

LOWCOUNTRY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

March 26, 2015

6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

PRESENT:

ABSENT:

**BEAUFORT COUNTY:**

Philip (Phil) Cromer  
Gerald Dawson  
Brian Flewelling  
Mary Beth Heyward  
Alice Howard  
Bill McBride  
Joseph McDomick  
Jerry Stewart  
Lisa Sulka

Marc A. Grant

**COLLETON COUNTY:**

Esther S. Black  
Bobby Bonds  
Jane Darby  
Joseph Flowers  
Thomas (Tommy) Mann  
Evon Robinson  
Gene Whetsell

**HAMPTON COUNTY:**

Frankie Bennett  
James (Pete) Hagood  
Charles (Buddy) Phillips  
Nat Shaffer

Travis (Pete) Mixon

**JASPER COUNTY:**

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

**GUESTS:** Frank Eskridge, Chief Technical Services Officer, Beaufort-Jasper Water Sewer Association; Celia Price, guest of Esther Black; Brad Samuel, SCANA C&ED & Local Government Representative; Becky Shaffer, wife of Board Chairman Nat Shaffer

**STAFF:** Hank Amundson, Sabrena Graham, Michelle Knight, Ginnie Kozak, Jonathan Sherwood, Sherry Smith, Carol Stonebraker

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Chairman Nat Shaffer called the March 26, 2015 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 January 22, 2015 meeting were unanimously approved on motion by Henry Lawton with a second from Pete Hagood. The Executive Director reported there were no proxies. The meeting proceeded after determining a quorum was present. Chairman Shaffer presented a board service award for retiring board member Billy Keyserling. Mayor Keyserling was unable to attend, and his award will be hand-delivered by another board member.

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Chairman Shaffer recognized LCOG Planning Director Ginnie Kozak for a presentation on Planning a Public Transit System to Assist Regional Hospitals in meeting Medicare/Medicaid and Chronic Illness Management Requirements. Ginnie reviewed information about a new project through Palmetto Breeze to provide patient transportation to hospitals to help achieve chronic illness management and meet insurer requirements to prevent avoidable hospital readmissions as well as hospital revenue loss. In January, the Lowcountry Regional Transportation Coordination Consolidation Steering Committee identified public medical transportation as its top priority, and a multi-agency session was held in February bringing together hospital, medical transportation providers and social service agency representatives to discuss transportation issues regarding the Beaufort Memorial Hospital and Community Health Needs Assessment 2016. A \$25K Health Care Access Mobility Design Challenge grant has been applied for to study innovative ways to provide patient transportation. Ginnie said the partners will proceed with a pilot program at Beaufort Memorial, even if the grant is not received, and expand to other regional hospitals. A successful program will promote patient care and help the hospitals not lose money. Ginnie will update the board as work progresses.

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With no items of Old Business brought forth, and no New Business on the Agenda for discussion, Chairman Shaffer Called for Reports and recognized Sherry Smith for the February Finance Report. Sherry submitted the report noting that it represented about 67% of the fiscal year. Revenues over Expenses are at 78%; a few line items are over but should correct with budget revisions in May. Brian Flewelling asked about the legal fees line item, and Sherry explained they are Aging Department funds to assist seniors with legal issues. Interim Aging Department Director Hank Amundson said spending in that area increased to meet program requirements where they were below goal. Lisa Sulka asked about Accounts Receivable. Sherry said the COG has a \$6.5M budget and a 30-day expenditure cycle before reimbursement requests are submitted. It takes about 45-60 days for the COG to be reimbursed; they are clean, sound receivables subject to a longer reimbursement cycle.

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Michelle Knight was recognized for the Community & Economic Development Report. Michelle submitted the report as written. She thanked the fourteen local governments that recently met with the CDBG grants representative to discuss projects. The community feedback was very helpful, and the representative extended an invitation to meet annually at the COG for similar discussions. Michelle noted that C&ED is working on six spring-funding project applications—one EDA project has been submitted and results are expected in 30-45 days, and the others are due mid-April with reviews to follow.

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Chairman Shaffer recognized Hank Amundson for a Lowcountry Workforce Development Area (LWIA) Update. Hank reviewed a PowerPoint presentation about LWIA. Guided by federal legislation, it has a dedicated board of directors—Lowcountry Workforce Investment Board (LWIB)—appointed by the four counties. The LWIB meets every other month to receive information and guide activities. LWIA's mission is to help individuals with career planning, skills improvement and other needs to obtain employment. Its clients receive one-on-one assistance from field counselors. LWIA developed a process (training) tree based on client assessments and needs of major regional industry clusters as a guide to providing workforce services. The COG's program redirected its focus to better serve business needs as the best way to serve its clients—actual jobs are now identified and clients are trained to fill them—and can assist a business with many HR needs, including paying for new-hire training. Hank reviewed previously reported issues the program has faced and how they were addressed. Workforce teams are now effectively located within the region to better identify and serve clients, the amount spent on training has increased, and all performance measures were met or exceeded. The number of clients served is tracking almost double this year, and 76.5% of adult clients were placed in jobs. Lowcountry Workforce has built the most robust on-the-job-training (OJT) program in the state. An in-house educator is now working with

hard to serve youth. Hank then reviewed the new Workforce Department Report noting which measures will be included quarterly and annually.

Hank spoke about changes to the recently reauthorized 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The effort is transitioning to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), aka "Opportunity Act", as directed by new federal legislation. Lowcountry Workforce Development is working with the four counties on the process of being re-designated as a WIOA area. Staff is addressing new requirements for procurement of services, and an RFP will be issued for contracted workforce services. The COG Board will receive ongoing updates.

Discussion followed regarding information to be included in reports. Hank also responded to a question about services for former employees of a recently closed business and said dedicated workforce staff was assigned to help with their re-employment needs and that participation has been very good.

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Sabrena Graham was recognized for the Director's Report, which she submitted with comments on selected items. The new board member orientation went well and included a recently produced PowerPoint presentation and brochure about the COG and its services. Sabrena commended Ginnie Kozak for being selected to serve as a peer-reviewer of proposals for the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Transport & Health this July in London. The COG hosted a Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) training session March 19. Sabrena reported the Daufuskie Island Council has requested that SCDOT and the COG provide funds for a study regarding Daufuskie Island transportation equity, including ferry service. She is planning a trip to the Island in April to review the situation and requested that board members contact her with comments and information. The Board will later decide a response.

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Sabrena continued and submitted the 208 Report and Regional Unemployment Chart for information. 208 Certification activity has increased and housing units are significantly higher when compared to the same period last year.

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With no additional business to address, and on motion by Pete Hagood, seconded by Tommy Mann and unanimously approved, Chairman Shaffer adjourned the meeting at 7:20 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,

Sabrena P. Graham  
Executive Director

Attachments

