



## MINUTES

**APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2021 – 10:30 A.M.  
ZOOM MEETING  
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

**Members Present:**

Sen. Thomas Alexander, Rocky Burgess, Grady Butler, David Cauthen, Larry Chappell, Dennis Claramunt, Roy Costner, III, Rep. West Cox, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, Ensley Feemster, Lillian Brock Flemming, George Fletcher, Mike Forrester, Don Godbey, Jane Hall, Butch Kirven, Manning Lynch, Jack Mabry, Willis Meadows, Dana Moore, Tom Ponder, E Riley, Jeff Roberts, Marta Wahlen, Cindy Wilson

**Guests Present:**

Jan Bradsher, Eric Dillon, Steve Newton, Jim Taylor, Tony Thomas, Mark Williamson, Michael Williamson

**Staff Present:**

Chip Bentley, Brooke Ferguson, Steve Pelissier, Tim Womack, Arlene Young, Don Zimmer

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**Call to Order**

Chairman Forrester called the meeting to order. The invocation was offered by E. Riley. Steve Pelissier introduced guests. Chairman Forrester asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 26, 2021 board meeting. Don Godbey made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ed Elliott. The motion was approved unanimously. The financial statement was accepted as information.

**Transformation of Spartanburg's Northside Community**

Chairman Forrester introduced Michael Williamson and Tony Thomas from the Northside Development Group (NDG). They shared the history of the north side of Spartanburg, explaining it as a former mill village, which experienced high crime and a high poverty rate. The NDG engaged the community to address the need for affordable housing in the area. With the help of the

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residents and other partners, they have expanded opportunities for mixed market housing, have renovated housing and have assisted with rent. They have purchased an old hotel and warehouse for redevelopment into retail space. NDG has supported the area's Early Childhood Development Center, Community Center, and entrepreneurial and job referral programs.

### **American Rescue Plan, What We Know at This Time**

Chairman Forrester asked Executive Director, Steve Pelissier to present information on the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 for COVID-19 Relief. Mr. Pelissier focused on the state and local recovery part of the plan. He explained how billions of dollars from the federal government would need to be spent by December 31, 2024. He discussed eligible activities and restrictions. He also noted that reporting on how funds are spent would likely be required to follow federal guidelines. Mr. Pelissier spoke about the challenge to spend such a large amount of money on limited eligible activities in the short time frame. He encouraged city and county officials to make policies ahead of time to make sure to use the funds in an appropriate manner. He presented a list of projected allocations to local governments in the region. There was a discussion about possible eligible projects. Mr. Pelissier offered that Trey Eubanks, Government Services Manager at ACOG, would be able to provide assistance and advice.

### **Status of Aging Services in the SC Appalachian Region in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Chairman Forrester requested that Tim Womack share the status of Aging Services in response to COVID-19. Mr. Womack stated that there has been an influx of funding to the Aging Services program. He explained that the majority of federal funds come with guidelines to provide meals for seniors. However, in the Upstate, there are very good mobile meals programs. Mr. Womack urged all board members to advocate for flexibility in federal funding. He gave an example of how the State of SC administers a needs assessment to seniors every five (5) years. The highest needs are yard work, minor home repair, and home care. At this time, over 800 homes are on the waiting list for repair. Mr. Womack discussed the reopening of senior centers, stating that the social aspect is a very important factor that seniors have been missing. He reviewed open centers by location and mentioned a large, new center at the shopping center on Howell and E. North Street.

### **South Carolina 2021 Legislative Report**

Chairman Forrester called on Brooke Ferguson to report on legislative action that may impact the region. Ms. Ferguson gave updates on six bills discussed at last month's meeting. The Abandoned Building Revitalization Act that extends tax credits to December 2025, is awaiting the Governor's signature. Return to Work within the School System, which provides 5-day in-person classroom instruction, is also awaiting the Governor's signature. The Appropriations Bill is still moving and scheduled for floor debate and conference committee. Ms. Ferguson gave details about the proposed differences. The COVID-19 Business Liability Protection Bill for employers that follow public health guidelines will have its third reading in the House next week. The Hate Crimes Bill is

in the full Senate Judiciary Committee. The Additional County Sales and Use Tax Bill, which allows a county to impose an addition to an existing transportation “penny” tax has been referred to the Finance Committee

### **Board Committee Appointments to Fill Vacant Positions**

Chairman Forrester appointed the following board members to fill vacancies in these committees:

George Fletcher – Chair, Water Quality Committee

Rockey Burgess – Economic Development Committee

Rep. West Cox – Personnel Committee

Ray Graham – Executive Committee Alternate

Mr. Pelissier will notify the board members of their appointments.

### **Executive Director’s Report**

Chairman Forrester asked Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director’s report. Mr. Feemster, the Finance Committee chair, has agreed to a meeting on Friday, May 7, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. in the ACOG building. Committee members may meet in person in the board room, or they may use a Zoom meeting link to be provided. The Annual Executive Committee Work Session will be Friday, June 4, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. at ACOG. Members of the Executive Committee may also meet in person or use the Zoom option. Mr. Pelissier explained that the board room is too small for the full board to meet in person while maintaining a social distance. The chairman has looked into alternative space at his place of employment, however, it is not available for the schedule ACOG Board Meeting times in May and June.

### **Members Report**

Chairman Forrester and other board members expressed the desire to resume in-person meetings. Cindy Wilson introduced two guests from Anderson County, Jim Taylor, Mayor Pro Tem from Honea Path and Jan Brasher.

The next board meeting will be held on May 28, 2021, at 10:30 AM through Zoom.

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.**

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Mike Forrester, Chairman

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

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