

Sherri Cassidy, CPFO, Chief Financial Officer
&
Ryan Parsell, Chief Public Information Officer

Board of County Commissioners
Holly Williams, District 1
Carrie Geitner, District 2
Stan VanderWerf, District 3
Longinos Gonzalez, Jr., District 4
Cami Bremer, District 5

CITIZEN OUTREACH GROUP

Citizen Outreach Group - August 16, 2021

**Members Present
In Person and Via
Virtual/Teleconference
Meeting:**

Stephanie Adams, Sarah Brittain Jack, Rafael Chanza,
Kelvin Dean, Arthur Glynn, Jim Godfrey

Members Absent

CheyAnne Clemons, Lauren Hug, Roland Rainey

County Staff Present:

Ryan Parsell, Deanna Ruschioni, Nikki Simmons

Commissioners Present:

Guest Speakers:

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m.

Members Absent at the August 16, 2021 COG Meeting

A motion was made to accept the absence of Lauren Hug as an excused absence, and accept Rafael Chanza, CheyAnne Clemons, and Roland Rainey as an unexcused absence; it was seconded, and all members present were in favor (5-0) with four members absent and two openings to be filled. Rafael Chanza joined the meeting after the vote, and therefore will be recorded as present.

Administrative Items

- 1) A motion was made to approve the June 21, 2021 meeting minutes as written; it was seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously by all members present (5-0) with four members absent and two openings to be filled.

2021 Financial Condition Presentation - Nikki Simmons, County Controller

- 2020 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and 2020 Popular Annual Financial Report - Nikki provided an overview of these reports and they can be found on the El Paso County website at: <https://admin.elpasoco.com/financial-services/budget-finance/comprehensive-annual-financial-reports/>;

A few of the financial highlights Nikki addressed:

- 2020 TABOR overage of \$7.1M - will be refunded through property tax credits.
- 2021 TABOR anticipated overage of \$15M - going before the Commissioners to propose an initiative to refer to the ballot to reset the base to retain the 2021 funding (\$13M for Roads & \$2M to Parks).
- Government-wide Financial Statements
- Fund Financial Statements (General Fund, Road & Bridge Fund, Human Services, Capital Projects, and Conservation Trust Fund)

In response to specific questions, Nikki and Ryan Parsell addressed the County's response to COVID-19 and the use of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES Act) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding:

- COVID-19 and its tremendous financial impact on El Paso County in 2020, and the \$125M in response and recovery aid El Paso County received from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding.
 - COVID-19 increased El Paso County's operating expenses tremendously as well. The County's total assets increased by 15% for a \$111M increase in comparison to 2019.
 - \$2.4M Regional Business Relief Fund's second round of checks being issued for local small businesses.
 - Water Grants & Broadband improvement initiatives
 - El Paso County will be receiving about \$140M from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) (direct funding from the Federal government for COVID-19 Coronavirus response) and about \$5M of these funds will be used on El Paso County's storm water projects.
- 2022 Budget Process - Nikki spoke to the upcoming 2022 Budget Hearings Schedule:
 - **October 5, 2021 – 2022 Budget Hearing #1 (Preliminary Balanced Budget)**
Statutory Presentation of the 2022 Preliminary Balanced Budget
 - **October 19, 2021 – 2022 Budget Hearing #2 (Original Adopted Budget)**
Department/Offices Critical Needs Presentations
 - **October 21, 2021 – 2022 Budget Hearing #3 (Original Adopted Budget)**
Department/Offices Critical Needs Presentations Continued; Updated Revenue Projections & Five-Year Forecast; COG Presentation to BoCC
 - **November 16, 2021 – 2022 Budget Hearing #4 (Original Adopted Budget)**
BoCC's Final Direction on the 2022 Original Adopted Budget
 - **December 7, 2021 – 2022 Budget Hearing #5 (Original Adopted Budget)**
The Adoption of the 2022 Original Adopted Budget

EPC 2021 Citizens College Master Plan Discussion – Ryan Parsell, Chief Public Information Officer
& Stephanie Adams, COG Chairperson

- Due to COVID-19 uncertainty, Stephanie spoke to the ideas of what the COG might be able to address this fall, and which sessions may need to be scheduled in the spring of 2022.

After further discussions, it was decided to move the 2021 Citizens College program out to the 2022 year, and to hold a COG meeting on September 20, 2021 for discussions regarding the 2022 Citizens College program. Prior to the September 20th meeting, Stephanie will provide the COG members with a copy of the presently constructed plans and asks that each bring a skeleton draft of their ideas to this meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.