

WAM Region III Meeting Notes
10/5/2017 Kirby, WY

Members and Guests Present include: Landon Greer & Barry Cook, Cody; Tim Patrick & Dennis Chambers, Manderson; William Malloy & Fred Crosby, Thermopolis; John Wetzel, Powell; Jim Gill, Loresa Brinkerhoff, Gary Gerber, Keith Gentzler, Worland; Kimberly Graham & Sandy Scott, Kirby; Dennis Peters, Dawn Peters, Roger Stickney, Basin; Gregg Fredrick, WYDOT; Rep. Jamie Flitner; Rep. Nathan Winters; Senator Wyatt Agar; Rep. Dan Laursen; Rep. Mike Greear; WAM Staff Katie Waldner and Rick Kaysen.

WAM Board of Director Landon Greer 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

Legislative Leadership Committee Representative and WAM Board of Director, John Wetzel led the legislative discussion. He 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 included that WAM needs to have a strong voice during tax revision discussions; loss of sales tax on food tax has a direct impact on local government, municipalities need to provide basic services, property taxes are too low, the \$105m is on the table and it is a fair number to ask for, do not see significant tax changes until citizens demand same, and WAM is recognized for bringing forward issues for discussion.

Kaysen asked the guest legislators what they needed from WAM. Comments were do not raise discussion on the direct distribution formula, WAM does want the legislature to make a decision on extraterritorial jurisdiction through HB51, what WAM has proposed in its finance report is good, the Joint Appropriations Committee has stated that if everything that has been asked for thus budgeting needs results in a \$1 billion revenue short fall, and will support the request for \$105m as presented.

Following the legislative discussion, legislators were thanked and departed.

Greer continued to conduct WAM Business.

Katie, Member Services Manager provided an update on WAM communications and indicated that WAM will be using a Mobile App starting in January to help members stay connected and shared that WAM Winter Workshop is coming up on February 21-23 in Cheyenne at the Radisson Hotel.

Cities and towns provided the following update from their municipalities:

Kirby – They decided to outsource the garbage service, and are able to reduce costs to their residents and the town effective October 1, 2017. They plan on selling their garbage containers and truck in the near future. They will also be addressing the sale of raw water.

Basin – Representative had to depart early, but Katie shared that they have discontinued their recycling program and they are looking to sell their cardboard baler and recycling trailer. Details of these items are being advertised in WAM's Classifieds on the Website.

Manderson – The Mayor shared with the lack of legislative provided consensus funding they will not be able to perform any infrastructure projects including 75-year-old water infrastructure, and that he is very concerned his town won't make it through this bust cycle.

Worland – They spent a lot of time and resources this year in removing a big sandbar from the river that has been causing ice backups and flooding. They are having a tough time maintaining good streets with the lack of funding.

Powell – The City has been able to down size their work force and budget via retirements and not filling positions. Working with WYDOT have a new street lighting system in one part of the city. Have had to cut back on snow removal for the coming season. They are looking to see some relief with the passing of the 5th penny in Park County.

Cody – They are currently working on some street projects and completed the first part of a sewer project. They will go back to SLIB for funding to phase 2 of the sewer lagoon project. They are very proud of their Citizen Academy for residents to learn about municipal operations. This is a program where they invite the community to participate and understand what the city does and how the different departments operate.

Thermopolis – They continue to have problems with their transfer station and are trying to get resolved.

Greer asked the group if anyone was interested in hosting the next region meeting that will take place in the spring. Mayor Gill from Worland offered to host the next meeting and will work with WAM on scheduling a date and logistics.

Safe travels home to all!