

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2019 6:30 P.M.  
POINT SOUTH, SOUTH CAROLINA

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:**

**ABSENT:**

**BEAUFORT COUNTY:**

Phil Cromer  
Herbert Glaze  
William Harkins  
Mary Beth Heyward  
Chris Hervochon  
Joseph McDomick

Gerald Dawson  
Brian Flewelling, proxy to C. Hervochon  
Mark Lawson  
Paul Sommerville  
Dan Wood, proxy to P. Cromer

**COLLETON COUNTY:**

Esther Black  
Bobby Bonds  
Joe Flowers  
Phillip Taylor, Sr.  
Gene Whetsell

Tommy Mann  
Crawford Moore  
Tim Grimsley

**HAMPTON COUNTY:**

Pete Hagood  
Ronald Mixson  
Pete Mixson  
Buddy Phillips  
Nat Shaffer  
J.L. Goodwin

Charles Savino

**JASPER COUNTY:**

John Carroll  
Joey Malphrus

Tom Johnson, proxy to John Carroll  
Gwen Smith

**GUESTS:** Tammy Coghill from Dominion Energy, Jim Battigaglia from The Archer Company, Celia Price from Colleton County, York Glover from Beaufort County Council

**STAFF:** Sabrena Graham, Jordan Newman, Ginnie Kozak, Sherry Smith, Michelle Grimes

1. **Call to Order** Chairman Bonds called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
  - 1.1. Pledge of Allegiance
  - 1.2. Invocation
    - Led by Philip Taylor, Sr.
  - 1.3. Introduction of Guests and Staff
  - 1.4. Proxies
    - Brian Flewelling to Chris Hervochon, Dan Wood to Philip Cromer, Tom Johnson to John Carroll
  - 1.5. Approval of April 25, 2019 Minutes
    - MOVED by Joe Flowers, seconded by Philip Taylor, Sr. to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

2. **Presentations**

2.1. Ms. Tammy Coghill, Manager of Economic Development & Local Government, Dominion Energy

- DE invested in South Carolina approximately 4 years ago with 1,500 miles of pipeline in 32 counties and opened 2 solar operations one in Jasper County and the other in the Town of Ridgeland.
- Southeast Energy Group (SEG) houses the operating and services companies of SCANA and has approximately 2.1 million customer accounts.
- SEG is focusing on 4 key areas including customer service, rebuilding trust, meeting integration & financial expectations and imbedding DE core values to all employees of the combined company.
- Benefits to Electric customers include: nearly 15% rate reduction, rate freeze for at least 3 years, and a gas fired power plant with no capital cost to customers. DE shareholders absorbed \$1.7 billion of debt.
- Rate reductions lowered the average rate from 7.71 to 6.48 cents per kWh.
- Benefits to Natural Gas customers include: \$2.45 million in total bill credits over 3 years and access to greater resources in the majority of the State of South Carolina.
- Additional benefits include: company headquarters to remain in Cayce, SC. Employee compensation protected through July 1, 2010 and DE is increasing charitable contributions by \$1 million a year for at least 5 years.
- What to expect in 2019: SCE&G electric customers continue to experience savings on their electric bills, a one-time credit tax reform and a one-time \$115 million settlement once approved by the court.
- Q (Hagood): Do you have any idea if you will be opening any more of the payment offices?
- A (Coghill): Not likely. Those offices were already being closed due to decreased foot traffic. With online payment options and walk-in pay centers at Walmart, Family Dollar and local Municipal Offices offering bill pay services to the customer.
- Q (P. Mixson): Who owns the Jenko plant in Allendale?
- A (Coghill): Not sure. It's not ours and I don't know a lot about that project.
- Q (McDomick): Did you say the SCE&G bills will be frozen for 3 years?
- A (Coghill): Yes, at least 3 years. A 15.2% reduction is in place now.
- Q (McDomick): What happens after 3 years?
- A (Coghill): I hope the fuel rate has gone down and we get to continue that.
- Q (Cromer): If the state were to sell Santee Cooper would Dominion be an interested buyer?
- A (Coghill): Not an interested buyer. As I understand it, we submitted a proposal to manage it for them.
- Q (Taylor): Do you have a ballpark number of individuals included in the 10-15% who took voluntary retirement?
- A (Coghill): I've heard about 600, not an official number. The workforce total is 6000. Have no idea the number affected in an involuntary reduction in force.
- Q (Carroll): The commercials about the \$1,000 refund, is that still going to happen?
- A (Coghill): The \$1,000 refund on average was something Dominion had offered early on. This would have caused a smaller overall rate reduction. During the negotiations, they didn't like the higher rates over time and rate reduction was deemed more acceptable.
- Full presentation slides available at LCOG office.

2.2. Mr. Jim Battigaglia, Regional Director, The Archer Company – LCOG Class and Comp Study

- Goals were to create an objective plan and balance internal equity and external competitiveness, resulting in fair compensation and efficient maintenance.
- Employees completed questionnaires which were reviewed by Supervisors, Directors and The Archer Company.

- The Archer Company then conducted a market analysis with a custom survey on pay ranges and average pay. 8 COGS, 3 counties & 2 cities participated in the survey. The benchmark jobs ranged from Executive Director to the Custodian.
- A pay plan with 23 pay grades was developed. Pay grades should have a 40% spread from minimum to maximum. The LCOG spread was 60% with 17 employees below the recommended pay ranges.
- Q (Taylor): How closely do your numbers parallel with Davis/Bacon or BLS? Do you see any comparisons in terms of your figures?
- A (Battigaglia): BLS is not one of our data points that we use. We use different organizations and ERI out of Charleston. Assumption is those are comparable to BLS data. Davis/Bacon is not a criterion we are using.
- Q (Cromer): How often do you do this? Every 5 years?
- A (Battigaglia): That's our default period. We think there are enough changes in the marketplace that every five years you should go out and test the market. We provide 1 year pay plan maintenance as jobs change, are created or reorganizations occur. Recommend questionnaires be completed.
- Q (Harkins): Does cost of living in an area have any impact?
- A (Battigaglia): Not for the area we are serving in south east South Carolina. Did not make any adjustments for that.
- Sabrena Graham comments: we have 23 pay grades and 32 employees at LCOG. Many of our positions are one person. We were able to build in areas for growth if employees completed continuing education or gained experience that warranted a pay grade increase. Now able to do that versus being locked into one slot forever.

### **3. New Business**

#### **3.1. Appointment of a Board Officer Nominating Committee – Chairman Bonds**

- The Chairman appointed: Herbert Glaze (Beaufort), Tommy Mann (Colleton), Pete Mixson (Hampton), Joey Malphrus (Jasper) to serve on the nominating committee for next year.

### **4. Staff Reports**

#### **4.1. Finance Report for April 2019 – Ms. Sherry Smith**

- Report represents 83% of budget year
- End of April revenues over expenditures were at \$73,000
- Focus in next 30 days minor budget revisions
- Begin working on 19/20 budget in the next couple of weeks and have that to present at the next meeting.

#### **4.2. Community & Economic Development Report – report is in the meeting packet, please review and call Michelle Knight if there are questions.**

#### **4.3. Director's Report – Ms. Sabrena Graham**

- The Lowcountry Regional Water System (LRWS) in Hampton County held a strategic planning board retreat on May 3. I attended and shared the history of the organization with the board. LCOG was very much involved and assisted the local governments with water studies, grants for system improvements and hosting and facilitating several brainstorming meetings of the local elected officials. I'm pleased that LCOG could be a part of this success story in the region.
- Housing Repairs has been a COG focus the last couple of months. We have been actively promoting these programs in the region at speaking events, Senior 101 events, etc. There are a couple of different programs available to our citizens. Two programs are income qualifying and one is based on age.
- Some of the feedback we've received is that the program requirements are too restrictive: home must be insured, no mobile homes over 30 years old, and the income qualifying

limits are too low. Unfortunately, these program requirements are set by the federal and state government not LCOG. I ask the board to be aware that while we are doing more to promote these programs, everyone will not qualify and be eligible for the program.

- I ask the board to join me in welcoming Michelle Grimes to the team. Michelle is the new Executive Assistant/PR Coordinator also board clerk.
  - Budget work session with the Executive Board is scheduled for Thursday, June 20 at 4:30PM. Please let me know if this date/time is not good for you.
  - Full Director's Report attached.
  - The Legislative Update dated May 22, 2019 was included in the meeting packet
- 4.4. The People and the Economy of the Lowcountry: A Demographic Overview – Ms. Ginnie Kozak
- Statistics include: demographic, unemployment and tourism information.
  - Separate sheet that came out today reporting 2018 population estimates by county, city or town.

**5. Executive Session**

**5.1 Personnel Matter**

- MOVED by John Carroll, seconded by Joseph McDomick to enter into an Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Motion carried unanimously. The Executive Session convened at 7:33 pm.
- MOVED by Joe Flowers, seconded by Phil Cromer to conclude the Executive Session. Motion carried unanimously. The open session of the Board resumed at 7:53pm.
- MOVED by Joe Flowers, seconded by Phil Cromer to accept the Executive Committee evaluation recommendations and compensation for Executive Director. Motion carried unanimously.
- Chairman Bonds comments – Executive Committee and all of the council thinks Executive Director is doing a fabulous job. Think that she is a real motivator and that the example she sets, the goals she has and the leadership she displays permeates the entire COG.

**6. Council Time**

- Sabrena Graham – Thank you.
- Philip Taylor, Sr. – Reminder that we have significant mental health issues going on in the state and May is Mental Health Awareness month.
- Buddy Philips – work began last week on old Pocotaligo road.
- Phil Cromer – Memorial Day Parade on Monday in Beaufort.

**7. Adjourn**

- MOVED by Joseph McDomick, seconded by Pete Hagood to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:58pm.

Minutes submitted by Michelle Grimes.

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