



MINUTES

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 2018 – 10:30 A.M.
ZOOM MEETING
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Members Present:

Sen. Thomas Alexander, Brandy Amidon, Grady Butler, Larry Chappell, Dennis Claramunt, Rep. Neal Collins, Francis Crowder, Joe Dill, Mack Durham, Ensley Feemster, Rep. Mike Forrester, Don Godbey, Ray Graham, Ruth Littlejohn, Willis Meadows, E Riley, Jeff Roberts, Terrence Roberts, Rep. Ann Thayer, Marta Wahlen, Cindy Wilson

Guests Present:

Trent Acker, Joel Dill, Mark Williamson

Staff Present:

Chip Bentley, Brooke Ferguson, Steve Pelissier, Amanda Plumley, Tim Womack, Arlene Young

Chairman Forrester called the meeting to order. The invocation was offered by Mr. Riley.

Chairman Forrester asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes of the September 26th board meeting. Mr. Godbey made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Crowder. The motion was approved unanimously. There were no questions about the financial statement.

Chairman Forrester introduced guest speaker Trent Acker, Director of the WorkLink Workforce Development Board, to discuss the services provided during the pandemic. Mr. Acker presented an overview of the Workforce Development Board, the effects of the pandemic, as well as the trends of re-employment. He reviewed unemployment and labor force data and the pandemic's impact on the local labor force. Mr. Acker explained that local Workforce Development Boards and SC Works Centers had to find innovative ways to help job seekers during this time. Staff at SC Works centers changed responsibilities to help with unemployment insurance tasks, especially during the initial surge in March and April. In addition to keeping their centers open as long as possible, they provided virtual services and drive-through job fairs.



At the end of Mr. Acker's presentation, Ruth Littlejohn asked for clarification on Spartanburg statistics for initial unemployment insurance claims. Mr. Acker explained that on April 11, 2020, 7,258 people filed unemployment claims for the first time. The same statistic dropped to 156 people on October 17, 2020.

Due to Chairman Forrester's audio difficulty, Mr. Pelissier introduced Don Godbey, Chairman of the CEDS Committee and Brooke Ferguson, Economic Development Director. Mr. Godbey asked Ms. Ferguson to present the report for consideration for approval by the full board. Ms. Ferguson explained that every five years the Economic Development Administration requires all economic development districts to write a new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report for the region. An Annual Performance Report is written for the years in between. Ms. Ferguson then highlighted the contents of this year's report. She gave an overview of economic conditions, discussed updated economic profiles for the region and each county, and showed economic development activity and highlights for each of the nine goals included in the report. She presented an overview of job creation and capital investment in the area and a list of active grant projects.

Committee Chairman Godbey asked for the Annual Performance Report to be approved by the board. A motion was made by the committee. The motion was approved unanimously with the ability to make corrections and additions to the document before December 1, 2020.

Chairman Forrester called on Chip Bentley to provide an update on recently awarded grant funds. Mr. Bentley reported that six projects were funded for vans for seniors and persons with disabilities. Five vans were secured for rural areas and one van for a small urban area. The grants totaled \$350,000.

Chairman Forrester asked Amanda Plumley to speak about the Senior Angel Tree Project. The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program chose to serve about 50 residents at Six Mile Retirement Community in Pickens County this Christmas. Through the project, residents receive personal products, necessities and a special gift from their wish list. Board support is especially appreciated this year since many residents have had a difficult time with not being able to see family and friends. Ms. Plumley explained that normally cash would be collected at the board meeting, but this time other donation options are available. If members would like to write a check, please make it out to Jessica Winters and mail to ACOG, 30 Century Circle, Greenville, SC, 29607. Payment may also be sent through the Venmo app to Senior Angel Tree Project. If you have questions about how to send donations, please check with Chip Bentley.

Chairman Forrester asked Steve Pelissier to provide the executive director's report. The November and December board meetings will be combined for the final meeting of the calendar year to be held on December 4th at 10:30 AM through Zoom. Mr. Pelissier will contact the Bi-Laws Committee



members to schedule a meeting before the next board meeting. The deadline for intent letters for ARC grants is November 23, 2020.

During the member's report, Mr. Forrester spoke about the recent Economic Development Committee meeting. The committee feels the need to add the topic of pandemic recovery to the discussion. He requested that businesses and counties participating in this endeavor report these efforts to Brooke Ferguson.

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

Representative Mike Forrester, Chairman

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