

MINUTES

FULL BOARD MEETING COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS CONFERENCE ROOM JANUARY 23, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Judy Gilstrap, Ed Elliott, Wallace Shaw, Dennis Claramunt, J.W. Sanders, James Batchler, Janie Wilson, Joe Dill, Thomas Alexander, Bennie Cunningham, Ernest Riley, Bob Winchester, Reg Dexter, G. Neil Smith, J. Connie Bowers, Heyward McDonald, Tom Hendricks, Dale Culbreth, Elbert Tillerson, Loretta Smith, and Mike Forrester.

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Pelissier, Joe Newton, Becky Hall, Vickie Williams, Dave Mueller, Dirk Reis, Chip Bentley, Carol Andersen, Julia Hoyle, Barbara Jardno, and Debbie Courson.

GUESTS PRESENT:

Haidee Stith and Bernell King-Ingram, S.C. Enterprise Center; Eddie Moore, Chairman, Anderson County Council; Odessa Williams, Greenville County Planning Commission; Lamar Bailes, Oconee County; and a reporter with the Greenville News.

The meeting was called to order by Chairwomen Gilstrap. The invocation was offered by Rev. Sanders. On motion by Mr. Elliott, seconded by Mr. Tillerson, the minutes of the December 5, 2008, meeting was unanimously approved.

South Carolina Enterprise Center

Ms. Stith and Ms. King-Ingram provided an overview of the S.C. Enterprise Center, which is a transformation of the former S.C. Women's Business Center. They commented that the Enterprise Center is a non-profit organization to assist underserved individuals and communities with small business and entrepreneurial success. The center

uses two approaches to accomplish its goals: direct services to aspiring and existing entrepreneurs, particularly microenterprises and woman-owned businesses and through providing a state-wide, community-centric system of economic development services. The Center's objective is to make positive advancement in wealth generation by promoting Microenterprise growth and by offering services to support this growth. A microenterprise is a business with five or fewer employees, which requires \$35,000 or less in start-up capital, and which does not have access to the traditional commercial banking sector.

Appalachian Region 2008-09 Needs Assessment for Aging Services

Ms. Williams stated that as the designated Area Agency on Aging for the Appalachian region, ACOG is responsible for developing a Needs Assessment in preparation for contracting with providers for targeted services. The Needs Assessment was conducted region-wide in the summer and fall of 2008. It is based on qualitative exploratory in-depth open ended discussions with over 500 older individuals and disabled adults, caregivers and their families and includes key informant interviews with policy makers and advocates.

Next, Ms. Williams reported on budget cuts for State In-home and Community Based services. She stated that an additional 5% cut has been imposed on the state supported Ombudsman Program, which is in addition to a 6% cut in December. An additional 15% cut in state budget funding is expected in June with the projected loss of State Supplemental Funding allocated to the Lt. Governor's Office on Aging by the General Assembly two years ago. For the Appalachian region, that would mean the loss of \$81,376 in Supplemental funding for In-Home and Community based services plus an additional 15% in State funds. This includes \$11,000 that the agency had previously been advised of, plus an additional \$19,000 that had been implemented within the past few weeks. Following Ms. Williams presentation, Mr. Lamar Bailes, a member of the Regional Aging Advisory Committee, addressed the Board. Mr. Bailes stated that the recently announced \$19,000 reduction in State funds would place a severe hardship on seniors in the region. He asked if the Board could help to cover this reduction.

In response, Mr. Pelissier explained that ACOG is already making cuts to personnel, holding vacancies, and deferring capital items to avoid a budget deficit for the year. He also noted that ACOG is already providing \$124,000 in general fund money to support aging services. In addition, he stated that he had received requests from several other groups over the past couple of years for a direct grant from ACOG. If the Board was to entertain this request, it should do so within a larger context, realizing that other groups would seek similar assistance.

Mr. Riley stated that these particular cuts had a direct impact on some of the most vulnerable people in the region and that the Board and agency has to step up to prevent suffering. Mr. Dill supported Mr. Riley's comments. Mr. Dill made motion, seconded by Mr. Riley, to contact legislative delegations, local governments, and other community organizations to make entities aware of the problem and to solicit funds to cover the rescissions. The motion was unanimously approved. Ms. Gilstrap asked Mr. Pelissier to report on action at the March Board meeting.

2009 Legislative Review

Mr. Newton provided a preview of the 2009 session of the S.C. General Assembly, emphasizing potential legislation of interest to local governments that include: budget cuts, FY-2010 budget, cigarette taxes, comprehensive tax reform, restrictions on pay day lending, and restructuring.

Report from the Budget Committee

Mr. Pelissier stated that the Budget Committee had met prior to the Board meeting. Mr. Bowers, chair of the Budget Committee, stated that the committee had met for a mid-year status review. In the budget is a Cisco server switch for \$5,000 that ACOG needs right away. The other items include an automobile, computer server and computer for Worklink that will be covered by a grant. Mr. Pelissier stated that the Board will need to take action on these items at the February meeting.

Proposed By-Laws Change

Mr. Pelissier provided an overview on a proposed change to the ACOG By-Laws that, if adopted, would move the date for the Board Chair to make committee assignments from February 28th to April 30th. For years in which new Board officers are elected, this change would allow the incoming Chair to make appointments; whereas, the current by-laws assign that responsibility to the out-going Chair.

The Economic Stimulus Package

Mr. Pelissier gave a brief report on the stimulus package, noting that there is still little agreement in Congress, that no details have been finalized, and that the package was in a constant state of change.

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Appointment of COG Board Officer Nominating Committee Director's Report

Chairwomen Gilstrap appointed the following Board members to serve on the Nominating Committee: J.W. Sanders, Chairman; Joe Dill and Renee Cariveau.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Chair

THE APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS HAS COMPLIED WITH THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IN SCHEDULING AND CONDUCTING THIS
MEETING.