

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

April 26, 2012

6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

<b>BEAUFORT COUNTY:</b>	Gerald Dawson Bill Ferguson Brian Flewelling Herbert Glaze Mary Beth Heyward Bill McBride Joseph McDomick Jerry Stewart Lisa Sulka George Williams	James Outlaw (Proxy to G. Dawson)
<b>COLLETON COUNTY:</b>	Esther Black Joseph Flowers Larry Hutto Tommy Mann Evon Robinson Gene Whetsel Bill Young	
<b>HAMPTON COUNTY:</b>	Frankie Bennett Charles Boyles Lloyd Griffith Pete Hagood Buddy Phillips	J. L. Goodwin Nat Shaffer
<b>JASPER COUNTY:</b>	Sherry Carroll Henry Lawton Joey Malphrus Gwen Smith	LeRoy Blackshear

**GUESTS:** Celia Price, guest of Esther Black; Fred Reed, Access Network Affordable Housing Program; Brad Samuel, SCANA C/ED & Local Government Representative; and from South Carolina Department of Transportation: Craig Forrest, District 2 Commissioner; Alan Matienzo, Assistant Program Manager; Brent Rewis, Lowcountry Program Manager, Bill Jordan, Transportation Planner; Mike Sullivan, Area Planning Engineer

**STAFF:** Chris Bickley, Barbara Johnson, Michelle Knight, Ginnie Kozak, Sherry Smith, Carol Stonebraker

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Chairman Bill Young called the April 26, 2012 Lowcountry Council of Governments regular board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Pete Hagood gave the invocation. Introduction of guests and staff followed. Minutes of the February 23, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved on motion by Joe Flowers with a second from Lloyd Griffith. The Executive Director presented one general proxy from Jim Outlaw to Gerald Dawson. The meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present.

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Chairman Young reordered the Agenda to allow SCDOT Area Planning Engineer Mike Sullivan to comment on information shared at the Transportation Committee meeting so that he could depart for Columbia. Mr. Sullivan presented preliminary information on a new Hilton Head MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization). Hilton Head Island, Bluffton and some unincorporated areas south of the Broad River in Beaufort County have been designated as an urban area by the Census Bureau and will become a separate area for SCDOT GuidesShare funding. A map of the area based on recently released 2010 Census data was in meeting packets. Mr. Sullivan said each MPO has one year to establish new boundaries, to be agreed upon by the state, and SCDOT expects a draft plan from the new MPO by August. He responded to questions. SCDOT has been talking to the Towns of Bluffton and Hilton Head Island and Beaufort County and expects to have ongoing conversations with them and to provide technical assistance. SCDOT determines how to allot funds for system upgrades (maintenance and preservation) for existing roads, which is funded separate from MPO (urban) and COG (rural) area new projects. Other areas, defined as urban clusters, may have characteristics of an urban area but do not meet the MPO population requirement of 50K or greater. Questions remain and Mr. Sullivan said he hopes to have more information by fall.

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Prior to opening the HOME Annual Action Plan Public Hearing, Chairman Young noted Fred Reed had joined the meeting. Mr. Reed, with Access Network's housing program, introduced himself and spoke briefly about affordable housing assistance provided by Access Network.

Notice of the Public Hearing had been properly advertised in regional newspapers. Summaries were mailed to board members prior to the meeting and included in meeting packets.

Chairman Young opened the Public Hearing at 6:52 p.m. and recognized Affordable Housing Manager Barbara Johnson to present the plan. Barbara said the public hearing was being held to receive comments on the annual action plan, which is due to HUD May 15. The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee met earlier this month and recommended approval of the Regional HOME Consortium Action Plan for 2012-2013. All activities support the Lowcountry Regional HOME Consortium's primary objective to provide safe, decent and affordable housing for all groups identified as being in need of housing assistance. Funding for all HUD programs decreased about 30% from last year. The Lowcountry program has \$540K for the new fiscal year—a significant reduction. With less funding for the program, Barbara reported that the Committee recommended limiting activities to Affordable Housing, which can be homeownership or rental housing, and Single Family Rehabilitation, which is owner-occupied housing. The program operates in Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties. Barbara responded to questions and said that CHDO is an acronym for Community Housing Development Organization. Designated CHDOs receive some funding through the HOME Consortium. All local match funds are used for activities and not administration. The Chairman called for public comments, and there were none. He closed the Public Hearing at 7:02 p.m., and board action followed. Brian Flewelling moved to approve the plan, and seconded by Evon Robinson, the motion unanimously carried.

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There were no items of Old Business on the Agenda. Chairman Young addressed New Business and recognized Sherry Smith to present proposals for the COG's new Outside Auditor Engagement. A summary was in meeting packets. Board members received advance copies. Sherry reported that 15 firms expressed interest and 5 responded. She reviewed their qualifications and recommended the firm of Crowley Wechsler and Associates. The contract period is for three years and may be extended another three years if the Board is satisfied with performance. Joe Flowers made a motion to accept the finance director's recommendation, and following a second by Mary Beth Heyward, the motion carried with all in favor.

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Chairman Young presented a Resolution by the Board of Directors to Apply for Transit Planning Funding. Copies were in meeting packets. Chris Bickley said it was a standard resolution required by the SCDOT Transit Division to apply for funding. Joe McDomick made a motion to adopt the resolution. Seconded by Mary Beth Heyward, the motion unanimously carried.

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Chairman Young asked Transportation Committee Chairman George Williams to report on the committee meeting held that afternoon. An updated STIP list was distributed. Mr. Williams commented on several items. Georgia and South Carolina plan to begin replacing the Back River Bridge as soon as permits are in place later this year. No COG funds are involved. One new project came forward and it was agreed to have SCDOT staff study a section of US Hwy. 15 in Walterboro, per the City's recommendation, to determine what improvements are needed to lessen the number of accidents on that section of highway. No COG funds will be used at this time, but the project may be added later to the STIP list. As recommended by the Committee, Mr. Williams made a motion to remove the proposed May River Road roundabout in Bluffton as a STIP Guideshare project. This was at the town's request. Joe Flowers seconded the motion and it carried with all in favor. Mr. Williams made another motion to increase STIP funding of the Lowcountry Regional Traffic Model project from \$80K to \$100K. Local match is \$25K and total project cost is \$125K, as had been originally estimated, and the previous amount was incorrect. Jerry Stewart seconded the motion. Discussion followed with questions about when the project would be complete. Ginnie Kozak responded and reviewed the process saying the project is expected to be complete this year. The motion carried with all in favor. No action was needed, but Chairman Williams announced that SCDOT and LCOG planning staff are gathering additional information on the use of STIP funds for enhancement project funding in the Region.

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Sherry Smith was recognized for the March Finance Report. Copies were in meeting packets. Sherry said the report represented 75% of the fiscal year and operations are near target. Line Items for Printing and Supplies are over budget largely due to expenses incurred as part of operating the regional SC Works Centers, and negotiations are underway with SCDEW to recover those costs. Budget revisions will be on the May agenda.

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Michelle Knight was recognized for the Community & Economic Development Report. Copies were in meeting packets and submitted as written. Michelle reported that two projects were submitted during the spring funding round.

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Chris Bickley was recognized for the Director's Report. Copies were in meeting packets and submitted as written. Chris commented on a scheduled non-binding mediation session regarding issues with the building project general contractor. He drew attention to handouts in the meeting packets. The 2012 Senior Expo will be held in Walterboro May 30. Regional unemployment has declined.

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During Council Time, Chairman Young invited everyone to the Rice Festival being held in Walterboro that weekend.

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With no additional business to address, and on motion duly made, seconded and approved, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:30 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