



MINUTES

**APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 2025 – 10:30 A.M.
COUNCIL BOARD ROOM WITH ZOOM OPTION
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

Members Present:

Sen. Thomas Alexander, Tom Allen, Bill Blanton, Bob Briggs, Rockey Burgess, David Cauthen, Garey Collins, Rick Danner, Ed Elliott, Ensley Feemster, Lillian Brock Flemming, Mike Forrester, Don Godbey, Karry Guillory, Robert Halfacre, Jane Hall, Rep. Rosalyn Henderson-Myers, Laura Hinty, Henry Jolly, Claiborne Linvill, Sherry Marrah, Alan Mitchell, Charles Pinson, E Riley, Jeff Roberts, Rep. Blake Sanders, David Underwood, Cindy Wilson, Wayne Wright

Guests Present:

Brandy Amidon, Larry Bragg, Dr. Veronica Deas, John Denby, Daniel Gambrell, Sampson Goren, Dianna Gracely, Tee Hooper, Terry Hughes, Shakota Johnson, Dr. Desmond Kelly, Pam Kendrick, Nancy Miramonti, Andy West, Nick Wildrick, and 18 additional guests online.

Staff Present:

Chip Bentley, Brooke Ferguson, Jill Francisco, Jeff Guilbault, Travis Hatcher, Steve Pelissier, Don Zimmer

Call to Order

Chairman Don Godbey called the meeting to order. Mr. Riley offered the invocation. Mr. Pelissier introduced the speakers and guests. Ms. Amidon introduced a new board member, Sherry Marrah, from Travelers Rest City Council. Chairman Godbey asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2025, board meeting. Mr. Riley made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Forrester. The motion was unanimously approved.

Recognition of a Board Member Whose Term Has Ended and an Employee's Milestone Anniversary at ACOG

Chairman Godbey presented Brandy Amidon with a plaque of appreciation for nine years of service as a board member. Ms. Amidon is taking on a new role as the President of the SC

Municipal Association. Chairman Godbey congratulated Travis Hatcher on ten years of service to ACOG. Mr. Hatcher manages grant-funded construction projects and is known for his expertise in environmental reviews and Fair Labor requirements. Chairman Godbey presented him with a plaque for his dedication and hard work.

Prisma Health

Chairman Godbey called on Dr. Desmond Kelly, Associate Chief Academic Officer, and Dr. Veronica Deas, Executive Director of Career and Workforce Development. Dr. Kelly and Dr. Deas presented an overview of the healthcare system's workforce development initiatives. They highlighted Prisma's growth, academic partnerships, and various programs aimed at educating, training, and retaining healthcare workers. Key programs discussed included nursing apprenticeships, externships, and a unique scholarship program. The presentation also touched on Prisma's use of technology to improve patient care and communication. Board members asked questions about childcare support for healthcare workers and Prisma's partnerships with other medical institutions.

GoForth Recovery

Chairman Godbey introduced Nick Wildrick, Executive Director, who shared his personal journey of recovery and how he founded Go Forth Recovery. Mr. Wildrick presented a recovery program that helps individuals transitioning from incarceration by providing job training, counseling, and support services. The program aims to help participants secure employment earning livable wages with benefits, complete a 12-step faith-based program, and receive individual counseling. He also emphasized the importance of advocating for better mental health services in hospitals, stricter regulations on gas station drugs, and housing support for former inmates.

SC Office of Resilience (SCOR) Update

Chairman Godbey asked the representatives from SCOR to share the agency's funding update. Pam Kendrick, Infrastructure Program Manager, discussed the availability of \$19.6 million in HUD CDBG-DR Hurricane Helene funding for mitigation activities in six counties: Spartanburg, Greenville, Anderson, Lawrence, Greenwood, and Aiken. The funding includes \$10 million for stormwater infrastructure projects, \$4 million for voluntary residential buyouts, \$1 million for plans and studies, and \$4 million for a federal funds match program. Nancy Miramonti, Buyout Program Manager, gave details about the Buyout Program and Shakota Johnson, Funds Match Program Manager, explained the Federal Funds Match Program.

Applications are due December 1st, with projects to be evaluated in January and February, and awards to be announced in March.



Executive Director's Report

Chairman Godbey called on Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director's report. Mr. Pelissier provided an update on the SCCOG Conference, scheduled for November 23–25, 2025, in Myrtle Beach. He noted that Mr. Forrester will serve as the 2025 SCCOG President and that ACOG will host this year's meeting for the other COGs. He encouraged all board members to attend and stated that registration forms will be emailed in September.

Mr. Pelissier also reported that, due to federal policy changes, board members will no longer be permitted to serve on the Regional Aging Advisory Committee (RAAC), effective January 1, 2026.

The next board meeting will be on September 26, 2025, at 10:30 AM in the ACOG Board Room. Members may also attend through Zoom.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 PM.

Don Godbey, Chairman

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

