

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

February 24, 2011

6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

BEAUFORT COUNTY:

Gerald Dawson
Bill Ferguson
Brian Flewelling
Herbert Glaze
Bill McBride
Joseph McDomick
James Outlaw
Jerry Stewart
George Williams

Donnie Beer (Proxy to B. Flewelling)
Mary Beth Heyward
Lisa Sulka (Proxy to Chair)

COLLETON COUNTY:

Esther S. Black
Joseph Flowers
Larry (Babe) Hutto
Evon Robinson
Gene Whetsel
Bill Young

Vic Nettles (Proxy to B. Young)

HAMPTON COUNTY:

Frankie Bennett
Charles Boyles, Jr.
J. L. Goodwin
Lloyd Griffith
Pete Hagood
Buddy Phillips
Nat Shaffer

JASPER COUNTY:

Sherry Carroll
Henry Lawton
Gwen Smith

Gary Hodges (Proxy to Chair)

GUESTS: Beaufort County State Senator Tom Davis; SCDOT Transportation Engineer Bill Jordan; Chanel Lewis with the City of Hardeeville; Coastal Carolina Hospital CEO Bill Masterton; retiring board member Dr. George Hood; Celia Price, guest of Esther Black; Beaufort County Councilman Paul Sommerville; SCDOT Area Planning Engineer Mike Sullivan

STAFF: Chris Bickley, Michelle Knight, Ginnie Kozak, Sherry Smith, Carol Stonebraker, Jamie Wood

The Lowcountry Council of Governments Board of Directors held its regular board meeting February 24, 2011 in the conference room of the Point South Hampton Inn. Chairman Buddy Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Evon Robinson gave the invocation. Varnville Mayor Nat Shaffer was welcomed as a returning member to the Board. Introduction of guests and staff followed. Minutes of the January 27, 2011 meeting were unanimously approved on motion by Henry Lawton with a second from Esther Black. Proxies presented by the Executive Director included Donnie Beer to Brian Flewelling, Vic Nettles to Bill Young and Lisa Sulka and Gary Hodges to the Chair. All were general proxies. The meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present.

Chairman Phillips presented retiring board member Dr. George Hood with a plaque recognizing his service on the COG Board, including his FY 2009/2010 term as Chairman. Due to a scheduling conflict,

George White was unable to attend, and Chris Bickley said Mr. White's service plaque would be sent to him.

Chairman Phillips called for Presentations and recognized South Carolina State Senator Tom Davis for an update on the Jasper Ocean Terminal. Senator Davis thanked everyone for the invitation to speak on the project. Noting Jasper County's long effort to have a shipping port on its side of the Savannah River, Senator Davis briefly reviewed Georgia and South Carolina's agreement to jointly develop the Jasper Port. He reported on an environmental impact statement issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding dredging the Savannah River, whereby those dredging spoils would be dumped until the year 2060 on the proposed 1,500 acre Jasper Port site instead of elsewhere on the Corps' 10,000 acre site. Senator Davis said that not releasing the easement for the Jasper Port site was in conflict with the intergovernmental agreement between the two states and Congressional directive to the Corps to release the easement. Georgia and South Carolina have contributed about \$2 million for studies the Corps said must be done before releasing that easement.

Senator Davis understands that the Savannah River dredging project faces significant concerns from the City of Savannah over how it may affect water supply, from shipping operators that believe further dredging would make the harbor channel V-shaped and more difficult to navigate, and opposition from various environmental groups. The Senator made several points including that South Carolina doesn't believe Georgia is acting in good faith; private money is ready to build the Jasper terminal as soon as the Corps of Engineers' dredging spoils easement is lifted; and he does not think Georgia will be allowed to deepen the Savannah Harbor. He believes Georgia will come to support its role in the Jasper terminal development as being in its best interest because the site is logistically better suited to handling the next generation of super ships.

Senator Davis said the Jasper Port is the most important issue in the Lowcountry Region and that the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project (SHEP) is bringing the issue to a head. After questions and discussion, Jim Outlaw made a motion to adopt a resolution encouraging the South Carolina State Ports Authority to enforce lifting the easement. Following a second by Bill Ferguson, the motion carried with all in favor.

The Chairman recognized Coastal Carolina Hospital CEO Bill Masterton, who had requested time to update the Board about the hospital and its accomplishments. Located at I-95, Exit 8 in Hardeeville, the hospital, owned by Tenet, is a 41-bed acute-care facility with a 24/7 emergency room. Mr. Masterton reviewed inpatient, outpatient and emergency room services offered at the hospital and specialties of its professional staff. The hospital earned Joint Commission certification as a primary stroke center last year and works with neurologists at MUSC on stroke evaluation, treatment and care. It has 204 employees and paid \$1.3M in taxes in 2010. Mr. Masterton invited everyone to Coastal Carolina's Open House event on March 10. Following discussion, Chairman Phillips thanked Mr. Masterton for the information.

Chairman Phillips called for Old Business, and hearing none, proceeded to New Business. Michelle Knight was recognized to present a Lowcountry Regional HOME Project for consideration. A summary was in meeting packets. Affordable Housing Manager Barbara Johnson was unable to attend the meeting. Michelle reviewed the project, which would rehabilitate 16 owner-occupied housing units in the Doodle Hill neighborhood of the City of Walterboro in Colleton County. The requested \$150,000 HOME funds would complement the City's CDBG safety improvement grant by funding interior housing repairs not covered under CDBG. Michelle said the Affordable Housing Committee recommended approval. Joe Flowers moved to approve the request, and following a second from Evon Robinson, the motion carried with all in favor. Chris Bickley commented on the importance of coordinating funding sources, which this project does.

Transportation Committee Chairman George Williams was recognized for comments on its meeting held earlier that day. An LCOG transportation program summary (thru FY 2015) was in meeting packets. Mr. Williams reported that SCDOT had added environmental impact factors to the decision-making matrix used to rank projects. The Board will, at its next meeting, review and take action on a proposal from Ginnie Kozak to update regional transportation traffic modeling based on 2010 Census data. The committee also reviewed human services transportation coordination, and it has asked Ginnie to add several projects to the STIP list, including continuation of four-laning Hwy 68 in Hampton County to the industrial park. Mr. Williams said the COG expects to have approximately \$40M available for local transportation projects over the next 5 years and that a project report and ranking proposal would be presented at the April board meeting.

Chairman Phillips called for Reports and recognized Sherry Smith for the January Finance Report. Copies were in meeting packets and Sherry reviewed the information. She said that, with the addition occupied, depreciation can be booked starting with the February report. A budget revision request will be presented at the next meeting. Chris Bickley responded to a question and said the building project is expected to come in slightly under budget and that remaining work seemed to be progressing faster. The report was accepted as information.

Michelle Knight was recognized for the Community and Economic Development Report. Copies were in meeting packets and Michelle submitted the report as written. She reminded everyone that spring funding round applications must be submitted by March 18. C&ED staff recently participated in a webinar regarding new federal budget proposals. Michelle recommended that board members contact their Congressperson to share examples of how the CDBG program has benefited local communities. The report was accepted as information.

Chris Bickley was recognized for the Director's Report. Copies were in meeting packets and submitted as written. Chris briefed the Board about the possibility the Workforce CNC project for TCL in Varnville could be in jeopardy if deadline was not met and reviewed alternate options should the project not go forward. During discussion Joe Flowers made a motion that the Board send a letter to TCL President Dr. Thomas Leitzel expressing its concerns about the project. Bill Young seconded the motion. Following brief additional discussion, the motion carried by majority in a show-of-hand vote.

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 7:35 p.m. Copies of the agenda were distributed prior to the meeting. A notice of the meeting and its location change 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