



APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2020 – 10:30 A.M.
ZOOM MEETING
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Members Present:

Cindy Wilson, Jeff Roberts, Mack Durham, Rep. Mike Forrester, Don Godbey, Henry Jolly, E Riley, Sen. Thomas Alexander, Rep. Neal Collins, Jack Elliott, Dennis Claramunt, Dana Moore, Manning Lynch, Rep. Anne Thayer, Willis Meadows, Terrance Roberts, Brandy Amidon, Joe Dill, Ruth Littlejohn, Roy Costner, Marta Wahlen, Julian Davis, Russell Stall, Lilian Brock Flemming

Guests Present:

Jeff Cunningham, Rochelle Garrett

Staff Present:

Steve Pelissier, Chip Bentley, Brooke Ferguson, Tim Womack, Arlene Young, Don Zimmer, Lance Estep, Jessica Winters

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 June 12th board meeting. Mr. Godbey stated that he was present at that meeting but was not included as being present. Mr. Dill made a motion to adopt the minutes with the change to show Mr. Godbey's presence. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jack Elliott. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Forrester stated that long-time board member Henry Jolly's term was coming to an end, after ten years on the board in his second stint in that role. Mr. Forrester thanked Mayor Jolly for his service and read an inscription from a plaque that will be presented to him when time allows. Several other board members also expressed appreciation to Mayor Jolly.

Chairman Forrester noted that the board would recognize two staff members who have recently celebrated milestone anniversaries with ACOG. Jessica Winters, a regional ombudsman, has completed fifteen years of service. Tim Womack, the aging services director, has been with the agency for ten years.

Chairman Forrester introduced Brook Ferguson, Economic Development Director, to discuss the Appalachian Regional COVID Economic Recovery Initiative. Ms. Ferguson announced that ACOG was awarded a \$400,000 CARES Act grant from the Economic Development Administration in July. The funds require no match from the organization and must be expended by July 2022. Approved activities related to the grant can be divided into two main categories: 1) updating the



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) to address pandemic recovery and resiliency, and 2) providing technical assistance to counties, municipalities, and economic development organizations in the region to help them respond to coronavirus.

Chairman Forrester then introduced Lance Estep, Regional Transportation Planner, to address the Appalachian Regional Freight Mobility Plan. Mr. Estep stated that ACOG has partnered with the region's MPOs (ANATS, GPATS, and SPATS) to examine the impacts of freight movement on the entire ACOG region (and Laurens County). ACOG kicked off the Freight Plan in March and has had consistent participation from several steering groups despite the limitations presented by COVID-19. ACOG staff and the consultant team from CDM Smith are regularly meeting with a technical committee that oversees the details of the plan, a steering committee that guides the plan based on data presented by the consultant team, and an advisory committee that brings a private sector perspective to the planning process.

Thus far, the plan has focused on assessing the regional freight network and analyzing the existing and future land uses throughout the region. Not surprising, I-85 handles the largest share of the freight-related truck traffic in the region. In 2016, I-85 carried 42% of the region's freight-related truck traffic; 73% of that traffic went straight through the area without stopping. In terms of tonnage, there are 138 million tons of freight handled in the Upstate each year; 75% of that is via truck. In addition to raw data, the plan has also taken a look at best practices in the industry, future freight technology trends, and grant opportunities.

ACOG staff and the consultant team recently completed an initial assessment of existing conditions in the region. For the next several months, the group will be focused on developing a list of goals and objectives for the plan and ultimately a set of recommendations on how to improve freight movement and supply chain logistics in the region. The plan is scheduled for completion in early 2021, with the first drafts of the plan likely ready for review by the end of 2020.

The Freight Plan website contains presentations and audio recordings of all committee meetings for those that are interested. The website is <http://www.scacog.org/acog-freight-plan>.

Following Mr. Estep's presentation, Mr. Davis noted that there is significant truck traffic in the I-85 – Fair Play area of Oconee County. He also stated that truck traffic is increasing in general in response to freight related development occurring throughout the county.

Ms. Wilson added that US 29 is becoming increasingly congested and noted it needs to be looked at in the study.

Chairman Forrester introduced Arlene Young to address Appalachian Regional Commission grants that have recently been awarded to entities in the region. Grant awards include;



<p>City of Anderson - Innovate Kitchen Interior renovations creating a shared kitchen facility that will offer food preparation space rentals; a kitchen for food-truck operators, food preservation, storage, packaging and distribution space; a liaison network and business education programs.</p>	\$500,000
<p>Central - Green Crescent Trail The Trail will connect downtown Central with the Southern Wesleyan University campus.</p>	\$500,000
<p>Liberty - Strategic Plan A plan focusing on economic development and downtown revitalization strategies.</p>	\$40,000
<p>SCTAC - Durability Track The track construction will include twelve vehicle test "events" each designed to simulate accelerated wear and tear on vehicles.</p>	\$500,000
<p>RD Anderson Applied Technology Center – Workforce Training Equipment The purchase of training equipment for HVAC and Plumbing Programs will establish a career pipeline of trained plumbers and HVAC technicians.</p>	\$250,000
<p>Build Carolina - SC Codes in Appalachia A learning platform that provides individuals with the resources and tools to create a career pathway in technology and programming.</p>	\$250,000
<p>Furman University – Innovation District Hub A strategic plan for an incubator space in the Poinsett Corridor.</p>	\$43,500
<p>SC First Steps - Greenville Childcare Career Development Pipeline The project will support the creation of approximately 36 licensed childcare businesses able to serve 150 children each year.</p>	\$90,000
<p>Greenville Technical Charter High School – Workforce Development Program Upgrades to school's technology infrastructure and computer systems including courses in Aircraft Owners and Pilot Association (AOPA), STEM, and computer coding and programming.</p>	\$231,573
<p>Apprenticeship Carolina – New Market Skills This project will assist expansion of both registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship programs with a priority given to automobile and aerospace-related entities.</p>	\$250,000
<p>Venture Carolina - Center for Entrepreneur and Investor Education The project focuses on educating and connecting early-stage investors and entrepreneurs.</p>	\$237,546
<p>Walhalla - Downtown Pedestrian and Bike Path</p>	\$500,000
<p>Total</p>	\$3,392,619



The chairman stated that ACOG Board committee assignments had been distributed with the agenda packet. He expressed appreciation for members' willingness to serve and stated that he and Mr. Pelissier worked hard to get everyone the assignments they prefer.

Chairman Forrester then asked Mr. Pelissier to provide the director's report. Mr. Pelissier stated that the next board meeting will be held on September 25th and that it will be conducted through Zoom. He also thanked Senator Alexander and Representative Forrester for their assistance with a recent challenge. Funding for local areas under WIOA (the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) is distributed by a formula that takes into account existing economic conditions. For FY 2021 allocations, the period for analyzing existing conditions ran through February 2020, just prior to the COVID changing everything. Because South Carolina had been doing well economically prior to the pandemic, allocations to local workforce boards had been cut significantly. This results in the local areas responding to an unprecedented number of clients with substantially reduced resources. While the state as a whole faced cuts, the regions with the two largest reductions are WorkLink (serving Anderson, Pickens, and Oconee Counties) and Upstate (serving Cherokee, Spartanburg, and Union Counties). Senator Alexander and Representative Forrester were able to persuade the State Workforce Investment Board to use discretionary funds from another source to restore funding to FY 2020 levels.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 AM

Representative Mike Forrester, Chair

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