



MINUTES

**APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2022 – 10:30 A.M.
COUNCIL BOARD ROOM WITH ZOOM OPTION
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

Members Present:

Bob Briggs, Rocky Burgess, Rep. Mike Burns, Dennis Claramunt, Brooke Coleman, Rick Danner, Joe Dill, Ed Elliot, John Elliott, Ennis Fant, Ensley Feemster, Mike Forrester, Don Godbey, Jane Hall, Henry Jolly, Butch Kirven, Jack Mabry, Willis Meadows, Charles Pinson, Brian Ramey, E Riley, Mildred Tillerson, Cindy Wilson

Guests Present:

Rep. Rita Allison, Susan Cyr, Casey Fields, Daniel Gambrell, Dianna Gracely, Kent Lesesne, Marcy Loucks, Paul Shewmaker, Bob Strother, Emily Wilson

Staff Present:

Lance Estep, Trey Eubanks, Brooke Ferguson, Amanda Mlinar, Steve Pelissier, Tim Womack, Arlene Young, Don Zimmer

Call to Order

Chairman Forrester called the meeting to order. Mr. Riley offered the invocation. Mr. Pelissier introduced guests: Ms. Loucks from McKinley, Cooper accounting firm, Representative Allison, Emily Wilson, and Ms. Gracely and Mayor Shewmaker from Simpsonville. Mr. Pelissier noted an attendance error in the October minutes. Mayor Burgess's name will be added to the attendance to correct the error. Chairman Forrester asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 28, 2022, board meeting. Mr. Godbey made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Rep. Burns. The motion was unanimously approved. The financial statement was accepted as information.

Resolution to Honor Representative Rita Allison for a Lifetime of Service to the Region

Chairman Forrester asked Rep. Rita Allison to come forward. He read the proposed resolution. Mr. Riley made a motion to accept the resolution to honor Rep. Allison for a lifetime of service to the people of the Appalachian region. Mr. Godbey seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. Chairman Forrester presented Rep. Allison with a framed copy of the resolution.

Action Item

Recognition of ACOG Board Members Whose Terms Will Expire at the End of December

Chairman Forrester recognized retiring board members for their years of service to ACOG. Joe Dill served twenty years, Willis Meadows served nine years, Ensley Feemster served eight years, and Rep. West Cox served two years.

Recognition of an ACOG Employee Who Recently Celebrated a Milestone Anniversary

Chairman Forrester acknowledged Senior Family Caregiver Advocate, Amanda Mlinar, for five years of service. Amanda began as an Aging Assessor and has worked her way up to her current position. She is known for her passion and commitment to senior advocacy.

City of Simpsonville Economic Development Initiatives

Chairman Forrester called Dianna Gracely, City Administrator, and Paul Shewmaker, Mayor, to give an overview of the city of Simpsonville's economic development initiatives. Ms. Gracely stated that the city is proud of their rebranding, "Simply Home". She discussed remodeling the old Simpsonville elementary school into the new arts center. ACOG Grants Services helped secure \$500,000 for this \$3 million project. The city updated public spaces, and created a gathering spot. They also created interactive spaces with public art. Ms. Gracely spoke about redevelopment and gave a list of impactful projects. She spoke in detail about the municipal complex and city park plan, showing a map and discussing future projects. She answered questions from the board and gave advice on how to succeed with economic development and revitalization.

2023 South Carolina Legislative Preview

Chairman Forrester requested that Kent Lesesne, of SC Association of Counties (SCAC), and Casey Fields, of the Municipal Association of SC (MASC), address their respective legislative priorities for the 2023 session. Mr. Lesesne spoke about the legislative priorities for the SCAC. He discussed workers' comp insurance for psychological injuries for first responders, and supporting state aid funding for libraries. In regards to land use, he listed tax benefits for affordable housing developers and land owners, supporting legislation that limits impact fees, and providing

regulations and guidelines for disposal of lithium batteries from vehicles. Mr. Lesesne stated that the SCAC supports public safety issues such as eliminating cell phones of inmates within facilities, and supporting reimbursement for training for EMTs, paramedics, and firefighters. He spoke on the revenue topics of uniform regulations of tiny homes, repealing the educational tax, and “Fee in Lieu of Taxes” for companies. Ms. Fields stated that the MASC recommended legislation priority list came from their Regional Advisory Committee. The MASC supports legislation that expands local economic development incentives for downtown small businesses. They support hate crime legislation, want to protect the authority of the small towns to manage short-term rentals, and support enclave annexation legislation. Ms. Fields stated that the MASC is concerned about local traffic safety measures, code enforcement on dilapidated buildings, and stronger penalties for fentanyl trafficking. Ms. Fields reported that MASC launched a civility campaign to improve on how councils communicate and interact with each other and residents.

Appalachian Council of Governments FY 2022 Annual Audit

Chairman Forrester introduced Marcy Loucks, Shareholder of McKinley, Cooper and Co., to review the 2022 annual audit. Ms. Loucks stated that there were no issues requiring correction. She referred to the auditor’s report and reviewed the balance sheets. She reviewed the fixed assets and operational funding, profit and loss statement, and discussed revenues. She noted that \$9.5 million of the \$13.5 million budget comes from federal funding. Ms. Loucks stated that ACOG is a low risk auditee and has good policies, procedures, and budgeting.

Appalachian Region 2023-2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Chairman Forrester called on Mr. Godbey, Economic Development Committee Chair, and Brooke Ferguson, Economic Development Director, to present information on the 2023-2028 CEDS. Mr. Godbey stated that the committee met and reviewed the CEDS. Ms. Ferguson explained that the CEDS serves as a strategic blueprint for economic development for the region. In order to maintain eligibility for EDA grants and programs, the CEDS must be written every five years, and progress reports must be submitted annually. She reviewed population statistics and estimated growth of the region. Ms. Ferguson presented data on income, housing costs, education, and employment. She discussed priorities and strategies. The Economic Development Committee recommended that the board approve the Appalachian Region 2023-2028 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Chairman Forrester called for a vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

Action Item

Executive Director’s Report

Chairman Forrester asked Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director’s report. Mr. Pelissier thanked all who contributed to the Ombudsman Program’s holiday project for two long term care facilities



in Spartanburg. Donations will be delivered soon. ACOG has a contract with ADC to administer the revolving loan program through ARC grants. The Economic Development Committee will be looking into how a recent change to ARC regulations allowing for the partial de-federalization of funds may affect ADC and ACOG. Mr. Pelissier asked Mr. Ed Elliott to speak about the recent SCARC meeting. Mr. Elliott stated that Senator Alexander received an award as Legislator of the Year, then he presented Chairman Forrester with the award of Volunteer of the Year from SCARC.

The next board meeting will be held on January 27, 2023, at 10:30 AM in the ACOG Board Room. Members may also attend through Zoom.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Mike Forrester, Chairman

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

