

WAM Region I Meeting Notes

10/25/2017 Torrington, WY

Members and Guests Present include: Tabitha Ennis, Candy Wright, & Mayor Joe Fabian, Wheatland; Council Member Klaus Hansen, Malea Brown, Janine Jordon, Laramie; Council Member Kate Russell, Albin; Council Member Thomas Mohren, Pine Bluffs; Michele Sussex and Mayor George Siglin, Lingle; Council Member Dennis Kelly, Council Member Bill Law, Council Member Deanna Hill, Council Member Randy Adams, Lynette Strecker, Mayor Mike Varney, Torrington; County Commissioner Wally Wolski; County Commissioner Carl Rupp, Goshen; Representative Cheri Steinmetz, Representative Dan Kirkbride, Senator Tara Nethercott, Senator Curt Meier; WAM Staff Laurie Heath; Katie Waldner and Rick Kaysen.

WAM Board of Director Mayor Siglin welcomed all and asked for introductions.

Rick Kaysen, WAM Executive Director, provided an update on WAM's 2018 Legislative Agenda and an overview of WAM's Municipal Finance Report Volume II that was issued in September, and presented to the Joint Revenue Committee on September 22, 2017. The discussion included the basic overview of municipal government, fiscal framework and WAM's recommendations of:

1. Securing a minimum of \$105 Million in Direct Distribution for the next biennium for cities, towns and counties.
2. Revise tax laws to allow INCREASED MUNICIPAL REVENUE CAPACITY
3. INCREASE THE CAP for Severance Tax and Federal Mineral Royalties
4. REMOVE TAX EXEMPTIONS that do not support economic development

Rick also shared legislative topics the WAM Board agreed to support, oppose and monitor. Included in the discussion was to support a statewide tourism tax, support permanency of the 5th Penny Option Tax, support a municipal tax, monitor a real estate transfer fee, support efforts of WAM and the WCCA to address extraterritorial jurisdiction bills, and to support a surface water drainage system bills.

He also asked Legislators for their comments. Comments from the legislators that were present were attentive and appreciative that WAM created a meeting to inform them and to ask their opinion on municipal issues. The legislators that were present appeared to be supportive of direct distribution but particularly Sen Meier did bring caution that the total amount may not be funded. They appreciated the various ideas presented by WAM and agreed that the cities and towns have different needs.

Cities and towns provided the following updates from their municipalities:

Wheatland – Mayor Fabian discussed they are aiming to add construction to their airport and working with SLIB and DOT on how to proceed. Wheatland also working to close their landfill and have a few other wastewater projects they are planning.

Laramie – the major project is the new Curtis Street overpass

Pine Bluffs – recovered well after hail storm and looking forward to a new school

Albin – new booster pump installed in water system to increase pressure in town; assessing on how to meet need for affordable housing; have had discussions on unincorporation if funding from the state is not realized, looking to buy railroad land to seek as a water source. Annexed an area to increase housing

Torrington - funding is an issue; took over the community recycling program as prior company was going to terminate service, this allows disabled people to stay employed, cost of equipment is a challenge, and recognizes will make no profit

Goshen County- supports \$105M in direct distribution request of the state, looking at how counties can generate revenues