

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
March 26, 2009
6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

BEAUFORT COUNTY:

Donnie Beer
Gerald Dawson
Brian Flewelling
Herbert Glaze
Mary Beth Heyward
Hank Johnston
William McBride
Joseph McDomick
James Outlaw
John Safay
Jerry Stewart
George Williams

Lisa Sulka

COLLETON COUNTY:

Esther Black
Joseph Flowers
Burley Lyons
Vic Nettles
George White

Evon Robinson (Proxy to E. Black)
Gene Whetsell
Bill Young (Proxy to V. Nettles)

HAMPTON COUNTY:

Frankie Bennett
Jimmy Bilka
J. L. Goodwin
Lloyd Griffith
Pete Hagood
Buddy Phillips

Nat Shaffer

JASPER COUNTY:

Gary Hodges
George Hood
Henry Lawton
Gwen Smith

Roy Powell

GUESTS:

Tim Bennett, Town of Bluffton; Craig Forrest, LRTA; Louise Moore, SCDOT;
Celia Price, guest of Esther Black; Brad Samuel, SCANA Corporation; Jeff
Slocum, City of Hardeeville

STAFF:

Chris Bickley, Ginnie Kozak, Sherry Smith, Carol Stonebraker

Chairman Heyward called the March 26, 2009 Lowcountry Council of Governments regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Henry Lawton gave the invocation. Introduction of guests and staff followed. Minutes of the February 26, 2009 minutes were unanimously approved on motion by Henry Lawton and with a second from Joe Flowers. Proxies presented by the Executive Director included Evon Robinson to Esther Black and Bill Young to Vic Nettles. Both were general

proxies. Tim Bennett attended for Lisa Sulka and Jeff Slocum for Roy Powell. The meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present.

Chairman Heyward called for Old Business and recognized Chris Bickley to review LCOG Building Expansion Plans. A review memo was in meeting packets. Chris requested that the Board reactivate its building expansion plans, authorize the architect to finalize construction plans and authorize staff to pursue grant funding and to prepare an overall financing package. Plans would come before the Board for final approval. Jim Outlaw moved to approve the recommendation, and following a second from Lloyd Griffith, the motion carried with all in favor.

The Chairman asked Chris Bickley to continue with the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Update for Michelle Knight, who was at training in Columbia. Information was mailed to board members prior to the meeting and included in meeting packets. Chris asked that the Board consider the proposed financing policy revisions to strengthen language on additional collateral. Joe Flowers moved to approve the proposed changes. Vic Nettles seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Chairman Heyward addressed Loan Review Committee membership and opened the matter for discussion. She reviewed committee membership. Joe McDomick made a motion that the Jasper County delegation meet to select its technical appointee. Vic Nettles seconded the motion. Discussion continued about appointee requirements and the need for active membership. It was noted that some time had elapsed since the last committee meeting due to new loan activity having been on hold. Current technical members would be contacted to confirm they wanted to remain on the committee. The Chairman called for a vote on Judge McDomick's motion, and it was unanimously approved. Chris Bickley reported that two businesses were interested in submitting applications, but the COG would not accept anything until the Board was comfortable with the committee and policies.

Chairman Heyward addressed New Business and recognized Transportation Committee Chairman George Williams to report on its meeting held earlier that day. Information about regional ARRA transportation projects was in meeting packets, and Mr. Williams reviewed the documents including primary and secondary route resurfacing allocations, Interstate projects, bridge repair, and traffic engineering as well as a summary of ARRA distribution by congressional district. He noted the SCDOT Commission made ARRA project selection and allocations and that no action was required by the Board. Jasper County had one Interstate resurfacing project between mile markers 18-24. Bridge repair included the Bridge over Calpen Swamp in Colleton County, and the Bridge to Knowles Island in Jasper County would be added. Colleton County had one (traffic engineering) Interstate pavement remarking project. Mr. Williams commented on the congressional district summary. He said the region's share of South Carolina ARRA transportation funds had not been finalized but was estimated to be between \$7-9M. Only shovel-ready projects qualified for consideration. The projects to widen Simmonsville Road from US 278 to Bluffton Parkway and Widening from US 278 to Bluffton Village were expected to be funded from that allocation.

Chris Bickley reported he had spoken to the District 2 Commissioner, who strongly supports the two projects, and that it was his understanding the project list required Board endorsement. Chris recommended adopting a resolution endorsing the list and authorizing him to work out the final appropriate language with DOT. George Williams moved to approve the recommendation, and Jim Outlaw seconded the motion. Discussion followed: Unlike STIP, where the Board submits projects to DOT for funding consideration, SCDOT Commissioners select ARRA projects. The Lowcountry region has several important transportation projects needing funding, but ARRA regulations require shovel-ready status, and guidelines require a start-date within 120 days. Effort would continue to promote funding the other projects on the list. Chairman Heyward called for a vote on Mr. Williams' motion, and it was unanimously approved.

George Williams reported on other items from the committee meeting: The environmental assessment on Highway 17 in Jasper County had begun. The COG had been notified that DOT would recommend additional intersection safety improvement projects. Staff would obtain the list, which would be reviewed at

the next committee meeting and ranked based on the Board-approved revised decision-making matrix that was expected to be approved by the DOT Commission at its April meeting. DOT also had asked for preliminary road-widening projects for assessment, and staff would submit three projects for viability evaluation should more funds become available. No Board action was required; specific project information is attached below as an addendum to the minutes. Ginnie Kozak added that the three projects would be selected from the long-rang plan approved by the Board two years ago.

Sherry Smith was recognized to present independent auditor proposal evaluations. Summaries were mailed to board members prior to the meeting and included in meeting packets. Sherry reviewed information submitted by the four CPA firms that had responded to the COG's Request for Proposals. Staff recommended extending the engagement of McGregor and Company. Chris Bickley said it was not unusual for the COG to contract for a second three-year term with an auditor; however, a different auditor must be selected once that term ends. Following discussion, Jim Outlaw moved to extend the McGregor and Company engagement, and after a second by Pete Hagood, the motion carried with all in favor.

Chris Bickley was recognized to discuss ARRA/Stimulus Committee Designation. Staff recommended that the COG Board Executive Committee be designated to act, as needed, on behalf of LCOG on any matters related to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Joe Flowers moved to accept the recommendation, and following a second by Jim Outlaw, the motion carried with all in favor.

Chairman Heyward called for Reports and recognized Sherry Smith for the February Finance Report. Copies were in meeting packets. Sherry reviewed the report noting that Operations was somewhat behind but should catch up over the next two months and that Title IX may require adjusting during the next budget revision. An additional restricted funds line item would be added to the Balance Sheet for the new Transfer of Development Rights contract. The report was received as information.

Chris Bickley was recognized for the Community & Economic Development Report. Michelle Knight was unable to attend the meeting. Copies were in meeting packets. Chris submitted the report as written noting there were 41 active projects and that the department was working with seven communities to submit project applications during the spring funding round. The report was accepted as information.

Chairman Heyward asked Chris Bickley to continue with the Director's Report. Copies were in meeting packets, and Chris reviewed selected items: In addition to its regular funding, the Workforce Development program would receive \$1.7M in ARRA stimulus funding, including \$675K for a new summer youth program. The SCDOT Commission planned to hold its April 16 meeting at LCOG, and the COG would host a dinner for the commission April 15. Chris presented and recommended approval of a resolution required to apply for SCDOT Mass Transit planning funds stating that the Board understands local matching funds are required. The resolution related to a second grant separate from the resolution approved at the last meeting. Following discussion, Bill McBride moved to adopt the resolution, and following a second from Henry Lawton, the motion carried with all in favor. Chris drew attention to new census estimates and unemployment charts in the meeting packets. He announced that the Aging Department would receive \$100K ARRA funds for group and home delivered meals that would require match from providers but not the COG. The US Department of Energy announced that Beaufort County is one of the larger jurisdictions that will receive a formula allocation of \$636K for the energy stimulus program and that the remaining jurisdictions will compete for funding through the State energy office. \$9.5M is available and expected to be coordinated state-wide through the Councils of Government.

There were no comments during Council Time, and with no additional business to address, and on motion duly made, seconded and approved, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m. Copies of the agenda were distributed prior to the meeting. A notice of the meeting was posted on the LCOG bulletin board at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

L. Chriswell Bickley, Jr.
Executive Director

Attachments

ADDENDUM:

The three projects for which SCDOT will undertake Advanced Project Planning Reports--at no cost to LCOG and involving no commitment by LCOG--are:

1. Widen US 321 from US 17 to Hardeeville city limits (Jasper County)
2. Improve the US 278/SC 68 intersection to facilitate hurricane evacuation (Hampton County)
3. Widen SC 64 from US 17 to I 95 (Colleton County).