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## MINUTES

**APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
FRIDAY, MAY 23, 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, Grady Butler, Garey Collins, Grant DeShields, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, Ennis Fant Sr., Ensley Feemster, Mike Forrester, Don Godbey, Karry Guillory, Robert Halfacre, Jane Hall, Rep. Rosalyn Henderson-Myers, Laura Hinty, Henry Jolly, Claiborne Linvill, Ruth Littlejohn, Saraí Melendez, Alan Mitchell, Charles Pinson, E Riley, Rep. Blake Sanders, David Underwood, Bob Walker, Cindy Wilson, Wayne Wright

**Guests Present:**

Joe Checca, Jeff Cunningham, SeDarien Dantzler, Daniel Gambrell, Bethany Greene, Zach Jones, Rachael Maitland, Kayla Nelums, Daniel Rumfelt, Scott Sharpe, Seth Taylor, Chenille Williams

**Staff Present:**

Chip Bentley, Jill Charlton, Brooke Ferguson, Steve Pelissier, Tim Womack, Arlene Young, Don Zimmer

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**Call to Order**

Board Secretary, Mr. Alan Mitchell, called the meeting to order. Mr. Riley offered the invocation. Mr. Pelissier introduced the speakers and guests. Secretary Mitchell asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2025, board meeting. Mr. Riley made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Littlejohn. The motion was unanimously approved. The financial statement was accepted as information.

**Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond (Charlotte)**

Secretary Mitchell introduced Ms. Bethany Greene, a regional economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. She presented an overview of the current economic situation. She discussed recent economic developments, including interest rate changes and their impact on the housing market. Ms. Greene also shared anecdotal information from business contacts in the region,

providing a more nuanced understanding of the local economy. She presented an overview of the US economy, highlighting its resilience despite challenges like high unemployment, inflation, and interest rates during the pandemic. She discussed solid economic growth, a strong labor market, and improving inflation, though still above the Fed's target of 2%. Ms. Greene emphasized the impact of uncertainty on businesses, consumer sentiment, and consumption, while noting risks from tariffs and housing costs.

### **South Carolina Office of Resiliency (SCOR)**

Secretary Mitchell called on Mr. Scott Sharpe, Disaster Recovery Director, at the South Carolina Office of Resiliency. He presented the disaster recovery efforts following Hurricane Helene in 2024, which affected 28 counties and resulted in 443,000 individual assistance applicants with \$2.1 billion in unmet housing, infrastructure, and economic needs. The office received a \$150 million CDBG-DR grant from HUD, with 80% allocated to the six most impacted counties (Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Aiken, Greenwood, and Laurens) and 20% to nine additional counties, with all funds required to serve low-to-moderate income citizens. The presentation outlined the plans to rebuild and repair homes, including a new program to replace mobile homes with stick-built houses, while also implementing resilience standards in new construction and managing a state-funded rapid rebuild program in 13 additional counties. Mr. Sharpe emphasized the importance of data sharing between disaster recovery organizations to prevent duplication of benefits and outlined plans for proactive community engagement.

### **State Energy Office (SEO)**

Secretary Mitchell introduced Ms. Rachael Maitland, Deputy Director, from the State Energy Office. She presented programs and initiatives, highlighting their focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean transportation. Ms. Maitland and her team discussed funding opportunities, including mini grants for public entities and upcoming residential rebates under the Inflation Reduction Act. They also shared information on education, outreach, and training programs, as well as technical assistance available to public entities. The SEO is seeking feedback on how to make their programs more accessible and relevant to communities' needs.

### **Legislative Report**

Secretary Mitchell asked Ms. Brooke Ferguson to present the Legislative Report. Ms. Ferguson reported that 93 bills had been signed into law, with 3 vetoes, including one on concealed carry charges. She discussed the budget conference committee's progress and highlighted funding for the Department on Aging.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Secretary Mitchell called on Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director's report. Mr. Pelissier asked Ms. Jill Charlton, Senior Project Manager, to provide information about a \$1.2 million EPA grant for brownfields in the 6 counties in the ACOG region. Ms. Charlton shared some target sites identified for potential environmental assessments and redevelopment. Mr. Pelissier reported that the Executive Committee Retreat will be held on June 13 and gave an update on Aging funding.

### **Member Updates**

Ms. Littlejohn and Representative Myers provided details on the Southside Cultural Monument that celebrates the history of Spartanburg's historically Black communities. Mr. Dill invited the board to attend the upcoming Scottish Games at Furman.

**The next board meeting will be on June 27, 2025, at 10:30 AM in the ACOG Board Room.**

Please plan for a shorter meeting than normal since we will be reviewing the 2026 Work Program and there will be no guest speakers. Members may also attend through Zoom.

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

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**Alan Mitchell, Secretary**

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

