

The Board of Directors of the Brazos Valley Council of Governments passed and approved, as presented, the minutes of the December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Board of Directors meeting on this, the 13<sup>th</sup> day of January 2021.



Judge Byron Ryder  
Board Chairman

ATTEST:



Council Member Kavon Novak  
Board 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman

# BRAZOS VALLEY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING Wednesday, December 9, 2020, 1:00 p.m. Center for Regional Services Board Room 3991 E 29<sup>th</sup> Street, Bryan, TX 77802

### MINUTES

The Brazos Valley Council of Governments Board of Directors met on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room at the Center for Regional Services, located at 3991 East 29th Street in Bryan, Texas. BVCOG also had a Zoom meeting option. The web portal opened at 12:45 p.m. and the meeting convened at 1:00 p.m. The website to join the Zoom meeting was <https://zoom.us/j/91243871672> and the meeting ID was 912 4387 1672. If dialing by location, the number was +1 346 248 7799 (Houston). Below are the BVCOG Board Members attending in person, unless otherwise noted as Zoom.

### Present

<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Judge Duane Peters	Brazos County
Mayor Karl Mooney, College Station	Brazos County
Mayor Andrew Nelson, Bryan (1:10 p.m.)	Brazos County
Judge Keith Schroeder	Burleson County
Council Member Kavon Novak, Caldwell	Burleson County
Judge Joe Fauth, III	Grimes County
Commissioner Phillip Cox	Grimes County
Mayor Karen Hale, Plantersville	Grimes County
Judge Byron Ryder	Leon County
Commissioner Joey Sullivan	Leon County
Council Member Bobby Walters, Centerville	Leon County
Ms. Karen Lane, Tax Assessor	Madison County
Mayor Bill Parten, Madisonville	Madison County
Sheriff Gerald Yezak	Robertson County
Mayor Molly Hedrick, Franklin	Robertson County
Mr. Jimmie McCullough (Zoom)	Robertson County
Ms. Nelda Trevino	Robertson County
Judge John L. Durrenberger	Washington County
Commissioner Joy Fuchs	Washington County
Ms. Dorothy Morgan	Washington County
Dr. Robert G. Wright	Washington County

### Absent

Commissioner Irma Cauley, Brazos County	Mr. Jim Scott, Leon County
Ms. Marycruz Morales, Brazos County	Judge Tony Leago, Madison County
Mr. Clarence Wayne Grays, Burleson County	Ms. Sandra Guice, Madison County
Mayor Micheal Bradford, Somerville	Judge Charles Ellison, Robertson County
Mayor Bert Miller, Navasota	Mayor Milton Tate, Jr., Brenham
Mr. Charles Tompkins, Grimes County	

**Staff**

Mr. Tom Wilkinson	Mr. Michael Parks	Mr. Stephen Bailey
Mr. Paul Turney	Mr. Bo Moncivais	Ms. Anita Pitt
Ms. Candilyn McLean	Mr. Roger Sheridan	Ms. Darla Patterson (Zoom)
Ms. Charlotte Strong	Mr. Harold Womble	Mr. Bryan Jones
Mr. Bobby Hubley		

**1. Call to Order**

The Brazos Valley Council of Governments Board of Directors Meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by the Chairman of the Board Judge Byron Ryder of Leon County.

**2. Invocation and Pledges of Allegiance**

The invocation was given by Ms. Dorothy Morgan of Washington County, and the pledges of allegiance were initiated by Judge Ryder.

**3. Introductions**

Mr. Tom Wilkinson asked the Board members on the phone and Zoom meeting for a roll call since most of the Board members personally attended the meeting. He then asked if there were any staff members or guests on the call.

**4. Consider for approval the minutes of the BVCOG Board of Directors Meeting for November 10, 2020.**

Mayor Molly Hedrick, from the City of Franklin, made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2020 BVCOG Board of Directors meeting, and Sheriff Gerald Yezak of Robertson County seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the minutes of the BVCOG Board of Directors meeting for November 10, 2020 were approved.

**5. Consider for approval the BVCOG Financial Report for October 2020 – Mr. Stephen Bailey, Director of Finance**

Mr. Bailey directed the Board to the packet of handouts covering the October 2020 BVCOG Financial Report which is the first month of the 2021 BVCOG Budget comparing the actual expenditures for the year. He reported the current month total expenses for October were \$3,442,567 with a budget of 92% remaining. It is not exact because payroll expenses are not included in the reports because of the delayed reporting from Paycor. Currently, we are in the process of a payroll software conversion and now getting to the step where the payroll import files are built in order to import them into the BVCOG accounting system.

Mr. Bailey reported almost all the categories are underspent. With the additions of the BVCAP and WIC programs included in the budget, there will be a few months of an adjustment period. Otherwise, the only category that is down is the Human Resources Internal Service Funds (ISF) and that is the result of the Paycor Payroll Software.

Mr. Bailey then opened the floor to the Board for questions. Commissioner Joey Sullivan of Leon County made a motion to approve the BVCOG Financial Report for October

2020. Mayor Karl Mooney, from the City of College Station, seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the BVCOG Financial Report for October 2020 was approved.

## **6. Executive Director’s Report**

### **6a. Discussion of Legislative Issues**

Mr. Wilkinson informed the Board the State of Texas Legislature is beginning to have committee hearings. There is a Senate Committee trying to pass a bill where cities and counties cannot discuss issues and contribute their opinions, on behalf of their constituents, to the senators in office.

Judge Joe Fauth, III of Grimes County added that it is very important for the mayors, county commissioners, and county judges to all stay vigilant about this issue with the Senate Committee. We need to contact our state representatives and our state senators on the proposed bill. Basically, they have excluded themselves from the bill so they can still have their lobbyists go to Washington, D.C. They apparently do not have faith in the elected officials serving the citizens of Texas in each city and each county.

Organizations like Texas Association of Counties (TAC) and the Texas Municipal League (TML) that provide so much training for cities and counties throughout the state at a very reasonable price has the tendency for this bill to classify these organizations as lobbyist organizations. For example, if a city official or county official does go to Austin to testify they will not be reimbursed for any of their travel expenses. Mr. Wilkinson believes it is offensive the senators are spending their time on this bill.

Commissioner Joy Fuchs of Washington County agrees as she communicates with the senators and representatives of the region. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the city and county governments have been the most helpful in getting things done compared to the state agencies. Even though the bill is intended for the bigger jurisdictions (Travis and Harris counties, etc.), legislatively the bill will be one size fits all and be harmful to the BVCOG region as it would eventually relinquish the opinions and help offered by the governments of small to mid-size cities and counties.

Mr. Wilkinson asked the Board if they would like to have an invitation sent to our Senate representatives, Senator Kolkhorst and Senator Schwertner, to discuss the issue of this bill in a Senate Committee. Mr. Wilkinson informed the Board an invitation will be sent later to our House representatives if the bill passes to them.

### **6b. Report on Center for Regional Services (CRS)**

Mr. Wilkinson reported the space formerly leased by the Children’s Museum will now be leased by a local nondenominational church. Ms. Dorothy Morgan of Washington County voiced her concern that we are a government facility in this area but she does support a church in the CRS. Mr. Wilkinson continued this church outreaches to a good number of individuals in the community, some of

them would be potential users of our services or advocates for individuals in the community.

**6c. Workforce Program Updates**

Mr. Wilkinson reported there is presently a skill set mismanagement in Workforce Solutions because workers recently laid off have different skills than the businesses that are hiring. The challenge we have is it is difficult to get the training needed for these unemployed workers. Another issue brought to our attention is the healthcare shortage and we are researching the situation before a conclusion reached. Unfortunately, Workforce is not an organization geared to train medical professionals but can train six months to a year for medical records management, technical medical careers, etc.

Mr. Wilkinson reported Workforce's Childcare Services is busy but there is a concern for December. The waiver that allowed individuals to hold off looking for work in order to keep their Unemployment Benefits expired with the previous rules and regulations back in force before the waiver went into effect.

**6d. Broadband in the Brazos Valley Update, Construction Progress and Plans**

Mr. Parks reported there are more and more meetings with businesses in the region interested in BVCOGNET. A great meeting with a set of these businesses are hotels in Leon and Madison counties. The cost to have the fiber reach these businesses will be between \$20,000 and \$30,000. There was also a meeting set up by our business consultants out of Austin to talk with an internet service provider out of the Conroe area that is interested in expanding their network into the Brazos Valley. Our main target is the middle mile where a company can make their own market and service their own customers, not necessarily the last mile end user. Mr. Parks announced we did get final notice on the BVCOGNET loan squared away today as the required Board officers signed the paperwork and the permanent financing is in place.

Mr. Wilkinson reported Commissioner Fuchs arranged a meeting for us with the new superintendent of the Brenham Independent School District. Mr. Bo Moncivais, Information Systems Program Manager, introduced and discussed BVCOGNET's capabilities and offerings available for the school district. Mr. Wilkinson mentioned COVID-19 has clearly delineated where there is communication gaps, especially when teaching in a virtual classroom with virtual learners. Therefore, schools, medical facilities, and government agencies are our primary target.

Mr. Wilkinson added Ms. Anita Pitt, 9-1-1 Program Manager, has an item on the agenda where BVCOGNET is competing with Verizon for the best solution switched Ethernet layer 2 network for 9-1-1 connectivity.

Mr. Wilkinson announced the loan paperwork has been executed with First Financial Bank to provide a loan to BVCOG for \$10 million with the collateral being the fiber and the income from the fiber with terms as previously discussed.

Mr. Wilkinson reported that it is amazing to see BVCOGNET come to fruition after working long and hard over the last seven to eight years. We are being asked by a lot of other organizations across the country, mainly COG's, how to begin and complete a fiber network. Our answer was to make sure they do their research because it can be a difficult and lengthy process.

Mr. Parks reported several companies already have purchased circuits on BVCOGNET to help provide better internet service. Mayor Andrew Nelson, from the City of Bryan, added in order to have better internet service in the region it is more a marathon than a sprint and the residents of Bryan are ready for better internet service. Mayor Karl Mooney, from the City of College Station, added there is a scheduled workshop on their city council agenda this week in order to provide better internet service to the residents of College Station.

Mr. Wilkinson concluded the best thing for us, and fortunate for us to have, is Fibertown being located in downtown Bryan and supplying the internet feed. Otherwise, the internet feed supply would come from Dallas or Houston.

**6e. Community Action Program Report**

Mr. Wilkinson reported the BVCAP programs are running smoothly. The Energy Assistance Program managed by Mr. Bryan Jones had additional funds transferred to the Rental/Utility Assistance Programs because a greater need is helping clients and their families keep their rent payments and utilities current at this time during COVID-19. Home repairs and rehabilitation is difficult at this time with the issue of COVID-19 looming.

Mr. Parks added if there are residents in the region needed help there are funds available but residents have to apply in order to receive the funds. There is a one-time application process for the 2021 year if residents apply in January. If residents apply in December 2020, they can receive funds in December 2020 but they will have to reapply in January 2021 to be eligible for funds throughout the year in 2021.

Mr. Wilkinson reported the Head Start office in Fort Worth does not like the way BVCOG was managing BVCAP Head Start in our paperwork. They do not care that BVCOG is managing BVCAP Head Start, they just did not like the way we submitted the paperwork. We hired a consultant out of Florida that is a specialist in Head Start paperwork and we went on the recommendation to submit the paperwork. The consultant will resubmit the BVCAP Head Start paperwork in the manner required by the Fort Worth Head Start office.

**7. Consider for approval a Resolution Authorizing Approval of 9-1-1 Expenditures Exceeding \$50,000 for Managed Services and Project Management for 9-1-1 Networks.**

Ms. Anita Pitt, 9-1-1 Program Manager, reported the 9-1-1 network has been using Verizon Business to manage and monitor the network for a very long time and would like to switch to a different provider. The new provider that 9-1-1 will be switching to is

National Public Safety Solutions (NPSS) which specifically monitors and manages the routers and networks for 9-1-1 solutions here in Texas. This move will be in the right direction rather than with a conglomerate.

Commissioner Fuchs motioned to approve a Resolution Authorizing Approval of 9-1-1 Expenditures Exceeding \$50,000 for Managed Services and Project Management for 9-1-1 Networks. Council Member Kavon Novak, from the City of Caldwell, seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the Resolution Authorizing Approval of 9-1-1 Expenditures Exceeding \$50,000 for Managed Services and Project Management for 9-1-1 Networks was approved.

**8. Consider to Authorize Approval of 9-1-1 Expenditures Exceeding \$50,000 for the Best Solution Switched Ethernet Layer 2 Network for 9-1-1 Connectivity.**

Ms. Pitt announced our prime network, the one that connects the two posts between BVCOG and Brenham, is an MPLS network and in operation since 2007. It's become apparent the configurations in the routers and the network itself is not viable to use for NextGen. A Switched Ethernet Layer 2 Network is the best option to go to and quotes from various vendors have been received. Mr. Wilkinson suggested Ms. Pitt get an independent study to research more on the two quotes received from Verizon Business and BVCOGNET. Ms. Pitt decided to hold off on the resolution and ask permission to make a decision on the Switched Ethernet Layer 2 Network after an independent consultant provides the best researched decision after both networks have been evaluated.

Ms. Morgan motioned to approve Authorization to Approve 9-1-1 Expenditures Exceeding \$50,000 for the Best Solution Switched Ethernet Layer 2 Network for 9-1-1 Connectivity. She added Ms. Pitt does not need to come back to the Board to approve a resolution. Dr. Robert G. Wright of Washington County, seconded the motion and agreed with what Ms. Morgan added. The motion carried, and the Authorization to Approve 9-1-1 Expenditures Exceeding \$50,000 for the Best Solution Switched Ethernet Layer 2 Network for 9-1-1 Connectivity was approved.

**9. Consider for approval the recommendation of the Madison County Commissioner's Court appointment of Ashley Kishino, Madison County Sheriff's Office, to the BVCOG Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC).**

Ms. Karen Lane, Madison County Tax Assessor, motioned to approve the recommendation of the Madison County Commissioner's Court appointment of Ashley Kishino, Madison County Sheriff's Office, to the BVCOG Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC). Sheriff Gerald Yezak of Robertson County seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the recommendation of the Madison County Commissioner's Court appointment of Ashley Kishino, Madison County Sheriff's Office, to the BVCOG Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) was approved.

**10. Consider for approval the recommendation of the Homeland Security Advisory Committee's Implementation Plan (IP) for 2021.**

Mayor Nelson motioned to approve the recommendation of the Homeland Security Advisory Committee's Implementation Plan (IP) for 2021. Mayor Molly Hedrick, from the City of Franklin, seconded the motion. The motion carried, and the recommendation

of the Homeland Security Advisory Committee’s Implementation Plan (IP) for 2021 was approved.

**11. The following Program Reports were included in the packet:**

9-1-1 Regional Planning, Brazos Valley Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), Area Agency on Aging (AAA), Brazos Valley Wide Area Communications System (BVWACS), County Indigent Health Care (CIHC), Economic and Community Development Program (ECD), Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP), HIV/Health Services, Public Safety Planning (PSP), Purchasing Solutions Alliance (PSA), Solid Waste Planning Program (SWPD), Workforce Solutions Brazos Valley Board (WSBVB), and Women’s, Infants, & Children (WIC)

**12. Adjournment**

Mr. Wilkinson reminded the Board about some important dates coming up. The Flood Control Grants are due to the Texas Water Board on January 17, 2021. The Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are not processed through the COG anymore, they are processed through the state. Counties and cities in the region should be working with their consultants to have them submitted by the due date of May 3, 2021.

Commissioner Fuchs motioned for the meeting to be adjourned and Sheriff Yezak, seconded the motion. The motion carried, and Judge Ryder announced the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.