

**LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

February 28, 2013

6:30 p.m.

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:**

**ABSENT:**

**BEAUFORT COUNTY:**

Gerald Dawson  
Brian Flewelling  
Herbert Glaze  
Mary Beth Heyward  
Billy Keyserling  
Bill McBride  
Joseph McDomick  
Jerry Stewart  
Lisa Sulka  
Tabor Vaux  
George Williams

Marc A. Grant (Proxy to G. Williams)

**COLLETON COUNTY:**

Esther S. Black  
Joseph Flowers  
Larry (Babe) Hutto  
Thomas (Tommy) Mann

Evon Robinson  
Gene Whetsel  
Bill Young (Proxy to J. Flowers)

**HAMPTON COUNTY:**

Charles Boyles, Jr.  
James (Pete) Hagood  
Charles (Buddy) Phillips  
Nat Shaffer

Frankie Bennett  
J. L. Goodwin  
Lloyd Griffith

**JASPER COUNTY:**

Henry Etheridge  
Henry Lawton, Sr.  
Joey Malphrus  
Gwen Johnson Smith

Sherry Carroll

**GUESTS:**

LeRoy Blackshear and Bill Ferguson, retiring LCOG Board Members; Andy Fulghum, Jasper County Administrator; Harrison Rearden, SCDOT Commissioner District 6

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

---

Chairman Herbert Glaze called the February 28, 2013 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. Chairman Glaze welcomed Beaufort County Councilman Tabor Vaux to the Board. Introduction of guests and staff followed. SCDOT Commissioner Rearden was welcomed to the meeting. Minutes of the January 24, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved on motion by Tommy Mann with a second from Gwen Smith. Proxies presented by the Executive Director included Marc Grant to George Williams and Bill Young to Joe Flowers. Both were general proxies. The meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present.

Chairman Glaze presented plaques to retiring members LeRoy Blackshear and Bill Ferguson in recognition of their service on the LCOG Board of Directors. Mr. Blackshear said he enjoyed his time on

the Board and wished everyone well. Mr. Ferguson served two appointments to the COG Board representing the Town of Hilton Head Island. He spoke about how the experience had helped him grow personally and thanked everyone.

---

Chairman Glaze recognized Hank Amundson for a Lowcountry Workforce Development Area (LWIA) Update. Copies of the PowerPoint slides were made available.

Hank spoke about the program, its role in workforce and economic development, some of its challenges and strategies for improvement. The Lowcountry Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) is governed by the Lowcountry Workforce Investment Board (LWIB), appointed by the county councils, with representation from government agencies, partner agencies and businesses. Majority membership must be from private sector business.

Hank presented strategic goals for the program with new focus on being more aligned with private business and regional economic development and with the original mission of the Workforce Investment Act. The program increasingly is working with economic developers and businesses to be an asset when new jobs are created and help train and improve a company's workforce.

LWIA works in conjunction with its main partner, SC Department of Workforce & Development (SCDEW). SCDEW owns three of the four buildings LWIA staff works from, and the program operates under a Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA) with SCDEW in all four buildings. Staff is looking at ways to lower operating expenses and use those savings to increase local training dollars.

In addition to LWIA concerns about the RSA formula, SCDEW has centralized delivery of certain services such as unemployment insurance (UI) claims, making it more difficult for rural residents, especially those without Internet access, to obtain services. Centralized services reduce traffic in local centers resulting in fewer contacts with persons who may benefit from WIA services. Hank reported there is a push for the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) to retain an additional 10% of Workforce Investment Act money at the state level for administration, which would further reduce local training dollars.

A client training flowchart was reviewed. All new enrollees receive basic skills assessment (WorkKeys), and training is offered in four broad regional job-growth sectors identified by the LWIB as important to growing the local economy. LWIA provides Intensive Services for clients needing extra help that cannot be obtained online such as help with a resume, finding a job and other support services. Its on-the-job (OJT) program can benefit private business with help in hiring a person and compensate the business while the new-hire is in training. LWIA has a dedicated business services manager. Hank conducts business outreach to locate current or anticipated job openings. LWIA also offers traditional certificate-based training. Hank noted that, historically, most clients go through training and do not get a job until after earning a certificate. He wants to turn that around by finding the job first and train to it—whether a job through new economic development or one being added through company growth.

There have been changes at SCDEW that have caused cash flow issues at local levels statewide. SCDEW cut staff for processing unemployment insurance in Hampton and Jasper Counties. SCDEW staff reductions at the centers increase WIA expenses, which results in fewer dollars available for local training. Any additional SCDEW staff cuts would further affect regional WIA programs. Hank emphasized that the COG and LWIA are committed to full delivery of workforce investment services in all four counties. He believes there can be more diverse delivery of WIA services, and staff is looking at ways to make those services better and how to save more money that can be redirected to training.

In closing, Hank stressed the importance of communication and requested the Board's help in educating communities and businesses about the LWIA Program and its services. He asked that board members call him if they know a business that needs help.

Considerable discussion followed and Hank responded to questions. WorkKeys testing is part of the training tree and required of all new enrollees. The WIA Program receives funding for three training areas: Youth, Adult (any 18 or older unemployed), and Dislocated Worker (mass layoff, not an individual fired for cause). Funding for each area must be kept separate and cannot be mixed. Asked about examples

of how the program can help businesses, Hank said that economic development directors can call him about a potential new business—code names are used—and the skill sets and areas of expertise they have identified as needed by different groups of employees. LWIA can offer info about who is ready or who can be sent to what courses and be ready to support outreach to that business. Most companies have their own types of machinery and processes, and instead of sending people to a generic class at a technical school, often it is more beneficial to tell that business about the OJT program that allows their staff to be trained in place. WIA can reimburse a portion of a new (OJT) employee's salary for the first few months.

Chris Bickley responded to a question about SCDEW centralization saying he believes those decisions are made at State cabinet agency level. The Lowcountry has two members—James Holloway and William Ponds—on the SWIB, and we try to maintain good relationships with both and to make sure they are getting good info from us as well as State staff on items coming up. Workforce areas are concerned about the effort to increase the percentage of WIA funds held at State from 5% to 15%, which would be a big hit to regional training budgets. Chris said he thought it important to bring the WIA program to the COG Board at least once a year. It is one of the largest programs at the COG and the only one with its own policy board, the LWIB, which is set up as required by federal regulations. LWIA is committed to delivering its services to both unemployed persons and employers. Chris commended Hank and his staff for doing good work and meeting challenging circumstances.

Chairman Glaze thanked Hank for the information.

---

With no Old Business on the Agenda, Chairman Glaze addressed New Business and recognized Barbara Johnson to present proposed Regional HOME Consortium Projects for consideration. A draft projects list memo was mailed to board members prior to the meeting and later revised following the Affordable Housing Committee's February 27, 2013 meeting. A copy of the revised memo was in meeting packets. Barbara presented the information noting that the Affordable Housing Committee recommended approval. All projects require separate local match. HOME funds requested: Beaufort Housing Authority - \$131,946 for 15 units Tenant-based Rental Assistance; Hilton Head Habitat for Humanity - \$75,000 for 3 New Construction units in Bluffton; Lowcountry Habitat for Humanity - \$100,000 for 4 New Construction units in Beaufort; \$125,000 for 5 scattered-site Owner-Occupied Rehab units in Jasper County; Lowcountry Community Action Agency - \$125,000 for 5 scattered-site Owner-Occupied Rehab units in Colleton County, and \$125,000 for an additional 5 Owner-occupied Rehab units in Hampton County (4 units are currently funded.) Joe Flowers moved to approve the projects as presented and Esther Black seconded the motion. Following brief discussion, the motion unanimously carried.

Affordable Housing Committee Chairman Gerald Dawson commented on project site visits he made with other Committee members and Barbara to Hardeeville and Hampton and spoke about how gratifying it was to meet some of the participants and how grateful they were for the program.

---

Chairman Glaze called for Reports and recognized Sherry Smith for the January Finance Report. Sherry reported that Operations are on target. Aging & Disability received an additional \$90K for services as well as an additional \$15K that can be used as match. When budget revisions are made in April or May, those match funds will free local dollars allocated for that purpose. WIA just signed a new resource-sharing agreement with SCDEW. The COG budget will be revised to reflect changes.

---

Michelle Knight was recognized for the Community & Economic Development Report. Copies were in meeting packets and Michelle submitted the report as written. She reminded everyone of the March 15 deadline to submit water, sewer, and drainage projects for the spring funding round.

---

Chris Bickley was recognized for the Director's Report. A copy of the report was in meeting packets. Chris thanked SCDOT Commissioner Harrison Rearden for attending the meeting. The 208 Report listed 5 approved projects, the highest single-month activity since 2008. Unemployment numbers were not available at the time of the meeting. Chris reviewed selected items in the Director's Report. He is concerned about how the approaching federal Sequester and soon-to-expire federal budget concurrent resolution may affect COG programs, but is confident the COG is prepared to deal with Congressional decisions. Orientation for new board members will be rescheduled. The senior services provider discussed at the previous meeting is repaying overbilling following a plan agreed to by the State and LCOG. The COG has offered Hampton County Council on Aging additional transportation funds to help offset its loss of SCDOT transit dollars. Beginning July, the COG plans to conduct all aging services client assessment and qualifying in house. There may be opportunity for the 10 statewide Area Agencies on Aging to provide care management services as Medicare expands. More information will be shared as it is known. Chris responded to a question about SCDOT projects and confirmed cost updates are expected soon. Chris also shared with the Board his plans to retire at the end of 2014.

---

There were no comments during Council Time. With no additional business to address, and on motion duly made, seconded and approved, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:24 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: Jasper County board members met after the meeting and chose Henry Etheridge to serve on the Executive Committee.