

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
September 26, 2013
6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

BEAUFORT COUNTY:

Gerald Dawson
Brian Flewelling
Herbert Glaze
Marc A. Grant
Mary Beth Heyward
Billy Keyserling
Bill McBride
Joseph McDomick
Jim Outlaw

Jerry Stewart (Proxy to B. McBride)
Lisa Sulka (Proxy to Chair)
Tabor Vaux
George Williams (Proxy to Chair)

COLLETON COUNTY:

Esther S. Black
Bobby Bonds
Joseph Flowers
Larry (Babe) Hutto
Gene Whetsell

Thomas (Tommy) Mann
Evon Robinson

HAMPTON COUNTY:

Frankie Bennett
Charles Boyles, Jr.
J. L. Goodwin
Lloyd (Tootie) Griffith
James (Pete) Hagood
Charles (Buddy) Phillips
Nat Shaffer

JASPER COUNTY:

Sherry Carroll
Henry Etheridge
Henry Lawton, Sr.
Joey Malphrus
Gwen Johnson Smith

GUESTS:

Bob Nanni, Hardeeville City Manager; Harrison Rearden, SCDOT Commissioner, 6th District; Brad Samuel, Community/Economic Development & Local Government Representative, SCANA Corporation; Bill Young, retiring LCOG Board Member

STAFF:

Chris Bickley, Barbara Johnson, Michelle Knight, Ginnie Kozak, Sherry Smith, Carol Stonebraker

Chairman Herbert Glaze called the September 26, 2013 Lowcountry Council of Governments regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Gerald Dawson gave the invocation. Introduction of guests and staff followed. Chairman Glaze welcomed and recognized SCDOT Commissioner Harrison Rearden for comments. The Commissioner said SCDOT submitted its priority list for next year and is working with the Legislature to fund additional bridge, road and facility projects with the new state budget funds. Chairman Glaze called for action on minutes of the June 27, 2013 meeting, which were unanimously approved on motion by Joe Flowers with a second from Lloyd Griffith. Proxies presented by the Executive

Director included Jerry Stewart to Bill McBride and Lisa Sulka and George Williams to the Chair. All were general proxies. The meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present.

Chairman Glaze recognized incoming 2013-2014 Officers and At-Large Executive Committee Members. The new Officers are Chairman Gwen Johnson Smith, Vice Chairman Lloyd Griffith, Secretary Thomas Mann and Treasurer Gerald Dawson representing Jasper, Hampton, Colleton and Beaufort Counties respectively. Executive Committee members are Brian Flewelling, Gene Whetsell, Nat Shaffer and Henry Etheridge, also from Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties respectively.

Chairman Glaze handed the gavel over to new Chairman Gwen Smith. Chairman Smith presented the Chairman's Plaque to Mr. Glaze, who expressed his pleasure in having served as LCOG Board Chair. He thanked everyone for their support. New board member Bobby Bonds and returning board member Jim Outlaw were welcomed. Chairman Smith presented service awards to retiring members Bill Young and Herbert Glaze.

At 6:40 p.m. Chairman Smith opened the Public Hearing on the Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and recognized Barbara Johnson to lead the hearing. The public hearing had been properly advertised in regional papers, and a summary was sent to board members prior to the hearing. Barbara said the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee met September 17th to review the report in detail. It and staff recommended approval. Barbara reported that during fiscal year 2012-2013, the program completed 12 rehab units, 4 new construction units, and provided 1 unit of down payment assistance and 25 units of tenant-based rental assistance. She reviewed project details. Barbara then presented a separate request to approve funding for a 5-unit Jasper County Neighbors United (JCNU) Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) rehabilitation project in Ridgeland and Hardeeville. The funding totals \$125,000 available from three prior years. It too was recommended for approval by the Advisory Committee and staff. The Chairman called for public comment and there was none. The hearing closed at 6:45 p.m.

With no Old Business, Chairman Smith addressed New Business and called for action on the Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium CAPER. Joe McDomick moved to approve the CAPER as presented in the public hearing. Following a second from Mary Beth Heyward, the motion carried with all in favor.

Chairman Smith called for action on the Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium Project Amendment. Joe Flowers moved to approve the Amendment. Joe McDomick seconded the motion and it carried with all in favor.

Chris Bickley was recognized to report on the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). Board members received advance copies of the report covering the first year of operation. Chris reviewed the information. LCOG disbanded its RLF a year ago, transferred those assets to the Catawba COG, and joined with it and the Lower Savannah and Santee-Lynches COGs to form the South Carolina Revolving Loan Fund (SCRLF). The SCRLF is operated by Catawaba's professional commercial lending staff and offers more business lending products. During the reporting period, SCRLF worked with 12 Lowcountry prospects from the four counties. Chris said it is his understanding no loans were made in the region because prospects either were unable to meet lending requirements or to put their remaining funding packages together. SCRLF has one active prospect in the Lowcountry. SCRLF staff made a prospecting trip to the Lowcountry in September, and a Lenders Breakfast is scheduled October 10 at the Hilton Head-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce to promote the program—SCDOC will also present its business and lending resources. The SCRLF collaboration—Catawba Regional,

Lowcountry, Lower Savannah and Santee-Lynches Councils of Governments—received a National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) 2013 Innovation Award for establishing the new SCRLF program to support business development and job creation.

Chairman Smith recognized Michelle Knight to conduct the Lowcountry Regional Development Corporation (LRDC) Annual Meeting. A report was in meeting packets, and Michelle reviewed the information. LRDC is the COG's affiliate 501 (c) 6 non-profit organization established to further regional economic development. Membership of the LRDC board is LCOG Officers and Executive Committee Members. LCOG Executive Director Chris Bickley serves as Managing Agent, and Director of Community & Economic Development Michelle Knight is Recording Secretary. LRDC operates on an October 1–September 30 fiscal year and is audited each year by the COG's independent auditor. Michelle reviewed past projects including an industrial building in Colleton County that was purchased last year by its tenant. Current projects include two leased facilities where LRDC acts as landlord, one in Estill and the other in Hardeeville; an outstanding loan that is being repaid by the borrower; and a future project in Jasper County for which funds from the Palm Key project final payout are being held in escrow. Michelle reported a project was presented during the year, but it did not meet requirements; effort to identify a qualifying project continues. There were no questions. Chris Bickley reminded everyone that LRDC resources are available to regional governments for economic development projects.

Ginnie Kozak was recognized to present the Transportation Committee Report in the absence of Committee Chairman George Williams. A summary was in meeting packets. Ginnie reported the Transportation Committee met earlier that day to consider two projects for inclusion on the SCDOT STIP list: a \$400K sidewalk project in the City of Beaufort, and a \$400K Pedestrian Infrastructure (sidewalk) project in Bluffton. No LCOG Guidshare funds are involved. SCDOT already approved funding the projects through its Transportation Alternatives Program (former Enhancement Grants Program.) Municipalities provide the match. The Committee recommended approval. Discussion followed. Joe Flowers made a motion to amend the STIP list to add the two projects. Mary Beth Heyward seconded the motion and it carried with all in favor.

Discussion continued regarding two current projects, and Ginnie Kozak added clarifying comments: The US 21 @ Grays Hill project adds turning lanes at the US 21 intersection at Grays Hill. It is strictly a safety project based on Beaufort County and SCDOT accident records and traffic patterns. The SC 68 widening project is the second phase of widening the road to four lanes in Hampton County. It requires additional right-of-way acquisition, which is underway. New environmental studies had to be completed due to changes in Federal wetlands requirements. SCDOT is developing mitigation plans to be submitted with the permit application. The estimated date to go to bid is next summer.

On a related transportation matter, Joey Malphrus spoke about the lack of foresight in replacing the Back River Bridge with only two lanes, because once the Highway 17 widening project in South Carolina is complete, connecting roads on both sides of the bridge will have four lanes. He asked if anyone had new information about the bridge project. Commissioner Rearden reported having extensively looked at the issue. South Carolina and Georgia both signed off on the current arrangement—replacing the two-lane bridge—and at this stage with work underway, a change would require agreement between the two governors, which probably isn't feasible. He agreed it is not logical and believes it will become a safety and traffic problem in the future.

Chairman Smith called for Reports and recognized Sherry Smith for the August Finance Report. Sherry presented the report noting that Expenditures are near goal and Revenues over Expenditures are ahead of schedule. The AAA received additional funds for match. The COG and AAA are working to meet State changes in accountability reporting. Sherry reported a serious matter regarding AAA expense reimbursements from the State. No reimbursements have been received for June or July. Chris Bickley said it is a state-wide problem. New State regulations and protocols are being followed. The COG pays the regional Councils on

Aging (COA) for services before it receives funds from the State. July has been paid, but the COG cannot advance additional months. During discussion, a question arose about whether board members may help by contacting State Legislators, and it was recommended they first contact their local COA to learn what its needs are.

Michelle Knight was recognized for the Community & Economic Development Report. Michelle submitted the report as written. She reported a heavy fall funding round with the COG submitting applications on behalf of six local governments. Clarification memos from the State are expected to go out before the next board meeting. Infrastructure grants are included in the spring funding round, and it is not too early to begin discussions on projects. Michelle responded to a question about a Rural Development grant and said the COG can help with grant writing and administration and to call her to discuss specifics.

Chris Bickley was recognized for the Director's Report. Chris submitted the report and commented on selected items. He reminded everyone of the upcoming SCARC Conference in November. A new board member orientation will be scheduled soon. Chris announced a Colleton County municipal vacancy on the Transportation Committee. Colleton County members appointed Bobby Bonds to the Committee following his agreement to serve. The COG is leading a new Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) for the Office of Economic Adjustment in the Pentagon to include the Air Station and Parris Island in northern Beaufort County. Jim Outlaw said he is interested in volunteering for the JLUS Policy Committee if one is established. Chris also drew attention to the 208 Report and Employment and Wage charts in meeting packets.

Chairman Smith opened Council Time. Pete Hagood congratulated retiring COG Board Member—and City of Walterboro Mayor—Bill Young for his election as Third Vice President on the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC). Gerald Dawson spoke in remembrance of former LCOG Board Member Bill Ferguson, who recently passed away.

With no additional business to address, and on motion duly made, seconded and approved, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:35p.m. Copies of the agenda were distributed prior to the meeting. A notice of the meeting was posted on the LCOG bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

L. Chriswell Bickley, Jr.
Executive Director

Attachments