

EAST CENTRAL COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

COLORADO'S CENTRAL PLAINS



128 Colorado Ave · Box 28 · Stratton, Colorado 80836 · 719-348-5562 · (FAX) 719-348-5887 · www.eccog.com

EAST CENTRAL COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 7, 2026

Call to Order

Chairman Dave Hornung called the January 7, 2026, meeting of the ECCOG Board of Directors to order at 7:00PM held as a Zoom conference call.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Dave Hornung invited the attendees to recite the Pledge of Allegiance as a flag was displayed on the screen.

Roll Call

Roll call was taken with eight Directors in attendance: Mike Buck, Dave Hornung, Terry Jaques, Sherry Jones, Hal McNerney, Valerie Rhoades and Ron Smith. ECCOG Executive Director Candace Payne and Senior & Transit Services Director Sean Vanous were present. Directors who could not attend included: Rhonda Brown, Ben Ferree, Ryan Fulmer, Megan Gardner, and Derek Isom. A quorum was reached. The At Large position is vacant.

Approval of November 5, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes

The Minutes of November 5, 2025, were provided in the packet. Director Terry Jaques made a motion to approve the Minutes as presented. Director Hal McNerney seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Financial Report of January 7, 2026

Noted for the record: December 20, 2025, Financial Report was approved by email ballot. The January 7, 2026, Financial Report was reviewed by Executive Director Candace Payne and Senior & Transit Services Director Sean Vanous with the Board. Attention was given to the fund balances available for expenditure thru November with the bank balance as of December 31st. Director Hal McNerney made a motion to approve the Financial Report as presented for filing. Director Sherry Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Bills & Payroll

November Payroll and Bills were approved by email ballot. December 2025 bills and payroll reports were discussed. Payroll totaled \$42,508.07 for the part-time and full-time staff. The Accounts Payable checks totaling \$66,024.95 were reviewed and included within that report were HelpMATE payments, Enterprise Zone contribution project donations and new brochure costs, standard employee reimbursements, monthly utilities, and purchase of raw food and materials for the programs. Director Hal McNerney made a motion to ratify the payment of bills and payroll. Director Sherry Jones seconded the motion. Motion carried.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

COG Staffing

Senior & Transit Services Director Sean Vanous reported Cheyenne County still needs a Senior Center Coordinator, Assistant Cook and Outback Express driver. Lincoln County needs a bus driver while Kit Carson County needs a Head Cook (medical restrictions) in Burlington and an Assistant Cook (resigned). Elbert County currently has no needs.

Renewable Energy Impact Study Committee

Chairman Dave Hornung and Director Terry Jaques reported the Eastern Plains Renewable Energy Impact Study group will meet January 9th from 11-1PM virtually due to weather predictions. Originally, the meeting was to be in-person in Limon, but that changed earlier today. Everyone was encouraged to use the emailed Zoom link to participate on Friday for this brief meeting.

Housing Needs Assessment

Executive Director Candace Payne stated the Housing Needs Assessment has been approved by Department of Local Affairs staff as an email received stated. An official letter is coming but all necessary documentation of County Commission meetings was submitted before December ended in the DOLA online portal. Next steps include hosting a housing resource meeting, forming a regional housing committee and supporting individual applications for housing projects as requested. Recommendations were suggested by the consultants and Advisory Committee members and priorities will be selected in 2026.

Accounting Software Update

As of January 7th, Paulette has received access to ECCOG's side of the system and is learning to set up and input the data for ECCOG. Prairie Development Corporation is almost ready to activate with current data also.

ECCOG Board Member Update

Executive Director Candace Payne reported Prairie Development Corporation was excited to appoint Benjamin Ferree to the At Large position to continue serving on this Board. Ferree would start in that position effective March 2026 when we re-organize the operation for the coming year. Lincoln County municipalities would like to wait until April elections are done to make a nomination for their position on the ECCOG Board. Director Hal McNerney plans to run for re-election for Kit Carson County municipalities and continue his service to ECCOG.

NEW BUSINESS:

State Unit on Aging Desk Evaluation

Senior & Transit Services Director Sean Vanous shared that data was submitted to a shared folder for the SUA Desk Evaluation on January 6th just a bit early. Once the state staff reviews the data, we will be notified if an on-site evaluation is needed.

Enterprise Zone Contribution Project Application

Executive Director Candace Payne requested the approval of an EZ Contribution Project application for Limon Heritage Society effective January 2026 thru December 2031. Their current project ended in December with good local support of the project. Director Hal McNerney made a motion to approve the project for advancement through the state process. Director Terry Jaques seconded the motion which passed.

Another Contribution Project application for Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation was also discussed for approval as this project also ended December 31st. This project has appreciated strong local support also for the past five years. After a brief explanation of the application process, Director Ron Smith made a motion to advance this application through the state's process for approval. Director Hal McNerney seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Both projects received Board approval. Limon Heritage Society has been reviewed by the Peer Reviewers and should be approved in late January. Lincoln County EDC will go through Peer Review in February and should be approved in late February.

The boundary remains unchanged since 2019 for all of Lincoln, Kit Carson and Cheyenne counties are eligible for tax credits while a major share of east Elbert County is eligible. The west side of Elbert County graduated from the EZ program and new brochures will be distributed across the region.

EZ administration for the six counties north of East Central appears to be staying with NECALG. No final announcement has been received yet.

Opportunity Zone

The potential Opportunity Zone investment areas are on the online map now and plans are in process to host an event in the region to train local governments and investors on the new parameters laid out for the 2.0 edition of OZ. The need for a regional prospectus or individual county prospectus has not been determined. There could be grant funds to help create a prospectus, but no decision is made to date. We have selected April 23 in Limon as a regional event for us and Regions 1 and 6 to attend this special day of training and planning. More details to come.

CDOT Staff Changes & SOW

Glenn Krause has retired from CDOT and a new representative has been announced, Jim Bath, as our Division of Transit & Rail advisor. Lincoln County's initial application for a new vehicle was submitted by the deadline. The CDOT 5311 contract for Administration & Operating funds has been approved and will be forthcoming for signatures soon.

Regional Grant Navigator

Executive Director Candace Payne stated this program is ending in our region on February 6th. We were one of the first approved for contracting and we'll be one of the first to end the program. No extensions are allowed and funds will be returned to the state once the final report is made. These funds were paid up front but we only received partial payment in Year 3. Chairman Dave Hornung asked if the funds were beneficial and useful. From our work, Years 1 and 2 were more productive as we assisted with Brownfields, water project applications and paid for municipal and county staff grant training. However, once the national administration changed, interest in federal funds decreased as funds were placed on hold or cut.

Other

Next Meeting Dates/Locations (1st Wed of each month)

Feb 4 – Email ballot

Mar 4 – In person in Limon with new Directors

Apr 1 – Zoom or Email

Adjournment

Chairman Dave Hornung adjourned the meeting at 7:52PM.

All handouts and reports are retained in the permanent file of ECCOG Board meetings.