



Executive Committee | Summary Minutes

10:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Access via Zoom or Conference Call

<https://zoom.us/j/98530162047?pwd=NlZWa3NZY2pwaXI0ZlAzNVcrd2Ntdz09>

Dial In: + 1 346 248 7799

Meeting ID: 985 3016 2047

Passcode: 097306

Present (23)

Judge Paul Pape, Bastrop County, **Chair**
Mayor Brandt Rydell, City of Taylor, **First Vice Chair**
Judge James Oakley, Burnet County, **Second Vice Chair**
Mayor Lew White, City of Lockhart, **Secretary**
Judge Ron Cunningham, Llano County, **Parliamentarian**
Mayor Jane Hughson, City of San Marcos, **Immediate Past President**
Council Member Mackenzie Kelly, City of Austin
Mayor Pro Tem Lyle Nelson, City of Bastrop Council Member Andrea Willott, City of Bee Cave
Judge Brett Bray, Blanco County
Commissioner Joe Don Dockery, Burnet County
Judge Joe Weber, Fayette County
Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Pitts, City of Georgetown
Commissioner Debbie Ingalsbe, Hays County

Council Member Christine Sederquist, City of Leander
Commissioner Steven Knobloch, Lee County
Council Member Mike Heath, City of Pflugerville
Council Member Matthew Baker, City of Round Rock
Council Member William Gordon, City of Smithville
Commissioner Ann Howard, Travis County
Commissioner Brigid Shea, Travis County
Commissioner Russ Boles, Williamson County
Commissioner Cynthia Long, Williamson County

Absent (2)

Judge Hoppy Haden, Caldwell County
Mayor Sandy Cox, City of Lakeway

1. **Call to Order by the Chair**

Judge Pape called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and confirmed the quorum. Judge Pape recognized two new Executive Committee members and asked Ms. Voights to introduce them. Ms. Voights introduced Lee County Commissioner Steven Knobloch and City of Austin Council Member Mackenzie Kelly.

2. **Consider Approval of Minutes for the February 10, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting**

A motion was made by Commissioner Long to approve the February 10, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Ingalsbe seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Consider Adopting a Resolution Recognizing National Telecommunicator Week**

Richard Morales, Director of Emergency Communications

Mr. Morales explained this year the National Telecommunicator Week is April 11 through 17, 2021 and is held to express recognition, appreciation, and support for telecommunicators throughout the region.

A motion was made by Commissioner Long to approve a resolution recognizing National Telecommunicator Week. Mayor Hughson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Consider Approving Ranking for FY 2021 Homeland Security Grant Program Applications
Martin Ritchey, Director of Homeland Security

Mr. Ritchey presented the CAPCOG FY 2021 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) prioritized projects list for consideration to be submitted to the Office of the Governor (OG). This list was sent to the Executive Committee as a backup document prior to the meeting. He explained changes to the grant process, noting the OG had not provided an estimate of funding expected this year as no allocations had been provided to the states. He went on to explain that the current administration reverted the system back to the way it was previously, and that Texas received an allocation of over \$18 million. He touched on other changes which impacted the grant process, noting the Department of Homeland Security added a fifth area of investment – combating extremist nationalist behavior. Other investment areas include cybersecurity, protecting soft targets, intelligence and information sharing, and emerging threats.

Mr. Ritchey explained the application process this year noting subcommittees of the HSTF conducted its preliminary review and ranking in accordance with state and federal guidelines and that the HSTF reviewed and ranked the prioritized list of projects being submitted to the Executive Committee. He pointed out changes made to the prioritized list prior to the final acceptance of the projects, which included two projects from the City of Austin that were flipped and a project from Fayette County was moved up several places so that it would be closer to the line for possible funding.

Judge Bray asked if there was a way to fund Fayette County through the funding estimate since it was the only rural project that was close to the project line. Ms. Voights responded that the board has authority to adjust project amounts. Judge Weber questioned if an agenda item was needed to consider how funds are dispersed, and if a certain amount of the funds could be dedicated to the rural counties. Mr. Ritchey discussed how the projects were scored and ranked.

Council Member Heath asked about the training and exercise project. Mr. Ritchey discussed plans for “Operation Cobalt” which will focus on electric grid and other critical infrastructure including radiological and hazardous material response. The budget will support the exercise and other trainings meant to prepare emergency response teams for the exercises. Judge Weber asked about the CAPCOG Regional Planning line item to which Ms. Voights responded that funds the homeland security department staff, office space, etc.

Judge Oakley referred to some projects and asked if CAPCOG was evaluating whether some of the equipment needed to be replaced. Mr. Ritchey responded that the equipment in question was at the end of life and could no longer be maintained. Mr. Ritchey also mentioned that evaluating committees requested that some projects reduce cost so they could fund more grants.

Ms. Voights briefly discussed how having a regional allocation is helpful because projects can be scaled or negotiated so more projects could fit the funding; that is something done with other grant programs. She discussed the history of the funding process, the goal of building regional capacity which usually meant assets have gone to larger communities who have the staff to deploy them throughout the region. That doesn’t mean we can’t look at what capacity is needed in the outlying counties.

Judge Pape asked if the board should decide to have a carve out or a set aside for rural areas and would that be a modification to guidelines or policies that are already in place. He then asked Ms. Voights if the board had approved the policies and procedures and guidelines that these committees used to recommend the projects that should be funded. Ms. Voights indicated the plans and guidelines had been adopted and are those used by the committees.

Mr. Ritchey reviewed the plans and guidelines including the THIRA for threats and hazards, SPR or stakeholder preparedness report, the implementation plan, and the grant process. He noted that stakeholders are asked when they are creating their grant application to reference the THIRA, the SPR, the IP and many of our documents to validate their request. Judge Pape said he felt it would be appropriate for the Executive Committee to review some of the guiding documents in the future to see if more money could be invested in rural areas.

Ms. Voights said that the membership of the HSTF has always been about including every county's EMC and having small, medium, and large departments represented so the projects recommended would serve the whole region based on the plans they have voted on. She added that Mr. Ritchey's process for doing the plans had been inclusive.

A motion was made by Council Member Sederquist to approve the submission of the CAPCOG FY 2021 HSGP Prioritized Project list to the Office of the Governor. Council Member Howard seconded the motion. The motion passed with by a majority with six opposing votes by Judge Bray, Judge Cunningham, Commissioner Dockery, Council Member Heath, Judge Oakley and Judge Weber.

Judge Pape confirmed six nays, the others are yays, therefore, the motion was approved. He asked that the next agenda bring back these issues for review to address concerns. Ms. Voights stated she was unsure how to structure an agenda item because many of the investment areas must be met by the projects. She added that the process needed to be looked at and maybe outlying counties need to be more involved in the planning process, so they have a stronger voice.

Judge Pape commented that it is multifaceted, and we have got to look at every facet of it. He instructed Ms. Voights and her staff to figure out a way to have that conversation.

5. Consider Approving Appointments to Advisory Committees

Deborah Brea, Executive Assistant

Ms. Brea reported Ms. Darian Clary, with the Austin Independent School District, was nominated by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee to fill the at-large educational slot on the SWAC.

A motion was made by Commissioner Ingalsbe to approve the nomination as presented. Council Member Sederquist seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Staff Reports

Betty Voights, Executive Director

Ms. Voights reported the legislative bill to increase the wireless fee, HB2911 was filed last week and that she plans to put some information together to the legislators in the our region to support it by indicating the need for more resources to for radio communications interoperability work that is needed in our counties.. She discussed ongoing demand in some rural counties for networked dispatch consoles and other infrastructure and noted the bill as filed allowed for a district to vote on increasing its fee to \$.75, \$1.00 or \$1.25.

Commissioner Long questioned if the board had taken a specific position on an increase in the wireless fee and that this would represents a tax increase. She went on to state that she felt before advocating on behalf of the Executive Committee for a tax increase, the board should vote on the issue. She then stated she was not in favor, without approval of this board to advocate for the bill. Ms. Voights responded an

increase was not automatic, noting that it would have to come to the Executive Committee to decide, even if the bill passes.

There were several questions about the bill; Ms. Voights explained that Representative White, who is also the chair of the Homeland Security Committee is sponsoring HB2911. She noted she had discussed this bill with the Executive Committee while it was being developed and that the final bill would provide the authority to increase the fee.

Commissioner Howard questioned the timing and suggested Ms. Voights continue to work on this for the next month until the board makes a decision. After more discussion, Ms. Voights stated she wanted to clarify what the Executive Committee was instructing her to do because until that point she was under the assumption that because CAPCOG would ultimately need this board to vote on this issue, it was okay to be working on it. She said she needs to be able to respond to inquiries by legislators' offices. Judge Pape commented that if the board was going to ask the Executive Director to promote a bill to allow local districts to raise their fee, that was a big enough policy question that there should be some action on it.

Judge Pape indicated the issue should be placed on the April agenda and asked Ms. Voights if the bill would come up for a hearing before then. Ms. Voights said she had no way of knowing and would try to balance providing information against promoting it. Judge Pape went on to say there was no action item to be taken today and directed Ms. Voights based on the conversation to use her best judgement on how to work on this.

Ms. Voights deferred to Council Member Gordon at which time he stated he had submitted a resignation letter to CAOCOG on March 2nd. He gave a brief farewell and thanked the Executive Committee for the experience and opportunity to serve. Judge Pape commented that Council Member Gordon had represented the City of Smithville and Bastrop County well and thanked him for his service.

Mr. Morales gave a brief after action report on 911 during storm Uri. He reported an overall increase in call volume to all call centers of at least 30%, during the week of the storm. The Austin Fire Department had at an increase of 145%, Travis County Sheriff's Department had an increase of 71% and the City of San Marcus had at an increase of 121%.

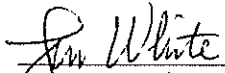
He reported there were several issues that occurred throughout the region within the PSAPS and the emergency communication centers, noting most having to do with power – four of which had major power issues. He explained the backup systems used natural gas, propane or diesel fuel and with the extreme temperatures, there were many issues that prevented some of the backup systems from working. He reported that Cedar Park had a complete failure and that AT&T and all the other commercial carrier networks were on a hold fast response, which meant that they could not roll out any vehicles. Mr. Morales explained our four dedicated technicians monitored our systems remotely and were specifically concentrating on our issues.

Commissioner Shea requested a follow up email from Mr. Morales with information regarding the kind of steps being taken to winterize and to better prepare our systems to be more resilient.

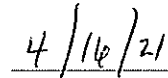
Mr. Ritchey gave a brief after action report on Homeland Security issues during storm Uri. He reported an unprecedented number of messages were sent, over 16 million messages went out of Everbridge. He touched on WebEOC, noting that there was approximately 3,398 cumulative logins March 14 – 23, with approximately 483 different people using the website.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:19 a.m.



Mayor Lew White, Secretary
Executive Committee
Capital Area Council of Governments



Date