

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

January 28, 2010

6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

BEAUFORT COUNTY:

Gerald Dawson
Brian Flewelling
Herbert Glaze
Mary Beth Heyward
Bill McBride
Joseph McDomick
James Outlaw
Jerry Stewart
Lisa Sulka
George Williams

Donnie Beer (Proxy to J. Bilka)
Bill Ferguson (Proxy to G. Williams)

COLLETON COUNTY:

Esther Black
Joseph Flowers
Burley Lyons
Vic Nettles
Evon Robinson
Gene Whetsel
Bill Young

George White

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:

Anthony Barrett, Bluffton Town Manager; Ted Felder, Hardeeville Interim City Manager; Ceila Price, guest of Esther Black; Brad Samuel, SCANA Corp.; Greer Scoggins, Sembler Corp.; Paul Sommerville, Beaufort County Council

STAFF:

Chris Bickley, Michelle Knight, Ginnie Kozak, Sherry Smith, Carol Stonebraker, Marville Thompson

Chairman Hood called the January 28, 2010 Lowcountry Council of Governments regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Evon Robinson gave the invocation. Introduction of guests and staff followed. Minutes of the October 22, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved on motion by Henry Lawton with a second from Jimmy Bilka. Proxies presented by the

Executive Director included Donnie Beer to Jimmy Bilka and Bill Ferguson to George Williams. Both were general proxies. The meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present. Nat Shaffer moved to approve the 2010 LCOG Board Meeting Schedule as presented, and following a second by Mary Beth Heyward, the motion carried with all in favor.

Chairman Hood reordered Agenda Item II. 1. Lowcountry Regional Development Corporation Audit to allow time for the auditor to join the meeting.

Chairman Hood opened a Public Hearing on the Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium (LRHC) Program Amendments for Years 2006 and 2007. Michelle Knight was recognized to conduct the hearing for Affordable Housing Manager Barbara Johnson, who was unable to attend. The hearing had been properly advertised, review information was mailed to board members prior to the meeting and the final summary was in meeting packets. Michelle presented the HOME Advisory Committee recommendations: reallocate PY 2006 funds from a previously approved project that did not go forward to: \$100K for first-time homebuyers down-payment assistance, \$50K for tenant-based rental assistance, and all remaining PY 2006 funds to be used for housing rehabilitation; allocate all leftover funds from any PY 2007 project to housing rehabilitation, and approval of two projects: a \$150K tenant-based rental assistance project in Beaufort County administered by the Beaufort Housing Authority, and a \$100K down-payment assistance program administered by the COG. Discussion followed during which Michelle said all 2006/2007 funds must be obligated before June 30, although project completion dates were later. Nat Shaffer asked if the Beaufort Housing Authority tenant-based rental assistance project extended to the other three counties. Michelle responded no, because the Beaufort Housing Authority could only serve Beaufort County, and the housing authority that serves the other three counties had not responded to the request for interest. Chairman Hood opened discussion for public comments and there were none. He declared the hearing closed.

There were no items of Old Business on the Agenda. Chairman Hood addressed New Business and called for action on the LRHC Program Amendments for Program Years 2006 and 2007 as reviewed during the public hearing. Henry Lawton moved to approve the amendments as presented, and following a second by Brian Flewelling, the motion carried by majority with one opposing vote from Nat Shaffer.

Ginnie Kozak was recognized to present amendments to the Lowcountry STIP list to include Intersection Improvements and SC 68 Transportation Environmental Permits updates/renewals. Copies in meeting packets corrected one omission on the draft mailed prior to the meeting. Ginnie reviewed the information noting that the Board at its September meeting had endorsed most projects on the list. She reported that SCDOT engineers had determined during site inspections that appropriate safety improvements could be made at some of the high-accident intersections for about \$1-5K each. Additional funding from SCDOT would be available for the intersection at SC 46/S-29 and the one at US 21/SC 280. Following Board approval, the amended STIP list would be submitted for inclusion in the official SCDOT list. The SCDOT Commission would meet for final review, and once approved, updates to environmental permits for the SC 68 project could begin, with the goal of having it ready to bid should additional federal stimulus funds become available. Ginnie announced the Transportation Committee would meet soon to develop new policies and objectives for the regional long-range transportation plan, which would incorporate transportation plans from the four county's comprehensive plans. Discussion followed. Joe Flowers requested that the intersection at Highway 64/601 in Colleton County be brought to SCDOT's attention because of its high number of fatal accidents. Ginnie took an action item to have it added for

consideration in the next round. Responding to questions, she clarified that intersections at SC 64/S-867 and US 278/S-195 had been added since September and that the \$500K to update environmental permits for SC 68 was based on SCDOT's recommended estimate. Chris Bickley said that SCDOT determines who updates permits, which are state and federal requirements. Pete Hagood moved to approve the list. Henry Lawton seconded the motion, and it carried with all in favor.

The Chairman recognized Marvile Thompson for an overview of a new Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). Fact sheets were mailed prior to the meeting and copies were in meeting packets. Marvile presented information about upcoming changes in the Lowcountry Agency on Aging (AAA). It will become one of the state's Aging and Disability Resource Centers, a program of the Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging already active in several South Carolina regions. The program expands services for seniors to all disabled adults, regardless of age. Staff training to prepare for the added responsibilities would begin soon and be followed by a marketing effort to educate the public about the program. Marvile responded to questions and said the ADRC will work with other agencies to form partnerships and that, following staff training, inter-agency training would be scheduled at the COG. Chairman Hood thanked Marvile for the information.

Chairman Hood recognized Lesley Kelly with McGregor & Company to present the Lowcountry Regional Development Corporation (LRDC) audit as of September 30, 2009 and 2008. Draft audit reports were mailed to board members prior to the meeting and final copies were in meeting packets. Ms. Kelly presented the independent auditor's report noting it represented McGregor & Company's unqualified opinion and had been conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. She reported that very little LRDC activity had occurred since the previous audit. Chris Bickley reminded everyone that LRDC is an important economic development tool for the region. Joe Flowers moved to accept the report as information, and following a second from Henry Lawton, the motion carried with all in favor.

Sherry Smith was recognized for the Mid-year Finance Report. Copies were in meeting packets. Sherry reported Operations were in line with budget after up-front facility expansion expenses had been transferred to its separate account following loan approval. She pointed out that Accounts Receivable remained much higher than normal in November and December due to slow reimbursements related to transitioning to the state's new accounting system and that the issue should soon resolve itself. Pete Hagood moved to accept the report as information, and following a second from Brian Flewelling, the motion carried with all in favor.

Michelle Knight was recognized for the Community and Economic Development Report. Copies were in meeting packets. Michelle submitted the report as written and commented on current activity. She reported that two of the four fall projects were approved, and those two had been funded at levels more than requested. The COG met production timeline on the stimulus project and has a signed construction contract. The Colleton County Quick Jobs Center is very close to having an approved contract. Michelle said the State expects to have additional monies for CDBG projects due to both increased funding and funds returned from completed under-budget projects. She reviewed types of projects that may be submitted for each funding round and requested that everyone begin thinking about needs of their communities and to work with her to develop good projects and more of them due to the favorable conditions. Following discussion, Chris Bickley urged everyone to apply for the extra funds. The report was accepted as information.

The Chairman recognized Chris Bickley for the Director's Report. Copies were in meeting packets. Chris reviewed facility expansion progress and said there had been unexpected delays but that contractor activity would begin soon. Local jurisdictions were strongly encouraged to actively engage in promoting the 2010 Census. All the COG's energy efficiency grants were approved as submitted except for the Colleton County grant, which had been reduced by \$5K. Chris reported that he and LCOG Planning Director Ginnie Kozak were working with SCDOT staff on an ARRA II projects list. Regional unemployment remains a serious concern, and dramatic reductions in 208 Plan conformance certifications reflect ongoing downturn in area construction. Copies of 2009 Board Meeting Attendance charts were distributed for review.

Chairman Hood delayed the Executive Session and opened Council Time. Gary Hodges spoke about a proposed large development project in Hardeeville and followed with a motion to have the Okatie Crossings project on the February agenda for discussion and have the Executive Director draft a resolution of support to be voted up or down at the meeting. Vic Nettles seconded the motion. It was agreed that interested parties would be invited to present. The motion carried with all in favor.

Lloyd Griffith commented about the crucial importance of everyone working to have a good 2010 Census count noting that South Carolina had been 49th in not having a good 2000 Census count.

Chairman Hood called for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. Henry Lawton moved to enter Executive Session, and following a second by Pete Hagood the motion carried with all in favor. Afterwards, the meeting returned to Open Session.

With no additional business to address, and on motion duly made, seconded and approved, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:40 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