

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
October 23, 2014  
6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

**BEAUFORT COUNTY:**

Brian Flewelling  
Mary Beth Heyward  
Bill McBride  
Joseph McDomick  
Jerry Stewart  
Lisa Sulka  
George Williams

Gerald Dawson (Proxy to B. McBride)  
Marc A. Grant  
Billy Keyserling (Proxy to B. Flewelling)  
Jim Outlaw (Proxy to B. Flewelling)  
Tabor Vaux (Proxy to L. Sulka)

**COLLETON COUNTY:**

Esther S. Black  
Bobby Bonds  
Jane Darby  
Gene Whetsell

Joe Flowers (Proxy to G. Whetsell)  
Thomas (Tommy) Mann  
Evon Robinson (Proxy to E. Black)

**HAMPTON COUNTY:**

Frankie Bennett  
James (Pete) Hagood  
Travis L. (Pete) Mixson  
Charles (Buddy) Phillips  
Nat Shaffer

**JASPER COUNTY:**

Henry Etheridge  
Carolyn Kassel  
Henry Lawton, Sr.  
Joey Malphrus  
Gwen Johnson Smith

**GUESTS:** John Boylston, Alan Matienzo, Roger Sears and Mike Sullivan with SCDOT; LeNolon Edge, Jasper County Director of Planning and Building Services; Sabrena P. Graham, Hampton County Administrator (and LCOG Executive Director effective January 2015); Margaret Griffith, wife of former board member Lloyd Griffith and her daughter Amy Griffith Divel; Karen Jarrett, Town of Bluffton Project Management; Mike Phillips, Hardeeville Interim City Manager; Celia Price, guest of Esther Black; Lisa Wechsler, Crowley, Wechsler & Associates; Genelle Williams, Jasper County Sun

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

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Chairman Nat Shaffer called the October 23, 2014 Lowcountry Council of Governments regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Pete Hagood gave the invocation. Introduction of guests and staff followed. The Chairman called for action on minutes of the September 25, 2014 meeting. Brian Flewelling made a name spelling correction, after which Pete Hagood moved to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion unanimously carried following a second from Brian Flewelling. Proxies presented by the Executive Director included Gerald Dawson to Bill McBride, Joe Flowers to Gene Whetsel, Billy Keyserling and Jim Outlaw to Brian Flewelling, Evon Robinson to Esther Black, and Tabor Vaux to Lisa Sulka. The meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present.

Chairman Shaffer presented a plaque to George W. Williams, Jr. in recognition of his service on the LCOG Board of Directors and support of regionalism. The Chairman then presented a service award to

Margaret Griffith, widow of Lloyd H. (Tootie) Griffith, honoring Tootie's time on the Board and for serving as its Vice-Chairman July 2013-June 2014. Their daughter Amy Griffith Divel was also on hand to receive the award.

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Chairman Shaffer recognized Lisa Wechsler, partner with the COG's independent auditor Crowley, Wechsler & Associates, to present the Agency Audit for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2014. Advance copies were sent to board members. Ms. Wechsler submitted the report as written noting that the independent auditor's letter presents an unmodified opinion. She reviewed significant sections of the financial statements, notes, and supplementary information. The COG's Financial Reports presented to the Board throughout the year were found to be accurate and required no adjustments. Ms. Wechsler drew attention to Note 14 that details a future GASB reporting requirement revising existing standards for measuring and reporting pension liabilities. LCOG will begin implementing GASB Statement No. 68 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015. It will show as a long-term liability. Other than increased reporting, nothing changed for the COG or its management. The COG is meeting its obligation and no money is owed; however, future pension contributions may have to increase. Ms. Wechsler stated that the COG is a low-risk auditee; there were no findings or previous findings to report. She complimented Chris Bickley on his leadership and integrity and wished him well in retirement. Henry Lawton moved to accept the report as information, and following a second from Beth Heyward, the motion unanimously carried.

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The Chairman addressed Old Business, Item 1, and recognized Transportation Committee Chairman George Williams to review the proposed US17 – SC68 Funding scenario and report on the Committee's meeting earlier that day. A summary was sent to board members prior to the meeting.

Mr. Williams first presented Item 2, US21 – US21 Business (Paris Island Gateway Cost Increase). He reported that SCDOT revised the cost estimate based on a study of significant issues and that an additional \$620K is needed. However, the additional funding can be transferred from existing projects that are coming in under budget. Mr. Williams said the Committee recommended allocating an additional \$620K to the project. Henry Lawton moved to approve the recommendation, and Joe McDomick seconded. Three under-budget projects were identified during discussion—US21 at Shanklin Road, US21 at Gray's Hill, and US17 at SC336—where unused funds will be transferred to cover the Paris Island Gateway project. The motion unanimously carried.

Mr. Williams addressed US17 – SC68 funding, which had received considerable discussion in previous meetings. He reviewed the COG's earlier actions to approve \$20M for widening US17 in Jasper County. After learning the project's cost estimate had more than doubled, the COG, in order to protect SC68 and its other projects, acted at its June 2014 meeting to withdraw US17 widening funds and instead agreed to repave US17 from Hwy 315 to the Georgia State line. Mr. Williams said SCDOT has worked since then to develop a plan where SC68 remains funded, and the US17 widening project is funded with COG and MPO Guideshare money for a number of years. If approved, SCDOT projects the COG and MPO will not receive additional Guideshare funds for future projects through 2021. Mr. Williams said the Committee recommends rescinding the Board's action in June regarding US17 and then approving the US17 and SC68 funding scenario.

During discussion it was confirmed SC68 remains fully funded with construction to begin in 2015 and that additional Guideshare project funding for the COG will be restricted through 2021 and for the MPO through 2022.

Brian Flewelling moved to rescind the Board's action in June to withdraw funding for the US17 project. Pete Hagood seconded the motion and it unanimously carried.

Henry Etheridge moved to approve the US17 and SC68 funding scenario, and Joey Malphrus seconded the motion. Discussion followed regarding the projects and wording of the motion. It was also confirmed SCDOT intends to continue looking for other funding sources for the US17 project. Afterwards, Mr. Etheridge withdrew his motion with everyone in agreement. He then moved to approve all Guideshare

funding of projects, including SC68 in Hampton County and US17 in Jasper County, as presented by Mr. Williams and as detailed in Chris Bickley's October 17, 2014 memo and its two-page list of Guideshare projects. Following a second from Henry Lawton, the motion carried with all in favor. The memo and attachments are made part of these minutes. Chris Bickley thanked SCDOT and the Board for working together on a solution, and George Williams commended the SCDOT Commission for its flexibility. The same US17 funding scenario will go before the MPO Policy Committee for action at its next meeting.

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Chairman Shaffer addressed Old Business, Item 3, and recognized Executive Director Chris Bickley, who formally submitted his letter of resignation to the COG Board of Directors. It is effective on his planned retirement date of January 5, 2015. George Williams moved to accept, and following a second from Lisa Sulka, the motion was unanimously approved.

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There were no items of New Business on the Agenda.

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Chairman Shaffer called for Reports and recognized Sherry Smith for the September Finance Report. Sherry submitted the report noting that Revenues over Expenses are on target, Unrestricted Cash improved, and Accounts Receivable declined about \$300K. The COG's independent auditor's three-year contract is ending, and an RFP for auditing services will go out next spring.

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Michelle Knight was recognized for the Community and Economic Development Report, which she submitted as written. Michelle said it is time to begin planning infrastructure projects for the spring funding round. She reviewed plans to streamline needs assessments and will contact clerks to council about scheduling them in the same quarter.

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Chris Bickley was recognized for the Director's Report, which he submitted with comments. A SCARC Conference registration summary was attached, and participating members were asked to review their information. Chris reported on South Carolina Revolving Loan Fund (SCRLF) increased activity in the Lowcountry for the period August 2013-September 2014. LCOG, along with Lower Savannah and Santee Lynches COGs, merged their RLF programs with SCRLF about two years ago. SCRLF is operated by the Catawba COG. Questions followed and Chris confirmed persons interested in the RLF Program do not have to travel to Rock Hill. They can contact LCOG Community & Economic Development Director Michelle Knight to arrange meeting at the COG or another convenient regional location. Michelle Knight noted that a link to the SCRLF program is on the COG website.

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During Council Time, Brian Flewelling commended the Board for its good work for the Region. Pete Hagood thanked Chris Bickley for his service and wished him well. Chris expressed his honor in being the COG's Executive Director for 21 years and thanked board members for having given him this opportunity. Carol Stonebraker announced a retirement party for Chris is planned in November with invitations going out soon. Chairman Shaffer spoke about the Board's significant and important work during the year. (The next Board meeting will be held January 22, 2015.)

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With no additional business to address, and on motion duly made, seconded and approved, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:30 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