two-year term.
- The YVCOG Outstanding Service Award will be awarded at the December General Membership Meeting. Please send nominations to YVCOG Executive Director, Chris Wickenhagen.

Informational

PROGRAM

Legislative Updates

Legislative updates were provided by Representative Chris Corry, Representative Jeremie Dufault, and Senator James Honeyford. Vicki Holleman-Perez from Congressman Dan Newhouse's office was present.

Vicki Holleman-Perez was not able to give an update at this time, but extended an invitation to members to send information or questions to their office at any time and those questions will be answered.

Representative Chris Corry – 14th Legislative District: Assistant Minority Floor Leader; Assistant Ranking Minority Member of the Appropriations Committee; Community & Economic Development; Consumer Protection & Business.

The last session was pretty rough ... 105 days over Zoom.

Appropriations: our state is taking in more money now than at any time in our history, not including federal money. He is concerned that some of the spending has been reckless appropriations regarding our 'rainy day fund.' This fund was created to weather economic storms and could only be spent with a super majority approval. This fund has now been moved out of the 'rainy day fund' and put into a new account that can be spent by simple majority. His concern is what happens when this one-time surplus is spent? We need to exercise more fiscal restraint.

The long-term care trust act has been in around since 2019 and goes into effect in January. Opt-out period ends in November. The private market for long-term care is basically collapsed. He is working along with his colleagues to try to come up with some better solutions.

Community and Economic Development: seeing a large push into expanding broadband, including Yakima County area. It is getting to the point where it is cost prohibitive for companies to expand services further, so he believes it's good for the state to help out in this area.

In this 'state of emergency,' the governor is not talking to the Legislature and is not considering their input. The Legislature's rulemaking authority is being usurped.

Discussion on reality of climate change – longer, drier fire seasons, etc. What are our mitigation strategies? Water storage? We do need to be proactive.

Discussion on affordable housing issues, mask mandates, citizen engagement, elderly population being overlooked, etc.

Representative Jeremie Dufault – 15th Legislative District. Assistant Ranking Member of the Consumer Protection & Business Committee and of the Finance Committee.

The original plan for tonight was to present Norm Childress' wife, Sandy, with a resolution that he, Chris Corry, and all of the Yakima County delegation, had sponsored to recognize Commissioner Norm Childress his decades of service to our valley. He was a mentor and a friend, and he looks forward to having an opportunity to make that presentation.

The last legislative session ended in April, so there isn't a lot of news. It was not a good session for those who are in favor of less government, lower taxes, and safe streets in our state.

Legalization of drugs will happen July 1, 2023 – doesn't make sense to decriminalize and we will all be dealing with it on the front lines. It will be illegal for a 15-year-old to sit at a bus stop and drink a beer, but he can inject heroin and be legal. Our law enforcement and first responders will be hamstrung in a number of ways.

Senator Jim Honeyford – 15th Legislative District.

Mr. Honeyford was able to join the meeting near the end. He mentioned the _____ meeting scheduled for the 29th – he will get that information to YVCOG so it can be forwarded to the local governments.

He has no real idea about what to expect in the next session. There will probably be a lot of discussion regarding oversight and input on what to do with the excess revenue ... millions and millions of dollars.

UPCOMING GENERAL
MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

2021 meetings may be held via Zoom, or we may be able to meet in one of our cities.

YVCOG General Membership Special Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2021

A recording of this meeting is available

Meeting dates: October 20 - Zillah
December 8 – City of Yakima

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

ADJOURN

With no further business, Chairman Restucci adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James A. Restucci, YVCOG Chairman

Date signed: _____

Tamara Hayward, Financial Specialist