

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
April 28, 2011
6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

	<u>PRESENT:</u>	<u>ABSENT:</u>
BEAUFORT COUNTY:	Donnie Beer Gerald Dawson Brian Flewelling Herbert Glaze Mary Beth Heyward Bill McBride Joseph McDomick James Outlaw Jerry Stewart George Williams	Bill Ferguson Lisa Sulka
COLLETON COUNTY:	Esther S. Black Joseph Flowers Larry (Babe) Hutto Evon Robinson Gene Whetsel Bill Young	Vic Nettles (Proxy to B. Young)
HAMPTON COUNTY:	Charles Boyles Lloyd Griffith Pete Hagood Buddy Phillips Nat Shaffer	Frankie Bennett J. L. Goodwin
JASPER COUNTY:	LeRoy Blackshear Gary Hodges Henry Lawton Gwen Smith	Sherry Carroll
GUESTS:	SCDOT Commissioner Craig Forrest; Celia Price, guest of Esther Black	
STAFF:	Chris Bickley, Ginnie Kozak, Michelle Knight, Jonathan Sherwood, Sherry Smith, Carol Stonebraker, Jamie Wood	

The Lowcountry Council of Governments Board of Directors held its regular board meeting on April 28, 2011 at its Point South facility. Chairman Buddy Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Evon Robinson gave the invocation. Jasper County Council Chairman LeRoy Blackshear was welcomed as a new board member. Introduction of guests and staff followed. Minutes of the February 24, 2011 meeting were unanimously approved on motion by Henry Lawton and second from Joe McDomick. The Executive Director presented one general proxy from Vic Nettles to Bill Young, and the meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present.

Chairman Phillips opened a Public Hearing on the Beaufort County/Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium (LRHC) 2011 Annual Action Plan. The public hearing had been properly advertised in regional publications. The plan's executive summary and funding estimates were mailed to board members before the meeting and copies were in meeting packets. Michelle Knight was recognized to conduct the hearing for Barbara Johnson. Michelle noted that the hearing was the fourth of five public hearings advertised and held in the region including Beaufort, Hampton and Jasper Counties with the fifth scheduled in Colleton County the following Tuesday. Final documents must be submitted with comments to HUD by May 17. Michelle reviewed the Plan's required goals, challenges of developing affordable, safe and decent housing for regional low-income citizens and LRHC's obligation to see that resources are used effectively.

Michelle continued with a review of HOME funding proposed for program year 2011-2012. Michelle reported that estimates were based on 2010 funding because 2011 awards had not been determined when the summary was prepared and subsequently recommended for approval by the Advisory Committee. Since then, the tentative allocation reported to the COG decreased to \$669K, which Michelle said remained subject to change and could create a need to look at other resources. She reviewed the proposed division of funds between the four counties and by project activity including single or multifamily new construction affordable housing, single family housing rehabilitation, rental property rehabilitation and tenant-based rental assistance.

Discussion followed and Michelle responded to questions. She said the greatest need for affordable housing was in Beaufort and Jasper Counties due to heavier populations and that there is significant need to rehabilitate existing housing in the region; few dollars are available for improvements to mobile homes; and supplemental funding by CDBG grants can only be used for single family housing. Michelle said that staff had not discussed funding decrease scenarios, but if necessary, she expected they would be distributed across projects.

Chairman Phillips called for public comments. There were none and he closed the hearing.

Chairman Phillips called for Old Business and recognized Sherry Smith to present Agency FY 2010-2011 Budget Revisions. Copies were in meeting packets, and Sherry reviewed the information. The board approved the original budget about ten months ago, and the proposed revisions would adjust it to actual activity. Sherry emphasized the importance of local funds from the counties and the state to provide required match for numerous programs and funds for larger purchases, such as vehicles. State budget cuts over the last few years have caused a need for some fund balance dollars to be used for such items. She also reminded everyone that the COG operates on a reimbursement basis and is paid only after funds have been expended. Discussion followed, after which Brian Flewelling moved to approve the budget revisions as presented. The motion carried with all in favor following a second from Mary Beth Heyward.

Chairman Phillips addressed New Business and called for action on the HOME 2011 Annual Action Plan discussed during the public hearing. The Affordable Housing Committee recommended approval. Joe Flowers moved to approve the plan as submitted, and following a second from Joe McDomick, the motion carried with all in favor.

The Chairman recognized Michelle Knight to present several HOME projects for consideration. A summary had been mailed to board members prior to the meeting, and copies were in meeting packets. The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee had at its March 16, 2011 meeting approved raising maximum project amount from \$150K to \$300K depending on project size and activity. Michelle reviewed the funding requests: \$225K to Jasper County Neighbors United (JCNU) to rehabilitate nine owner-occupied houses in Beaufort County; \$150K to the Town of Yemassee to rehabilitate six owner-occupied houses in Hampton County with the COG administering the project for the Town; \$150K to the City of Beaufort to rehabilitate six owner-occupied houses in its Northwest Quadrant and in conjunction with the City's CDBG grant; \$150K to JCNU for interior rehabilitation of 42 rental units in Jasper County, which is a follow-on request to

funds awarded in 2010 addressing exterior renovations; \$100K to Beaufort Housing Authority to construct three new single family rental homes on in-fill lots in the City of Beaufort and one in the Town of Port Royal; \$150K to Beaufort-Jasper EOC to rehabilitate six owner-occupied houses in Beaufort County. All projects require local funds. The Affordable Housing Committee recommended approval.

Discussion followed during which committee member Gerald Dawson said more emphasis was placed on rehab due to the poor economy. He reported that the committee had visited Jasper County projects in March for a first-hand look at how the program was working, and Beaufort County visits are planned next. Chris Bickley noted that staff was constantly looking for projects in Colleton County, and Michelle Knight spoke about the need for strong partners to help in Colleton County. Gwen Johnson made a motion to approve all the projects as presented, and following a second from Bill McBride, the motion unanimously carried.

Chairman Phillips requested that Sherry Smith present proposed actions regarding the Title IX Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Portfolio. A summary was mailed to board members prior to the meeting, and copies were in meeting packets. Sherry reviewed requests to write off three non-performing loans stressing that doing so would not restrict or end effort to collect. Atlanta EDA suggested the actions, and staff recommended approval. There was considerable discussion about efforts to collect these loans and RLF program restrictions with the understanding and consensus that writing off the loans would improve the portfolio appearance and allow consideration of new loans, but doing so would in no way forgive the loans or restrict efforts to collect or take actions regarding collateral. Afterwards, Pete Hagood made a motion to approve the requests as presented, and Jim Outlaw seconded. The motion carried without exception.

Transportation Committee Chairman George Williams was recognized for recommendations from the committee at its meeting held earlier that afternoon. Mr. Williams presented three requests for approval:

- Remove the US 17 widening at Savannah from the STIP. Funding was only to begin the environmental review process, but new federal regulations prohibit this until construction funds are committed, which can not be done at this time. Mr. Williams moved to approve the action, and following a second from Jim Outlaw, the motion unanimously carried. The board further agreed the executive director would review the action with State Senator Tom Davis.
 - Allocate \$100K to the cost of a new, truly regional traffic demand model. Beaufort County and some of its municipalities are also contributing. Mr. Williams moved to approve the action, and following a second from Herbert Glaze, the motion unanimously carried.
 - Allocate \$3M a year for up to three years to widen Hwy. 68 in Hampton County to the regional industrial park. Mr. Williams moved to approve the action, and following a second from Pete Hagood, the motion unanimously carried.
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Chairman Phillips called for Reports and recognized Sherry Smith for the March Finance Report. Copies were in meeting packets. Sherry reviewed the numbers noting they had been posted against the original budget. The report was unanimously accepted as information on motion by Pete Hagood and second from Mary Beth Heyward.

Michelle Knight was recognized for the Community and Economic Development Report. Copies were in meeting packets. Michelle submitted the report as written noting that seven CDBG applications had been submitted during the spring funding round. Following brief discussion, the report was unanimously accepted as information on motion by Joe Flowers and second from Mary Beth Heyward.

Chris Bickley was recognized for the Director's Report. Copies were in meeting packets. Chris reported on facility expansion progress and reviewed regional population growth detailed in new 2010 Census data included in meeting packets. He requested authorization to change the Workforce Development Director's job description to comply with the state's interpretation of federal ADA requirements. The changes are not substantive. Bill McBride moved to approve the request, and after being duly seconded, the motion carried with all in favor.

There were no comments during Council Time. Having no additional business to address, a motion to adjourn was made by Jim Outlaw. Following a second from Pete Hagood, the motion carried with all in favor. Chairman Phillips adjourned the meeting at 8:15 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