



MINUTES

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

Members Present:

Monier Abusaft, Sen. Thomas Alexander, Brandy Amidon, Rockey Burgess, Rep. Mike Burns, Dennis Claramunt, Rep. Neal Collins, Roy Costner, III, Francis Crowder, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, John Elliott, Ensley Feemster, Lillian Brock Flemming, George Fletcher, Mike Forrester, Don Godbey, Jane Hall, Henry Jolly, Butch Kirven, Ruth Littlejohn, Willis Meadows, Dana Moore, E Riley, Jeff Roberts, Terence Roberts, Cindy Wilson

Guests Present:

Doug Adomatis, Mary Nell Anthony, Eric Dillon, Sandy Dunagan, John Fargher, Cynthia Fryer, Angie Owens, Brett Sanders, Mark Williamson

Staff Present:

Chip Bentley, Brooke Ferguson, Steve Pelissier, Kim Reyes, Jessica Winter, Tim Womack, Arlene Young

Call to Order

Chairman Forrester called the meeting to order. The invocation was offered by E. Riley. Mr. Pelissier introduced guests and a new board member, Mo Abusaft of Spartanburg County Council, representing District 1. Chairman Forrester asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes from the January 22, 2021 board meeting. Mr. Godbey made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ed Elliott. The motion was approved unanimously. The financial statement was accepted as information.

Recognition of an ACOG Employee Who Recently Retired After 36 Years of Service

Chairman Forrester recognized Sandy Dunagan, Long Term Care Ombudsman, for her 36 years of service at the Appalachian Council of Governments. Ms. Dunagan has enjoyed a variety of work experiences over the years ranging from administrative support to the Ombudsmen Program. The board and staff wished her well, and she will be presented with a plaque at a later date.

Greenville Technical Charter High School (GTCHS) Aviation Curriculum

Chairman Forrester introduced Principal Mary Nell Anthony and her teaching staff, Cynthia Fryer and Doug Adomatis. Ms. Fryer and Mr. Adomatis played three videos and discussed the aviation program taking place at GTCHS. The aviation curriculum allows students to choose one of three career pathways: Pilot, Aircraft Maintenance, or Aerospace Engineering. The program's focus allows students to fast track into these careers after high school by offering incentives, such as dual enrollment in college courses, beginning hands-on training early, and taking professional exams early. Mr. Abusaft asked about the demographic make-up of the students enrolled in the class. Ms. Anthony and Mr. Adomatis stated that they face challenges in recruiting females to the program and are seeking ways to improve female involvement. They responded that approximately 35% of the students in the aviation program are from a non-white background, matching the percentage for the school as a whole.

Nomination of the Pickens County Regional Representative to the ACOG Board of Directors

Mr. Pelissier requested for this item to be moved up in the agenda due to a scheduling conflict. Chairman Forrester called on Mr. Costner from Pickens County Council. Mr. Costner nominated Tom Ponder to be the Regional Representative for Pickens County. Chairman Forrester approved and made the appointment.

Medicare Myths and Realities

Chairman Forrester asked Kim Reyes to explain the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) and discuss Medicare. Ms. Reyes, a SHIP Counselor in the ACOG office, assists clients with insurance choices, fraud, claim appeals, advocacy, and finding Medicare subsidy programs. She does not sell insurance. Ms. Reyes gave an informative presentation of ten myths about Medicare. As requested, the presentation will be distributed to board members after the meeting.

South Carolina 2021 Legislative Report

Chairman Forrester called on Brooke Ferguson to report on legislative action that may impact the region. Ms. Ferguson discussed the COVID-19 Vaccine bill designed to speed up vaccines and testing to rural areas, as well as the COVID-19 Business Liability Protection bill that provides protection for businesses that follow health guidelines. Ms. Ferguson mentioned the Abandoned

Building Revitalization Act, which extends tax credits through December 2025. She also reported on Economic Development Bonds that will be used to build a near dock rail in Charleston. \$550 million in general obligation bonds have been secured for this project. Ms. Ferguson explained that due to the pandemic, the Census Data would continue to be compiled until the end of April instead of the end of December 2020. This will also delay redistricting data, which is acquired from the census, causing concerns for elections.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Pelissier stated that Mr. Riley authorized him to schedule a Personnel Committee meeting for the third or fourth week in March. He also noted that there is a vacancy on the committee that needs to be filled.

Member Report

Chairman Forrester acknowledged the efforts of Representative Mike Burns, along with Joe Dill, Butch Kirven, and Mayor Brandy Amidon for providing emergency services in North Greenville County.

The next board meeting will be held on March 26, 2021, at 10:30 AM through Zoom.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 AM.

Mike Forrester, Chairman

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

