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## MINUTES

**APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2024 – 10:30 A.M.  
COUNCIL BOARD ROOM WITH ZOOM OPTION  
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

**Members Present:**

Sen. Thomas Alexander, Rick Bradley, Rockey Burgess, Rep. Mike Burns, Grady Butler, Dennis Claramunt, Brooke Coleman, Rep. Neal Collins, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, Ensley Feemster, Mike Forrester, Vince Gaulin, Britt Gillespie, Don Godbey, Robert Halfacre, Jane Hall, Laura Hinty, Henry Jolly, Butch Kirvin, Sarai Melendez, Alan Mitchell, Charles Pinson, Brian Ramey, E Riley, Bob Walker, Cindy Wilson

**Guests Present:**

Daniel Gambrell, Ken Roper, Ryan Syrbe

**Staff Present:**

Chip Bentley, Katherine Burns, Brooke Ferguson, Jill Francisco, Mia Fuller, Jeff Guilbault, Steve Pelissier, Tim Womack, Don Zimmer

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**Call to Order**

Chairman Collins called the meeting to order. Mr. Riley offered the invocation. Mr. Pelissier introduced two new board members. Mr. Vince Gaulin, of Pendleton, was introduced in person after attending last month's meeting online. Mr. Pelissier introduced Ms. Sarai Melendez of Walhalla. She will replace Mayor Ramey as the appointee from the Oconee County Municipal Association. He also introduced the speaker and other guests in attendance, including Mr. Ryan Syrbe from Senator Scott's office. Mr. Pelissier asked Tim Womack, Aging Services Director, to introduce the newly hired Aging Assessor, Katherine Burns. Chairman Collins asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 22, 2024, 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 recognized Administrative Assistant, Mia Fuller, for 25 years of service with ACOG. She is especially known for being a dedicated and loyal employee. The board expressed their gratitude and awarded her with a plaque for her service.

## **Pickens County**

Chairman Collins invited Mr. Ken Roper, the Pickens County Administrator, to share the county's growth management efforts with the board. Mr. Roper explained the need for zoning and regulations when beginning the Highway 11 project with the assistance of ACOG. He discussed strategies such as consistent branding and signage, and the expansion of heritage areas. He shared details about several projects in Pickens County. The #kickingasphalt program has been successful in engaging the public in getting potholes filled quickly, enabling them to see what roads are being worked on, and giving validation to the increased millage rate. Mr. Roper discussed landfill improvements and future expansion, internal leadership programs, and future construction for EMS dispatch headquarters. The board asked questions about funding sources.

## **Procurement of Aging Services**

Chairman Collins called on Mr. Joe Dill, Chair of the Regional Aging Advisory Committee (RAAC). Mr. Dill explained that the RAAC Committee recently met to review the bids for procurement for all the aging services that AGOG provides. He asked Mr. Womack, Aging Services Director, to review the committee recommendations for the board. Mr. Womack presented a service provider list for each county. The RAAC Committee recommended the board approve the list of aging services providers. Chairman Collins called for a vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **Action Item**

### **Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)**

Chairman Collins asked Mr. Pelissier to brief the board on the Appalachian Regional Commission. Mr. Pelissier gave an overview and explained the region and structure of the organization. He focused on the ARC's five cores investment priorities: building businesses, workforce ecosystems, community infrastructure, regional culture and tourism, and community leaders and capacity. Mr. Pelissier reviewed the South Carolina ARC investments in FY 2023 and explained how ARC funding is flexible and can be used within ACOG.

## **Legislative Report**

Chairman Collins called on Mrs. Brooke Ferguson, Economic Development Director, to present the Legislative Report. She reviewed highlights of the Senate-approved budget. She noted that the

House budget would likely show significant differences in property tax rebates and the homestead exemption fund. She highlighted the bill creating the Executive Office of Health and Policy and the Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act.

### **Board Committee Assignments**

Chairman Collins explained that board members had been notified of their committee assignments if they were new or if they had changes to their assignments. All other assignments stayed the same. The new assignment list was passed out for reference.

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

Chairman Collins called on Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director's report. Mr. Pelissier shared that he has been meeting with the County Councils in the region. The visits were mentioned in two local newspapers. He thanked Mayor Ramey for his service to ACOG.

### **Member's Report**

Mr. Riley invited everyone to visit Seneca for *Jazz on the Alley* every Thursday, 7-9 PM.

**The next board meeting will be held on May 24, 2024, at 10:30 AM in the ACOG Board Room. Members may also attend through Zoom.**

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 AM.**

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### **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.

