



MINUTES

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2023 – 10:30 A.M.
COUNCIL BOARD ROOM WITH ZOOM OPTION
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Members Present:

Rep. Mike Burns, Rep. Neal Collins, Roy Costner, Roel Cruz, Rick Danner, Joe Dill, Ensley Feemster, Lillian Brock Flemming, Mike Forrester, Britt Gillespie, Jane Hall, Mickey Haney, Henry Jolly, Butch Kirven, Rep. Brian Lawson, Ruth Littlejohn, Alan Mitchell, Charles Pinson, E Riley, Brett Sanders, Mildred Tillerson, Bob Walker, Cindy Wilson

Guests Present:

Joel Dill, Daniel Gambrell, Anna Johnson, Beth Rutherford

Staff Present:

Chip Bentley, Trey Eubanks, Brooke Ferguson, Jill Francisco, Jeff Guilbault, Terry Mendola, Steve Pelissier, Arlene Young

Call to Order

Chairman Collins called the meeting to order. Mr. Riley offered the invocation. Mr. Pelissier introduced the guests in attendance. Chairman Collins asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 25, 2023, board meeting. Mr. Dill made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gillespie. The motion was unanimously approved.

Recognition of Employee Milestone Anniversary with ACOG

Chairman Collins presented a plaque to Ms. Terry Mendola, Home Services Coordinator, for five years of service to ACOG. She is devoted to helping seniors stay in their homes as long as possible by coordinating homemaking, companionship, and personal care services.

United Housing Connections

Chairman Collins introduced Ms. Anna Johnson, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Administrator, representing United Housing Connections and Upstate Continuum of Care. Ms. Johnson stated that the focus of the Upstate CoC is to unify agencies working with the homeless, help the agencies work collaboratively, provide educational workshops, and offer gap analysis and other data. She gave a detailed example of the path a person follows upon entering one of the agencies and the HMIS system. Ms. Johnson discussed the programs at United Housing Connections including permanent supportive housing to help with chronic homelessness and preventative services such as emergency rental services. She noted that there is not nearly enough funding for these programs. Ms. Johnson discussed the Housing Resource Center, an outreach pilot program in downtown Greenville. The center has been successful in partnering with the community to provide services such as health care, mental health counseling, transportation, and accessible restrooms. She answered questions from the board.

Upstate Continuum of Care

Chairman Collins called on Ms. Beth Rutherford, who is the Advisory Council President of the Upstate Continuum of Care and the Homeless Engagement Specialist at the City of Spartanburg. Ms. Rutherford stated that the upstate has the highest percentage of homeless in the state at 36%. She indicated that economic issues related to COVID, and increased housing costs have caused an increase in homeless individuals and families. She gave several examples of families and the conditions that caused them to become homeless, and explained how they were helped through the CoC. Ms. Rutherford explained the homeless programs in the City of Spartanburg. Homeless Court is a successful program for the homeless who need a pro bono attorney and an advocate to work through legal issues in a more comfortable and convenient way. She explained the HEART, Litter Hero, and Challenge for Change programs. She is also working on reviving the Opportunity Center that will offer wrap-around services in Spartanburg. Ms. Rutherford referred to the 2020 SC State of the Homeless Report for board members to find more data, but to remember that collecting data on the homeless is difficult and the numbers shown are lower than actual. She answered questions from the board. When Chairman Collins asked, Ms. Rutherford stated that affordable housing is the greatest need at this time.

Executive Director's Report

Chairman Collins asked Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director's report. Mr. Pelissier noted that at his visit to the Oconee County Municipal Association meeting in August, a speaker from the Sheriff's department spoke about homelessness in the area. He is interested in getting law enforcement's perspective, as well as the federal economic impact on homelessness. The SCCOGs meeting will be held November 19-21, 2023. The deadline to register is October 2.



Member Updates

Mr. Walker stated that Spartanburg County is trying to pass a 1% sales tax in November and hopes that citizens will vote for it.

The next board meeting will be held on October 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 12:00 PM.

Rep. Neal Collins, Chairman

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

