

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 2018 6:30 P.M.  
POINT SOUTH, SOUTH CAROLINA

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:**

**ABSENT:**

**BEAUFORT COUNTY:**

Phil Cromer  
Gerald Dawson  
Brian Flewelling  
Herbert Glaze  
York Glover  
Alice Howard  
Dan Wood

Michael Covert  
Marc Grant  
Mary Beth Heyward, proxy to A. Howard  
Joseph McDomick

**COLLETON COUNTY:**

Tommy Mann  
Gene Whetsell

Esther Black, proxy to the chair  
Bobby Bonds, proxy to the chair  
Joe Flowers, proxy to G. Whetsell  
Evon Robinson, proxy to B. Bonds

**HAMPTON COUNTY:**

Pete Hagood  
Ronald Mixson  
Travis Mixson  
Buddy Phillips  
Nat Shaffer

**JASPER COUNTY:**

John Carroll  
Tom Johnson  
Henry Lawton  
Joey Malphrus  
Gwen Smith

**GUESTS:** Roger Fennell, Family Worship Center, Yemassee; Willie Fennell, Family Worship Center, Yemassee; Megan Groves, SCDOT; Al Jenkins, Sen. Tim Scott's Office; William Small, Hampton County; Eva Smalls, Family Worship Center, Yemassee; Craig Winn, SCDOT.

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

**1. Call to Order** Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

1.1. Pledge of Allegiance

1.2. Invocation

– Led by Pete Hagood

1.3. Introduction of Guests and Staff

1.4. Welcome New Board Member J.L. Goodwin, Yemassee

– Mr. Goodwin, appointee from the Town of Yemassee, was welcomed to the board.

1.5. Proxies

– Joe Flowers to Gene Whetsell; Mary Beth Heyward to Alice Howard; Evon Robinson to Bobby Bonds; Esther Black & Bobby Bonds to the Chair; Tim Grimsley, absent.

1.6. Approval of February 22, 2018 Minutes

Action – MOVED by Pete Hagood, seconded by John Carroll to approve the minutes as presented.  
Motion carried unanimously.

## **2. Public Hearing**

### **2.1. Regional HOME Consortium 2018-2019 Annual Action Plan – Michelle Knight**

- A public hearing was conducted to receive comments on the proposed allocation of the 2018-2019 Annual Action Plan.
- The Beaufort County/Lowcountry Regional Home Consortium Advisory Committee met on April 25, 2018 to review the plan and recommends LCOG Board approval.
- The plan was presented. Copies of the plan were distributed during the meeting.
- An estimated total of \$549,755 will be available for the upcoming year. This amount includes a 25% local match of \$100,976, along with HUD funds of \$448,779. The amount of HUD's contribution will be finalized in June.
- These funds will be distributed equally, \$100,975, for each of the four COG counties.

**Q:** There is a 25% local match?

**A:** It is the same match rate that the counties have been contributing for years. While the match rate has increased, the COG's Community & Economic Development Department has found ways to absorb the increase alleviating the need to ask counties for additional funds.

## **3. Presentations**

### **3.1. Update on Buckfield Dam/Pocotaligo Road Closure – Jill Stewart/John McCain, DHEC**

- There were no representatives from DHEC present to give an update.
- Several citizens were in attendance and expressed their frustrations with the lack of urgency in the repair of Pocotaligo Rd. The washed out section is the main thoroughfare for the communities of McPhersonville and Barkersville, and others in the region. The long detour has been an undue burden for the community for far too long and repairs are a matter of safety. They requested a temporary fix, a timeline for permanent restoration and for the COG Board to take a public position on an immediate repair of the road. Citizens also reported that flooding occurred at the Family Worship Center in Yemassee as a result of the closure of the flood gates under the bridge on Hwy 17. \$300,000 in damage was incurred. It is believed that these flood gates belong to Buckfield Plantation.
- Chairman Johnson stated that the LCOG Board had indeed taken a public position regarding the situation on Pocotaligo Road and has requested monthly reports from SCDOT for the past four months.
- Sabrena Graham reported that "new developments were shared at a community meeting on April 17 at Family Worship Center in Yemassee. Comments were made by several local elected officials. DHEC has deregulated the dam and hence removed itself from involvement. SCDOT is now taking action. Deputy Secretary of Engineering, Leland Colvin, explained the three step process DOT will take. First, the bridge will undergo an engineering assessment within the next 30 days to determine the extent of the damage. The assessment report will be shared with the property owner. The owner will be asked if he will repair the dam. If the answer is yes, the owner will repair the dam and the DOT will fix the road. If the answer is no, the owner essentially abandons the dam and DOT will put in a culvert and repair the road.

Mr. Colvin was clear there is not a financial issue with regards to repairing the road. It's a matter of property ownership. He also was clear that DOT does not and will not impound (control) water. Lastly, Mr. Colvin indicated it could take six to nine months to complete the repair depending on the assessment report and the reply from the property owner.

Locals plan to inquire with SCDOT to see if a temporary repair can be done and the road reopened sooner until the official work can be done." *Director's Report, 4/26/18, Item 10.*

- Craig Winn with SCDOT also reported that DOT owns the road by easement but does not own the dam underneath the road. A site assessment of the damage is currently underway

and will take 30 days to complete. The findings will be shared with the property owner who will then decide whether to repair the dam or give consent for DOT to install a culvert.

- Gerald Dawson stated that Beaufort County Engineer Rob McFee recently assessed the flood gates under Hwy 17 and has contacted SCDOT to determine who owns them. DHEC is also involved in the matter. No answer has been received yet. Mr. Winn will inquire of the status.

Q: Is there FEMA money to repair hurricane damage?

A: Mr. Winn: Not for that project.

Q: Is there a time frame for the property owner to respond? What happens if the property owner does not respond?

A: Mr. Winn: I am not aware of a time frame. It would become a legal issue if the property owner does not respond.

Q: Could Hampton County file a Condemnation Order around the damaged area on Pocotaligo Road? DOT would then be able to work directly with the county to get the repairs done.

A: Chairman Johnson: I'm satisfied that they could but they might not need to depending on the size of the easement around the road.

Action

- MOVED by Buddy Phillips, seconded by Gerald Dawson to have the Executive Director invite the property owners to the next meeting to ask them directly if they are going to repair the dam or consent to a culvert. Motion carried unanimously.

### 3.2. SCDOT Progress Report – Craig Winn

- A progress report of SCDOT road and bridge projects in the region was given. Copies of the report were distributed during the meeting.

Q: What is the status of Hwy 321 in Jasper County? There have been several serious accidents along that route.

A: It has a completion date of Nov. 5, 2018. Mr. Winn will find out the status of the individual roads associated with the construction and report findings directly to Chairman Johnson.

Comment: Beaufort County will soon be requesting remediation for a road safety concern at Hwy 170 at Snake River Road in Callawassie. Turning left from the median in front of Parker's is dangerous and the median needs to be closed.

Reply: If there have been accidents at that location the DOT's safety officer is probably already aware of it. Mr. Winn will look into it further.

Q: What river is the Hwy 21 bridge over?

A: One bridge is over Sandy Run Creek in Colleton County and another over Harbor River in Beaufort County.

## 4. New Business

### 4.1. Approval of the HOME Consortium 2018-2019 Annual Action Plan & Projects – Michelle Knight

Action

- MOVED by Brian Flewelling, seconded by Pete Hagood to approve the HOME Consortium 2018-2019 Annual Action Plan & Project. Motion carried unanimously.

### 4.2. Approval of RFP for Auditing Services – Sherry Smith

- Five proposals were received for the auditing services of the LCOG. It has been the COG's policy not to use the same firm for more than two cycles, therefore Crowley, Wechsler & Assoc. would not be considered. Sherry Smith recommended the services of McGregor & Company.

Action

- MOVED by Brian Flewelling, seconded by Gerald Dawson to select McGregor & Company. Motion carried unanimously.

## 5. Department Reports

### 5.1. Finance Report for March 2018 – Sherry Smith

- Revenues over expenditures were \$116,547. 1.02% of the budget has been expended but local monies for Aging will be used at the end of the year which will pull the % of budget back in line.
- Copies of the Financial Statement were distributed in agenda packets.

### 5.2. Community and Economic Development Report – Michelle Knight

- Three applications were submitted for the spring round of CDBG funds, as well as a non-competitive project for the Town of Hampton.
- The annual planning grant application will be submitted next week.
- With the passing of a new federal budget, extra funds were allocated to the EDA to address disaster declaration areas including South Carolina and the Lowcountry region. C&ED are developing three projects with this extra allocation. If your communities have any economic development needs related to infrastructure, contact LCOG's Community & Economic Development Department.

Q: Are the extra EDA opportunities well publicized with local governments?

A: Yes. Most staff have a good idea about it.

Q: Would this allocation be a possibility for the Pocotaligo Road restoration?

A: No. It needs to have an economic development component such as an industry being directly impacted by the closure of the road, etc.

### 5.3. Director's Report – Sabrena Graham

- Another resolution is needed for the 5310 Transportation Grant funds. The LCOG Board approved a prioritized list of recommended applicants for the SCDOT 5310 funds at our February meeting. LCOG applied for funds on behalf of Hampton and Jasper County Aging programs. The funds have been awarded. However, SCDOT updated their forms and is asking the board to retroactively authorize the Executive Director to make application for these funds.

Action

- MOVED by Joseph Malphrus, seconded by Brian Flewelling authorize the Executive Director to make application for the funds. Motion carried unanimously.
- The Aging Department is in their second round of solicitations on an RFP for meal Catering Services for FY18. They only received one bid during the first round that was not a successful proposal for all meal services requested. This second RFP covers a broader geographic area hoping to prompt more bidders.

The LCOG Board normally receives a bid recommendation from the Aging Advisory Board for approval. A new catering service must be in place by June 1. Due to time constraints, staff is asking the Board to authorize the Executive Director to accept the recommendation from the Aging Advisory Board and approve the bid. A full report will be given to the LCOG Board at the June meeting.

Action

- MOVED by Herbert Glaze, seconded by Brian Flewelling to authorize the Executive Director to approve the bid, under the condition that it is a reasonable percentage of the budgeted allowance. Motion carried unanimously.
- LCOG is working to identify grant opportunities to help expand the Edisto Indian Free Clinic and Meals Program. The clinic is located in Ridgeville but serves residents that are primarily from Colleton County. Medical care, labs and discounted x-rays are provided to any resident that has no insurance. There may also be an opportunity to partner with them in their current meals program to serve more seniors in the Cottageville area.
- LCOG has been selected by the State Ombudsman Office and the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging to participate in a pilot program. A second Ombudsman will be added to the LCOG staff that will provide services to the Dept. of Disability and Special Needs and Dept. of Mental Health. The new position will be added July 1.
- I attended an infrastructure briefing held by Governor McMaster and SCDOT Secretary Hall on March 13. The Governor encouraged entities around the state to work together with

SCDOT and take full advantage of President Trump's \$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan. One program of particular interest to South Carolina is a \$50B effort focused on rural improvements. 80% of the funds for that program will be distributed using block grants.

- Update on the Jasper Ocean Terminal (JOT) was the topic of discussion at the March 22, Town Hall Meeting in Jasper County hosted by Senator Margie Bright Matthews. Mr. Jim Newsome, President and CEO of the SC Ports Authority shared there is support for the JOT by SC and GA, however, timing is the issue. The starting timeline for the Jasper port has been moved back to year 2035/2037. Mr. Newsome explained due to improved efficiencies and a decline in demand, the life of the Charleston port has been extended. He also stated the Naval Base Terminal initially to open in 2013 is seven years behind its timeline. Mr. Newsome stated work should begin today to put the needed infrastructure in place so that it will be ready when the port is ready. A copy of Mr. Newsome's presentation is on the Jasper County website.
  - LCOG hosted SCDOT in our first Regional Transportation Forum on April 12, 2018. Approximately 20 individuals from various departments at DOT attended along with planning staff from various local governments throughout the region and County Transportation Committee (CTC) members from two of our counties. SCDOT is holding these forums at all 10 COGs in an effort to improve communications between the state and local transportation planners and to plan ahead in partnering on local projects. These meetings will be held annually.
  - I was approved as a Board Advisor to the Southern Carolina Regional Development Alliance for the FY2018-2019 year. LCOG has supported and partnered with SCA on a number of projects in or that impact our region.
  - LCOG Staff completed a week of cleaning here at the office last week. We are in the process of replacing the 15 year old storage trailers which are old and leaking.
  - The report on the Pocataligo Road-Buckfield Dam Repair is cited in Item 3.1 above.
  - A copy of the Director's Report was distributed during the meeting.
- 5.4. Planning Reports –208 Report & Regional Unemployment Chart
- Copies of the 208 Report, Regional Unemployment Chart & The Lowcountry Population Estimates were distributed during the meeting.

## **6. Council Time**

- Action
- Board members shared their thoughts and concerns regarding the 10-year delay in the completion of the Jasper Port.
  - Chairman Johnson, who is also the Chair for Jasper County Council, stated that Jasper County will not accept the new timeline meekly. By consensus, The LCOG Board fully supports Jasper County in their efforts to expedite the original timeline of the Jasper Port Project.
- Q: Isn't there supposed to be a GA/SC Port Authority regulating the Jasper Port Terminal?
- A: Mr. Johnson: Yes. One member is appointed by each Governor and two members appointed by each of the state's Port Authorities for a total of six members in the joint board.
- Good news is that the states have funded the current study to the end of the year. The Army Corps of Engineer's environmental impact study has not been slowed down or interrupted.
  - Senator Tom Davis continues to be an important advocate for the Jasper Port.
- Q: The sidewalk sections in the walkway leading up to the LCOG building are uneven creating a safety hazard. Is there a plan to have it repaired soon?
- A: Yes. The situation has been assessed by a professional. It will require the replacement of a few cement sections. We are now looking for a company to do the work.

## **7. Adjourn**

- Action
- The meeting adjourned by consensus at 7:35 pm.

Caucus   Counties chose attendees for the October NADO Conference in Charlotte, NC:  
(B) Mary Beth Heyward   (C) Esther Black   (H) Ronnie Mixson  
(J) Tom Johnson, John Carroll alternate

Minutes submitted by Connie Schroyer

*LCOG does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, disability or familial status in the admission, access, treatment or employment in its federally funded programs or activities. You may call 843-473-399\* to request special accommodations 48 hours in advance of a public meeting or to file a discrimination complaint. \*Hearing impaired clients may call 711 for state relay assistance.*