



MINUTES

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 2021 – 10:30 A.M.

SPARTANBURG COMMUNITY COLLEGE SPARK CENTER WITH ZOOM MEETING OPTION
DUNCAN, SOUTH CAROLINA

Members Present:

Monier Abusoft, Sen. Thomas Alexander, Brandy Amidon, Rockey Burgess, Grady Butler, David Cauthen, Larry Chappell, Dennis Claramunt, Rep. Neal Collins, Roy Costner, III, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, George Fletcher, Mike Forrester, Don Godbey, Jane Hall, Henry Jolly, Butch Kirven, Ruth Littlejohn, Rep. Steven Long, Jack Mabry, Willis Meadows, Dana Moore, Tom Ponder, Jeff Roberts, Russell Stall, Dennis Stroupe, Mildred Tillerson, Cindy Wilson

Guests Present:

Kirsten Bowen, Jan Bratcher, Jeff Cunningham, Joel Dill, Eric Dillon, Doug Frate, Mary Mason Jolly, William Kerr, Diane Lackey, Angie Omer, Phillip Quillin, James Taylor

Staff Present:

Chip Bentley, Lance Estep, Brooke Ferguson, Mia Fuller, Steve Pelissier, Tim Womack, Arlene Young

Call to Order

Chairman Forrester called the meeting to order. The invocation was offered by Joe Dill. Mr. Pelissier introduced guests: Doug Frate, from DOT, and citizens, Mary Mason Jolly and Joel Dill. Chairman Forrester asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June 25, 2021 board meeting. Don Godbey made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Dana Moore. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Spartanburg Community College Spark Center

Chairman Mike Forrester, the Vice President for Economic Development at Spartanburg Community College, presented information about the Spark Center. Mr. Forrester showed a video which explained the four functions of the Spark Center: the soft landings program; workforce employment services; small business incubator; and special projects. He discussed current

businesses being supported and explained how the center has impacted the community as well as international businesses.

Southeast Rail High Speed Corridor

Chairman Forrester called on Doug Frate, Director of Intermodal and Freight Programs, SCDOT, to give an update on the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor. The corridor runs from Florida to Washington, DC. Mr. Frate's focus for the presentation was on the section from Atlanta to Charlotte. He discussed Tier 1 of the project and the review process of three alternate routes. The project compared costs, operating speed, travel time, projected ridership, projected revenue, and environmental impacts. At the end of the study, the Greenfield Corridor was selected as the preferred route by a consortium of the federal Department of Transportation and the staff of South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina. Mr. Frate answered questions from board members including type of rail, technology used, and number of stops in the Upstate. Mr. Frate indicated that many of these topics will be addressed in Tier 2 of the project.

Appalachian Regional Freight Mobility Plan

Chairman Forrester asked Lance Estep, Principal Planner, to give an overview of the Appalachian Regional Freight Mobility Plan. Mr. Estep has been working with multiple agencies, NPO's, federal and state partners, a monthly steering committee, a quarterly advisory committee, as well as the public to come up with the components of the plan. Freight projects, policies, and programs were recommended. The projects were prioritized through a ranking process. Mr. Estep answered questions and discussed possible funding options. A link to the plan is available to the ACOG website.

Amendment to the 2021-2027 ACOG Regional TIP (Transportation Improvement Program)

On behalf of Jane Hall, Chair of the Regional Transportation Committee, Mr. Estep explained that a SCDOT project at US 76 and Welpine Road in Anderson County is estimated to cost more than was originally planned. There is a motion from the Regional Transportation Committee to approve the updated cost estimate. Chairman Forrester called for a vote. The motion was approved unanimously.

Action Item

Personnel Committee Report

Chairman Forrester introduced Brandy Amidon, from the Personnel Committee. Ms. Amidon stated that the Aging Services program needs an additional Information Referral/Assistance Specialist to keep up with the demands of seniors in the region. This is a federally funded position. There is a motion from the Personnel Committee to approve the new position. Chairman Forrester called for a vote. The motion was approved unanimously.

Action Item

Executive Director's Report

Chairman Forrester asked Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director's report. The governor's office announced that ARPA funds are available to smaller jurisdictions. Even though Treasury rules are still being developed, it is advised to go ahead and acquire the money to earn interest while waiting for final instructions. Mr. Pelissier congratulated Mr. Estep on winning national recognition with the NADO (National Association of Development Organizations) Innovation Award for the Freight Mobility Plan.

The next board meeting will be held on September 24, 2021, at 10:30 AM. AGOG will watch the COVID numbers in the upcoming weeks and make a decision on where and how the meeting will be held.

Members' Report

Ms. Littlejohn stated that after much hard work, a Piggly Wiggly grocery store will be opening in the south side of Spartanburg at the first of the year.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Mike Forrester, Chairman

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

