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## MINUTES

**APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2021 – 10:30 A.M.**  
**ZOOM MEETING**  
**GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

**Members Present:**

Monier Abusaft, Brandy Amidon, Rockey Burgess, David Cauthen, Dennis Claramunt, Rep. Neal Collins, Roy Costner, III, Rep. West Cox, Francis Crowder, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, Ensley Feemster, Lillian Brock Flemming, George Fletcher, Mike Forrester, Don Godbey, Jane Hall, Butch Kirven, Ruth Littlejohn, Jack Mabry, Willis Meadows, Dana Moore, Fletcher Perry, Tom Ponder, E Riley, Jeff Roberts, Terence Roberts, Marta Wahlen, Cindy Wilson

**Guests Present:**

Jeff Cunningham, Mary Douglas Hirsch, Saria Saccocio, Laura Turner, Eric Vinson, Mark Williamson

**Staff Present:**

Chip Bentley, Dorinne Dubois, Trey Eubanks, Brooke Ferguson, Amanda Mlinar, Steve Pelissier, Jennifer Vissage, Tim Womack, Arlene Young

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**Call to Order**

Chairman Forrester called the meeting to order. The invocation was offered by E. Riley. Steve Pelissier introduced guests and Roy Costner introduced a new board member, Tom Ponder, the regional representative for Pickens County. Chairman Forrester asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes from the February 26, 2021 board meeting. Don Godbey made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Brandy Amidon. The motion was approved unanimously. The financial statement was accepted as information.

**Recognition of an ACOG Employee Who Recently Celebrated a Milestone Anniversary**

Chairman Forrester recognized Dorinne Dubois, Homecare Coordinator, for 5 years of service at the Appalachian Council of Governments. Ms. Dubois began as a member of the Ombudsman

Program, then moved into the Homecare Coordinator position. She is a well-respected and valued team member who is truly dedicated to seniors in the region.

### **Economic Development, Recreation, Fun, Hospitality and Marketing in Travelers Rest**

Chairman Forrester asked Mayor Brandy Amidon and City Administrator Eric Vinson to discuss activities and plans for the future in Travelers Rest. Mayor Amidon began by discussing some challenges of growth in the area, then she described how Travelers Rest is addressing smart growth. She spoke in detail about how to keep a community focus while also maintaining a strong focus on planning. Mr. Vinson mentioned that Travelers Rest is committed to reinforcing the residents' role in the planning process. He also described their positive partnership with Greenville County as well as several recent successful projects.

### **Status of the COVID Pandemic in the Upstate**

Chairman Forrester introduced Dr. Saria Saccocio, Ambulatory Chief Medical Officer at Prisma Health to address the status of COVID-19 in the upstate. Dr. Saccocio began by showing a current map and case count for the US and for SC. She reported that deaths have decreased by 40% in the country, but only by 20% in SC. Dr. Saccocio gave details to show that overall COVID-19 conditions are improving through lower numbers of hospitalizations, better access to testing, improved medical access through virtual care, better treatment with Monoclonal Antibody COVID-19 Therapy, vaccines, and mobile health units. She answered questions and indicated that people will likely need a booster vaccine each year. For more information, go to [www.PrismaHealth.org/vaccine](http://www.PrismaHealth.org/vaccine).

### **South Carolina 2021 Legislative Report**

Chairman Forrester called on Brooke Ferguson to report on legislative action of interest to local governments in the region. Ms. Ferguson gave updates on the COVID-19 Business Liability Protection Bill and the Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act. Both items were discussed at last month's meeting. The House passed the FY 2021-2022 Appropriations Bill. It has now moved to the Senate Finance Committee. The SC Chamber and major employers are supporting a Hate Crime Bill. Ms. Ferguson pointed out that SC is one of 3 states without hate crimes laws. She also discussed the Solid Waste Policy and Management Act Amendment for Advanced Recyclers that lays out rules for advanced recycling facilities in SC. Ms. Ferguson explained the proposed Additional County Sales and Use Tax Bill that allows a county to impose an addition to an existing transportation "penny" tax. This currently only applies to the six counties with the transportation tax, but could potentially apply to others.



## Executive Director's Report

Chairman Forrester asked Mr. Pelissier to give part of his report earlier in the meeting and part according to the agenda. Accommodations were needed to save time due to a speaker's time conflict. Mr. Pelissier stated that the Appalachian Leadership Institute, an Appalachian Regional Commission Program, is offering a nine-month skill building initiative with seminars and best practice review sessions. The program will cover topics such as: economic development, leadership skills, locating and accessing investment capital, and networking. It will also offer six field visits in the region. Mr. Godbey, who is in this year's class, stated that he learned about different challenges in other areas in the ARC region. They also worked in small groups on projects regarding economic and community development. The program runs October 2021 – July 2022. Applications will be accepted through May 2021. For more information contact [leadership@arc.gov](mailto:leadership@arc.gov) or Mr. Pelissier. All expenses are paid.

The next board meeting will be held on April 23, 2021, at 10:30 AM through Zoom.

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.**

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Mike Forrester, Chairman

The South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments has complied with the Freedom of Information Act in scheduling and conducting this meeting.

