



MINUTES

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2025 – 10:30 A.M.
COUNCIL BOARD ROOM WITH ZOOM OPTION
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Members Present:

Tom Allen, Bill Blanton, Bob Briggs, Rockey Burgess, David Cauthen, Garey Collins, Rick Danner, Grant DeShields, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, Ensley Feemster, Mike Forrester, Vince Gaulin, Don Godbey, Karry Guillory, Robert Halfacre, Glenn Hart, Laura Hinty, Henry Jolly, Claiborne Linvill, Ruth Littlejohn, Sherry Marrah, Saraí Melendez, Alan Mitchell, Charles Pinson, E Riley, Terence Roberts, Cindy Wilson

Guests Present:

Sharon DeRidder, Daniel Gambrell, Mary Mason Jolly, Darren Ledbetter, Clark Leslie, Penny Phillips, Robert Snipes, Ben Temple, Jim Walden

Staff Present:

Chip Bentley, Brooke Ferguson, Trey Eubanks, Jeff Guilbault, Steve Pelissier, Jessica Winters, Tim Womack

Call to Order

Chairman Don Godbey called the meeting to order. Mr. Riley offered the invocation. Mr. Pelissier introduced the speakers and guests. Chairman Godbey asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2025, board meeting. Mr. Mitchell made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Guillory. The motion was unanimously approved.

Recognition of an Employee's Milestone Anniversary at ACOG

Several staff members were recognized for their long-term service. Cheryl Bentley received a 5-year service award, Tim Womack received a 15-year service award, and Jessica Winters received a 20-year service award. Chairman Godbey presented them with plaques for their dedicated service.

SC Human Affairs Commission

Chairman Godbey called on Mr. Robert Snipes, Community Relations and Outreach Director from the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission. He presented an overview of the community relations division, which operates to improve quality of life through advisory councils, free training programs, and partnerships with local organizations. Mr. Snipes expressed interest in establishing an advisory council with Spartanburg County and clarified that the Commission's focus remains on enforcing state laws regarding employment, fair housing, and public accommodation, without political involvement in DEI initiatives.

Engineering Consulting Services (ECS)

Chairman Godbey introduced Mr. Ben Temple, Southern Regional Manager of ECS, and board member of ACEC-SC. The Infrastructure Works Institute partnered with the University of South Carolina to study the economic impact of infrastructure spending in South Carolina, which has seen significant growth in advanced manufacturing and logistics jobs. The study found that 85% of job growth between 2015 and 2025 occurred in just 12 of the state's 46 counties, with many residents commuting long distances to these growth areas. The analysis showed that \$33 billion in direct spending created 28,000 jobs and \$22 billion in multiplier effects, resulting in a total economic impact of \$56 billion. The study also found that infrastructure improvements enabled the creation of 157,000 additional jobs and \$16 billion in additional economic activity between 2025-2035, representing a 67% increase in employment gains compared to maintaining the status quo.

SC Department of Transportation Update

Chairman Godbey asked Mr. Darren Ledbetter, SCDOT Program Manager, to provide an update on various construction and design projects. Key projects discussed included the SC11 at S. Saluda Road project. The meeting also highlighted funding breakdowns, expenditure updates, timelines, and adjustments to project designs based on public feedback and coordination with stakeholders.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Update

Chairman Godbey introduced Jake Whitmire, ACOG Transportation Planner. At the request of Ms. Jane Hall, Transportation Committee Chair, Mr. Whitmire gave an update on three Corridor Studies in the TIP. He explained that the US-29 Corridor Study in Anderson County was completed in July. The Transportation Committee recommended that the SC105 Corridor Study in Cherokee County be postponed due to the recent closure of Limestone College, with the US-123 Corridor Study in Oconee County being expanded to include Westminster. Chairman Godbey called for a vote on the committee's recommendation. The vote was unanimous.

Action Item – Motion from the Committee – Unanimous Vote

Bylaws Committee Update

Chairman Godbey called on Mr. Terence Roberts, of the Bylaws Committee to present a recommendation from the committee. Mr. Pelissier assisted in explaining that the reasons for the recommendation are to reduce the required number of board meetings per year from 10 to 6, with meetings scheduled for February, April, June, August, October, and early December. Chairman Godbey called for vote. The vote was unanimous. The board also approved moving officer elections to the first meeting of the calendar year.

Action Item – Motion from the Committee – Unanimous Vote

Executive Director’s Report

Chairman Godbey asked Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director’s report. Mr. Pelissier announced that the next board meeting will be held virtually on November 14th at 10:30 AM to review the CEDS Annual Performance Report. He also reminded members to register for the SCCOG annual conference taking place November 23-25.

Member Updates

Ms. Littlejohn reported that a hate crime bill passed in Spartanburg. Also, the grand opening of the new planetarium at the library was announced for October 17th.

Ms. Wilson discussed ongoing efforts to improve communication with the Anderson County delegation and council, as well as the engagement of CodeWrite to update development standards.

Ms. Melendez shared Senator Thomas Alexander's advocacy work, leading to a groundbreaking for a new community center in Walhalla in August, with completion expected by July 2026.

Mr. Allen mentioned a grassroots group in Anderson County focused on managing growth and sustainability.

The next board meeting will be on November 14, 2025, at 10:30 AM through Zoom.

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

Don Godbey, Chairman

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