

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2017 6:30 P.M.
POINT SOUTH, SOUTH CAROLINA

MINUTES

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

BEAUFORT COUNTY:

Phil Cromer
Gerald Dawson
Brian Flewelling
Herbert Glaze
York Glover
Mary Beth Heyward
Joseph McDomick
Dan Wood

Michael Covert
Marc Grant
Alice Howard

COLLETON COUNTY:

Esther Black
Joseph Flowers
Tim Grimsley
Tommy Mann
Evon Robinson
Gene Whetsell

Bobby Bonds, proxy to Gene Whetsell
Crawford Moore

HAMPTON COUNTY:

Pete Hagood
Ronald Mixson
Travis Mixson
Buddy Phillips

Nat Shaffer

JASPER COUNTY:

Tom Johnson
Henry Lawton
Gwen Smith

John Carroll
Joey Malphrus, proxy to the Chair

GUESTS: Sandy Cox, Cottageville; Al Jenkins, Senator Scott's Office; Kenny Larimore, SCDOT Planning Office; Celia Price, Colleton County; Brent Rewis, SCDOT Preconstruction Office; Mike Sullivan, SCDOT Chief Planner.

STAFF: Mike Butler, Sabrena Graham, Michelle Knight, Ginnie Kozak, Jordan Newman, Connie Schroyer, Sherry Smith.

1. Call to Order

1.1. Pledge of Allegiance

1.2. Invocation

– Led by Pete Hagood

1.3. Introduction of Guests and Staff

1.4. Proxies

– Bobby Bonds to Gene Whetsell; Joey Malphrus to Chair; Michael Covert & Alice Howard absent without proxy.

1.5. Approval of August 24, 2017 Minutes

Action – MOVED by Joe Flowers, seconded by Mary Beth Heyward to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Public Hearing

2.1. Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) – Michelle Knight

- The public hearing opened at 6:36 pm and closed at 6:38 pm.
- A review of 2016-2017 affordable housing program activity was reported as present in the CAPER.
- Total funds expended were \$601,793 including \$550,212 in HOME funds and \$51,581 in local match.
- A total of (18) rehab units were completed: (7) Beaufort County; (2) Colleton County, (7) Hampton County, (2) Jasper County.
- There were no public comments.
- Copies of the CAPER were distributed in agenda packets.

3. Presentation

3.1. SCDOT 10-Year Plan – Brent Rewis, SCDOT Preconstruction Office & Mike Sullivan, SCDOT Statewide Planning Chief

- With the passage of the Roads Bill that went in to effect July 1, 2017, SCDOT will begin the repair of the state's deteriorating roads and bridges.
- The increased funding generated by the new "gas tax" will be phased in at 2¢ per year for the next six years. The tax is expected to generate an additional \$149M in 2017 and \$600M by 2022. These funds will be in addition to the regular budget of the SCDOT.
- Four key priorities have been identified for investment: implementation of a Rural Safety Program; increased resurfacing projects; continuation of the Bridge Repair and Interstate Widening Programs.
- For the Lowcountry Region (54) bridges will be replaced, resurfacing projects will double, safety features will be added to (18) deadly corridors and the interstate system around and leading into the Charleston area will be improved, including the I-526/I-26 interchange.
- CTCs will also receive a portion of the gas tax revenue. About 2.66¢ on the dollar up to 4¢ in year six.
- SCDOT has added a "Project Viewer" to the agency's website, www.scdot.org, that allows anyone to "point and click" on an interactive road map of South Carolina. The user can choose between a list of project types (resurfacing, widening, bridge replacements, etc.) all across South Carolina, or a list of projects within a certain area of the state.
- Along with the state funded improvements, the DOTs, MPOs & COGs will be working together to transition to the MAP-21 Legislation. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, MAP-21, is a funding and authorization bill to govern United States federal surface transportation spending.
- Copies of the powerpoint presentation and a "Rebuilding our Roads" flyer were distributed during the meeting.

Q: Who is eligible for the gas tax credit and how can you get it?

A: Beginning Jan. 2018, SC residents will be able to take a gas tax credit on their state tax return. A worksheet will be provided by the D.O.R. to determine gas usage and taxes paid. You may file for this tax credit with the tax returns due April 2019.

Q: Will Highway 321 be widened?

A: No. Highway 321 is planned for added safety features such as shoulder widening, guard rails and/or clear zones. Past traffic accidents will be studied to determine which safety improvements to implement.

Q: Does widening interstates mean adding extra lanes?

A: Yes it does. Where to widen has yet to be determined.

Q: Will I-95 in the Walterboro area be widened? This is a deadly stretch of road with more traffic than the road will allow.

- A: That segment has not been identified for widening. However in 2019-2020 there is a resurfacing & clear zone project planned (removing trees from median) from the GA border to mile marker 64 which will alleviate some of the dangers.
- Q: How much federal money is contributed to interstate projects?
- A: It varies project to project but typically it's an 80/20 split between federal and state funds.
- Q: What is the status of the bridge work from Edisto through Charleston County? There has been heavy equipment parked there for several years with zero progress.
- A: It is an issue with the utilities. SCDOT is has been working to correct the problem including an overall revision of the utility process.
- Q: Can you clarify the 2¢ gas tax revenues?
- A: It will generate roughly \$100M a year, compounding yearly, until year six when the accrual will reach \$600M annually. This revenue will be in addition to the Act 275 & Act 98 money.
- Q: Is it true that cell phone map apps that find alternate routes to avoid traffic back-ups has made rural roads more dangerous due to increased usage on secondary roads?
- A: This scenario has not been studied from a statewide perspective.
- Q: Are states doing anything to eliminate the use of metal railing?
- A: SCDOT is not aware of any programs to eliminate metal railing although it has re-evaluated the design of end abutments.
- Q: Are exits included in federally funded interstate improvements?
- A: Yes. Exits are considered part of the interstate and would be included in any corridor project.
- Q: Have there been any studies on a federal level about rail systems?
- A: At one time there were discussions about a high-speed rail corridor. But there are no active conversations at this time.
- Q: Is SCDOT evaluating traffic congestion that bottlenecks on I-95 at the GA state line? It is essential for the military to have a good flow of traffic especially when deployed during natural disasters.
- A: SCDOT is currently re-evaluating the statewide interstate systems. Traffic congestion is a main component in ranking improvement needs on specific interstate corridors.

4. Reports

4.1. Finance Report for August 2017 – Sherry Smith

- The field work for the audit is complete. The final report will be presented at the next board meeting.
- Revenues over expenditures were \$27,789. 25% of the budget has been expended.
- Copies of the monthly Financial Statement were distributed in agenda packets.

4.2. Community and Economic Development Report – Michelle Knight

- The department has submitted (9) applications: (1) RIA, (8) CDBG. Two more CDBG application requests are forthcoming.
- Site visits have been scheduled on Oct. 9 & 17.
- With the applications submitted, the department is now back to its regular workload.
- Copies of the Project Report were distributed in agenda packets.

4.3. Director's Report – Sabrena Graham

- The DHEC Board approved the Groundwater Management Plan which was presented at the last board meeting. The final report is posted on the DHEC website. DHEC will provide LCOG a copy of groundwater withdrawal applications as they are placed on public notice.
- LCOG will host a Regional Dinner for county and municipal administrators/council chairs on Oct. 30, 2017 at Harold's Country Club. The purpose of the dinner is to identify challenges local communities are facing and seek input on new services LCOG can provide.
- The Lt. Governor's Office on Aging has been awarding additional funds to the Aging Department for Home and Community Based Services for the last five years. This year additional funding was not awarded. The LCOG Aging Department must return to operating

within the regular budget. This will mean a reduction in some services. Clients whom it might affect have been notified. The Minor Home Repair program has ended unless other funding sources are found.

- The Lt. Governor's Office on Aging will be conducting a financial and programmatic audit at the LCOG Office on Sept. 29th.
 - The SC Association of Regional Councils (SCARC) Conference will be held Nov. 19-21 at the Kingston Plantation Embassy Suites in Myrtle Beach. All board members are invited to attend. Registration forms were distributed during the meeting and are due to Connie Schroyer by Oct. 13.
 - A copy of the Director's Report was distributed during the meeting.
- 4.4. Planning Reports – 208 Report & Regional Unemployment Chart (for information)
- Copies of the reports were distributed during the meeting.

5. Council Time

- Buddy Phillips welcomed Beaufort County to the Southern Carolina Alliance. All four COG counties are now represented by the Alliance.
- Tommy Mann thanked the SCDOT representatives for their help in clearing storm debris from the roads at Edisto Beach.
- Mary Beth Heyward announced the sale of the Port of Port Royal to a private developer.

6. Adjourn

- Action
- MOVED by Gene Whetsell, seconded by York Glover to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:28pm

Minutes submitted by Connie Schroyer

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