

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

January 23, 2014

6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

BEAUFORT COUNTY:

Gerald Dawson
Brian Flewelling
Marc A. Grant
Mary Beth Heyward
Bill McBride
Joseph McDomick
Jim Outlaw
Jerry Stewart
Lisa Sulka
Tabor Vaux

Billy Keyserling (Proxy to B. Flewelling)
George Williams (Proxy to Chair)

COLLETON COUNTY:

Bobby Bonds
Joseph Flowers
Thomas Mann
Evon Robinson

Esther S. Black (Proxy to E. Robinson)
Gene Whetsell

HAMPTON COUNTY:

Frankie Bennett
Charles Boyles, Jr.
Lloyd Griffith
James (Pete) Hagood

Charles (Buddy) Phillips (Proxy to L. Griffith)
Nat Shaffer (Proxy to L. Griffith)

JASPER COUNTY:

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

Joey Malphrus (Proxy to Chair)

GUESTS: Craig Forrest, SCDOT Commissioner At Large; Bob Nanni, Hardeeville City Manager; Brad Samuel, SCANA C&ED & Local Government Representative; Lisa Wechsler, Crowley Wechsler & Associates; Retiring Board Members J. L. Goodwin and Larry (Babe) Hutto

STAFF: Chris Bickley, Michelle Knight, Ginnie Kozak, Sherry Smith, Carol Stonebraker

Chairman Gwen Johnson Smith called the January 23, 2014 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. Minutes of the October 24, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved on motion by Henry Lawton with a second from Mary Beth Heyward. Proxies presented by the Executive Director included Esther Black to Evon Robinson, Billy Keyserling to Brian Flewelling, Buddy Phillips and Nat Shaffer to Lloyd Griffith, and Joey Malphrus and George Williams to the Chair. All were general proxies. The meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present.

Chairman Smith submitted the 2014 LCOG Board Meeting Schedule, which was unanimously approved on motion by Bill McBride with a second from Mary Beth Heyward.

Chairman Smith presented service awards to retiring members J. L. Goodwin and Larry (Babe) Hutto in recognition of their work on the LCOG Board. In accepting the awards, both men thanked the Board and staff for helping their communities and expressed their honor in serving.

There were no items of Old Business on the Agenda. Chairman Smith Called for New Business and recognized Lisa Wechsler, CPA with Crowley Wechsler & Associates, the COG's independent auditor, to present the Lowcountry Regional Development Corporation (LRDC) audit for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2013. Advance copies were sent to board members and hard copies distributed at the meeting. Ms. Wechsler reviewed the Statements of Activities and Statements of Cash Flows. Notes to the Financial Statements included details of Significant Accounting Policies, Cash on Deposit, Restricted Cash, Leases, Notes Receivable, Land and Buildings Available for Lease, Deferred Revenues, and Commitments. Ms. Wechsler stated the audit was a clean, unmodified opinion. Chris Bickley noted LRDC has had significant activity in the past, but very little has taken place over the last few years. Chris asked Ms. Wechsler if the auditors found anything more he or the Board needed to know. She responded no, all LRDC project activity is summarized in the report. A motion to accept the report as information was made by Joe Flowers, seconded by Evon Robinson and unanimously approved. Chairman Smith thanked Ms. Wechsler.

The Chairman recognized Chris Bickley for comments about hiring his replacement as Executive Director. The Board was notified early 2013 of his plans to retire at the end of 2014 with the suggestion that discussions and planning for a candidate search begin January 2014. A memo was included in meeting packets and Chris reviewed recommendations. Chairman Smith opened the floor to discussion, during which several ideas were heard along with brief procedural comments. Jim Outlaw made a motion to authorize the LCOG Executive Committee to lead the search for a new Executive Director and that the current Director serve as ex officio member of the Search Committee. Evon Robinson seconded the motion. Chairman Smith stated the motion after which it unanimously carried. It was further agreed the Executive (Search) Committee will develop a calendar and budget and report to the Board at the next meeting. Chairman Smith asked members of the Search Committee to meet following the board meeting to select a Committee Chairman and date for its first meeting. (* See Addendum)

Chairman Smith called for Reports and recognized Sherry Smith to present the mid-year Finance Report. Sherry submitted the report noting the COG received a \$50K Aging funds grant after the budget was approved. Once the grant is included in upcoming budget revisions, Revenues over Expenses will be at the 50% mid-year target. Accounts Receivable significantly improved.

Michelle Knight was recognized for the Community & Economic Development Report. She submitted the report as written and commented on recent activity. Only six CDBG grants were awarded throughout the state during the fall funding round, of which LCOG received half—a City of Walterboro Streetscape Project, Hampton County DHEC Health Clinic, and City of Hardeeville Library. Applications for the spring funding round are due March 14, and early discussions indicate 7-8 projects will be submitted. Michelle urged everyone interested in submitting a project to contact her very soon.

Chris Bickley was recognized for the Director's Report. Copies were in meeting packets. Chris delegated Finance Director Sherry Smith to act on his behalf during his upcoming absence due to knee surgery recovery. The South Carolina Revolving Loan Fund (SCRLF), in which the COG participates, made a loan commitment to an expanding business in Bluffton and is in discussions with several other Lowcountry business loan prospects. Chris presented a request from Colleton County to manage its Career Skills Center (f.k.a. Quick Jobs Center) in

Walterboro. Following discussion, Joe Flowers moved to approve the request, Brian Flewelling seconded, and the motion unanimously carried. Chris noted the unemployment chart indicates regional improvement. He drew attention to updated Planning Department Traffic Count Maps posted in the Board Room.

During Council Time, Pete Hagood asked for an update on the Highway 68 transportation project. Chris Bickley responded and said he was not aware of new information but understands the project is at the top of the list for bidding.

With no additional business to address, and on motion duly made, seconded and approved, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.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

ADDENDUM: The Executive Committee met following the board meeting and selected Brian Flewelling as Chairman of the Search Committee.