



MINUTES

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 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, Garey Collins, Rep. Neal Collins, Rick Danner, Grant DeShields, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, Ennis Fant, Ensley Feemster, Lillian Brock Flemming, Mike Forrester, Britt Gillespie, Don Godbey, Robert Halfacre, Laura Hinty, Henry Jolly, Claiborne Linvill, Ruth Littlejohn, Saraí Melendez, Alan Mitchell, E Riley, David Underwood, Bob Walker, Cindy Wilson, Wayne Wright

Guests Present:

Daniel Gambrell, Mary Mason Jolly, Debbie Jordan, Darren Ledbetter, John Lummus, Allie Martinsen, Archit Patel, Ryan Syrbe, Bryan Webb

Staff Present:

Chip Bentley, Jill Charlton, Jalesha Deloatch, Trey Eubanks, Brooke Ferguson, Travis Hatcher, Steve Pelissier, Dani Vankirk, Tim Womack, Arlene Young, Don Zimmer

Call to Order

Chairman Collins called the meeting to order. Mr. Riley offered the invocation. Mr. Pelissier introduced the speakers and guests. He also introduced three new board members, Mr. Grant DeShields from Spartanburg County Council, and Mr. David Underwood and Mr. Wayne Wright, both from Oconee County Council. Mr. Dill introduced Mr. Garey Collins, a new board member from Greenville County Council. Mr. Pelissier introduced the new Administrative Assistant, Jalesha Deloatch, who started at the beginning of February. Ms. Deloatch was hired from 180 applicants who applied for the position. Chairman Collins asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2025, board meeting. Mr. Riley made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Godbey. The motion was unanimously approved. The financial statement was accepted as information.

Recognition of Employee Milestone Anniversary with ACOG

Chairman Collins thanked Mr. Steve Pelissier, Executive Director, for 35 years of service at ACOG. He presented him with a plaque of recognition. In addition, a donation was made to Clemson University for a brick at the baseball stadium to be engraved with Mr. Pelissier's name and a note to honor his 35 years of leadership in the Upstate.

Upstate SC Alliance

Chairman Collins introduced Mr. John Lummus, President and CEO of Upstate SC Alliance, a regional economic development group for 10 counties in the Upstate. Mr. Lummus gave an overview, the mission, role, and statistics of the organization. He gave details on how Upstate SC Alliance markets the Upstate for global business investment and talent attraction. Mr. Lummus explained how his organization has a strong focus on research, providing data to companies interested in locating in the region and stated that they use InfoMentum for this research. He answered questions from the board about taxes, affordable housing, and childcare as incentives when recruiting companies to come to the Upstate.

SC Parks, Recreation & Tourism (SCPRT)

Chairman Collins called on Ms. Debbie Jordan, the Grants Coordinator in the Office of Recreation, Grants, and Policy. Ms. Jordan reviewed the federally funded Water Conservation Fund, which must be used to acquire land for outdoor recreation. She then explained that the state funded Undiscovered SC grant is used to bring tourism to the community and that the applicant must be a county or municipal government. Ms. Jordan gave details of both grants and shared the types of eligible projects for each. She expressed her willingness to help with applications. Ms. Jordan also mentioned the Recreational Trails program as a funding source and encouraged the board to view the SCPRT website.

Legislative Report

Chairman Collins asked Ms. Brooke Ferguson, Economic Development Director, to present the legislative report. She highlighted bills of interest including the Financial Freedom Act, the Educational Scholarship Trust Fund, the Carolina Energy Security Act, municipal election dates, and tort reform. ACOG is interested in the bill proposing an increase in the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) for Medicaid-eligible seniors in nursing home. Budget discussions will begin in the House on March 10, 2025.

Executive Director's Report

Chairman Collins called on Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director's report. Mr. Pelissier thanked the board for their support during his 35 years of employment. He reported that Jennifer



Kelly, the Executive Director at WorkLink, has accepted a new position, so he will work with the WorkLink board to fill the vacant director's position. Mr. Pelissier requested that the new board members let Mr. Godbey or him know their preference of committee assignment.

Member Updates

Ms. Littlejohn reported that tickets are now on sale for the Hub City Spartanburgers baseball team.

The next board meeting will be on March 28, 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 12:00 PM.

Rep. Neal A. Collins, Chairman

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

