

MINUTES
LOWER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
FULL BOARD MEETING
Zoom Conference Call
August 13, 2020 at 12:00 pm Meeting

LSCOG Board Members present:

Aiken County: Roger Boyd, Gary Bunker, Danny Feagin, Lessie Price, Andrew Siders (Chairman), John Simmons
Allendale County: Larry Cohen, Dorothy Riley (Past Chairman)
Bamberg County: Jerry Bell, Sharon Hammond, Larry Haynes
Barnwell County: Freddie Houston, David Kenner (Vice Chairman), Ben Kinlaw, Jason Stapleton, Thomas L. Williams
Calhoun County: John McLaughlin, James Haigler (Treasurer), Roger Hill
Orangeburg County: Janie Cooper-Smith, Johnny Ravenell, Vernon Stephens, Harry Wimberly, Brad Hutto

LSCOG Board Members excused:

Allendale County: Theresa Taylor (E)
Bamberg County: Clint Carter (E)
Orangeburg County: Heyward Livingston (E)

LSCOG Board Members absent:

Aiken County: Willar Hightower, Thomas H. Williams, Melissa Oremus
Allendale County: Rebecca Gooding, Bill Robinson, Dawan Smith, Theresa Taylor (E)
Bamberg County: Clint Carter (E), Shawn Hanks, Gerald Wright, Justin Bamberg
Barnwell County: Tim Bennett, Lonnie Hosey
Calhoun County: Helen Carson-Peterson, David Summers, Ken Westbury, Russell L. Ott
Orangeburg County: Michael Butler, Heyward Livingston (E)

LSCOG staff present: Dr. William Molnar, Nora Sanders, Frances Owens, Vicki Hallee, Rhonda Mitchell, André Anderson, Emory Langton, Lee Willing, Nathaniel Foutch, Eric Carrier

Guests present: Garrett Dragano (Congressman Joe Wilson's office)

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Andrew Siders called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

ROLL CALL

Dr. Molnar (*Executive Director*) conducted roll call. A quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

*A motion was made by Mr. Gary Bunker and seconded by Ms. Lessie Price to approve the minutes from the June 11, 2020 full board meeting. **The motion carried unanimously.***

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Treasurer James Haigler presented the financial report for June 2020 for information. The report was accepted as information.

BUDGET AMENDMENT REVIEW FOR FY 19-20

Mr. James Haigler presented the Budget Amendment review and requested the full Board to approve the budget amendments for the 2019-20 fiscal year budget. *A motion was made by Mr. Gary Bunker and seconded by Mr. Danny Feagin. **The motion carried unanimously.***

FY 2020-2021 RURAL PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (RPWP)

Mr. Eric Carrier (*PCED Planner*) presented the 2020-2021 Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) for board approval. The RPWP incorporates all transportation planning activities for the rural area of the LSCOG region during fiscal year 2020-2021. The document serves as the framework for transportation projects funding assistance.

*A motion was made by Ms. Lessie Price and seconded by Ms. Sharon Hammond. **The motion carried unanimously.***

Transit Board Resolution Request

Ms. Rhonda Mitchell (*Transit Manager*) presented the Transit resolution for FY 2020/2021 for board approval. Each year a resolution by the LSCOG Board of Directors is required of all SCDOT Office of Public Transit sub recipients to apply for transit funding.

- LSCOG is applying for \$66,668 in State Mass Transit Funds (SMTF) funding for the Best Friend Express Transit Service in Aiken County.
- LSCOG is applying for \$40,000 in Mobility Management Funding.
- LSCOG is applying for \$75,000 in Flex Guide share Funding.

A resolution by the LSCOG Board of Directors stating LSCOG will provide the required match, necessary insurance coverage, and comply with all FTA and SCDOT statutes and regulations requires an approval vote by the LSCOG Board of Directors and signature by the Board Chairperson.

*A motion was made by Mr. Freddie Houston and seconded by Ms. Sharon Hammond. **The motion carried unanimously.***

TRANSIT UPDATE

Ms. Mitchell gave an update on the Best Friend Express transit system operating in Aiken County.

She informed the board that this system closed out 2020 FY successfully despite the pandemic and continues to run at a full schedule. Masks are available on the buses for those who may need them and social distancing measures are in place for seating. PPE has been provided to all drivers and the buses are disinfected several times a day. In addition, the driver's area of the buses are being fitted with a barrier which is accessible from both sides.

A CARES Act grant has been applied for which will utilize the funding available to help respond to / recover from the Covid-19 Pandemic. This grant is for three years.

Workforce Development Update

Mr. André Anderson (*Workforce Development Administrator*) gave an update on the LSCOG Workforce Division.

- **SC Works Centers:** Re-opened 3 of our centers and seeing people in the centers as well as offering services virtually. Centers in Bamberg, Allendale, and Calhoun Counties are set to open on a reduced schedule of one day a week beginning August 31st. The majority of people being helped in the centers are unemployed.
- **Restoration funding from Department of Labor funding:** The state received an 8% reduction of funding from the DOL and subsequently our revenues were decreased. The state has graciously restored funding back to previous FY level. This is an amount of \$120,000 of funds coming back into our area in the form a grant from the state. This will assist employers and job seekers in our 6 county region.
- **Drive through Job Fair:** Held at our Aiken SC Works center. Individuals drove up to the center and received a bag full of employment opportunities from employers hiring within the next month. Over 175 people came through. Over 30 employers seeking to hire. A second drive through job fair is being planned in the Orangeburg region for the end of September.

Human Services Update

Mr. Lee Willing (*Human Services Director*) gave an update on the LSCOG Aging Division.

- **Assessments:** 2,910 senior staff assessments (meal services, home maker and transportation) increase of 645 new assessments
- **Meal services:** 1,195 seniors received 371,053 delivered meals. 856 meals at congregate dining facilities prior to closing. 4,108 seniors received 258,524 special Covid-19 meals. We received a significant increase in request for meals from new clients during this time.
- **Home Maker services:** 300 seniors for 62,877 hours of in home services.
- **Transportation services:** provided to 350 seniors for 508,258 miles of travel
- **Legal services:** provided to 156 seniors for 1,270 hours of legal services

- Family Care Giver program: provided to 635 clients for \$595,000 of services. Originally allocated funding of \$848,000 prior to the pandemic. This program was severely impacted due to fears of bringing outside people into client's homes. Fears have subsided and we expect to return to normal patterns. Aging staff received 4,825 calls for information, referrals and assistance.
- Special Enrollment for Medicare prescription care program: Open enrollment will begin in October. For Protection of seniors and staff we will not be scheduling in office appointments. We will offer our services by mail out to existing clients as well as a select number of new clients.
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman program: regarding visitation and nursing home residents, Ombudsmen have not been permitted into Long Term care facilities since March 13th. Contact continues to be maintained by phone, email, flyers and mail outs.

NOTE: Chairman Sider had to leave the meeting due to a prior engagement and handed the meeting off to Vice Chairman David Kenner.

Planning, Community & Economic Development Update

Ms. Emory Langston (*PCED Administrator*) and Mr. Nate Foutch (*Community & Economic Development Projects Manager*) gave an update on the LSCOG PCED Division.

Planning: Mr. Carrier has been compiling our Covid numbers in the region.

Active Projects: We are working with two counties and two municipalities on a 10 year comprehensive plan to update projects. Once this stage is complete we will look at various zoning needs for those areas.

Upcoming Projects: We have two potential projects that will start this fall, another 10 year comprehensive plan update and a potential five year plan review. We are also in the process of working with five of our counties to update the hazardous mitigation plans. These are five year updates.

Home Program:

1. Project working with our Community Housing Development Organization, New America, in Orangeburg on the North View Project. Completion of this project is projected by the end of August.
2. Second Baptist CDC is starting on a project on Abbeville Street in Aiken for single family affordable homes.
3. Edisto Habitat had to push back the build of some of their houses due to Covid-19. They're adjusting their plans as needed during this time.
4. Home-owner occupied rehab has some projects that have met all guidelines but have been slowed down due to Covid.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) was included in the CARES Act with two types of additional grant funding available.

1. A non-competitive supplemental grant through invitation to the economic develop districts for up to \$400,000 over the course of two years. This will look at the economic injury in our region due to Covid and developing resiliency strategies in moving forward.
2. LSCOG has applied for two EDA CARES Act projects.
 - a. First for the City of Aiken for around \$5,000,000 for a new pump station for the industrial park near Exit 18 off I-20 and an additional 3 miles of sewer line improvements.
 - b. Second is for Bamberg County involving around \$10,000,000 for increased broadband infrastructure throughout the county.

CDBG Community Development Block Grant. This past spring we applied for three CDBG projects.

1. \$1 million for the Town of Williston to upgrade their water treatment facility as well as two stretches of waterlines which will improve water quality for the entire town.
2. \$1 million was submitted for the Town of Monetta to construct a new water tank for their municipal water system. Aiken County was a co-applicant on that project and it should benefit nearly 1,000 people in rural Aiken County as well as the new Ridge Spring / Monetta School campus.
3. Around \$700,000 for the Town of Norway to upgrade old water lines and improve fire protection on the western side of town.

Active CDBG projects:

- Denmark Downtown Streetscape project has finished construction
- Nearing the completion of water and sewer projects in Denmark, Norway and Wagener.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Each county was called upon to report any changes to the Executive Committee members. The Executive Committee members at this time will remain the same for FY 2020-21 with one change. John McLaughlin will replace James Haigler as the Calhoun County alternate. *A motion was made by Mr. Freddie Houston and seconded by Mr. Danny Feagin. The motion carried unanimously.*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dr. Molnar gave updates on the following:

- Work at the COG: Within the office we are still maintaining masks, social distancing. The staff is working better than 50% and will be increasing soon. We are not having meetings in the office however we have allowed volunteers to come back in.
- Mr. Carrier's County and State trends Covid-19 weekly report is sent out to County Administrators and County Council Chairmen. This shows trend lines since March as well as where hot spots are located.
- Conference Updates
 - NADO Annual Training Conference in Cleveland Oct 17-20 (will be Virtual)
 - SCCOG Annual Meeting in Myrtle Beach – Canceled
- EDA Revolving Loan Funding to help small businesses respond to the Coronavirus: We moved our loan fund to the Catawba COG to be part of the SC Business Loan Fund which incorporates 26 counties in the state. That organization applied for CARES funding from EDA and received an additional \$8.2 million in loan funds. These loans are low interest, fixed, below market. The loan amounts range from \$50,000 - \$750,000. This information is being sent to your Chamber of Commerce. If you would like someone to come to your County Council meetings and talk about these loans please let me know.
- Census 2020 will be ending a month early this year. The last day to self-respond is September 30th.
- Next Scheduled Meetings will be Zoom meetings
 - Aging Advisory Meeting in September TBD
 - Executive Committee Meeting 9/10/20
 - Transit TAC meeting 9/16/20
 - Board of Director's meeting 10/8/20

GENERAL DISCUSSION

No General discussion items.

ADJOURN

Vice Chairman David Kenner adjourned the meeting at 1:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. William Molnar
Executive Director

NOTICE OF THE MEETING AND A COPY OF THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING WAS DISTRIBUTED TO LOCAL NEWS MEDIA PRIOR TO THE MEETING AND A NOTICE OF THE MEETING POSTED ON LOWER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS WEBSITE AND BULLETIN BOARD AT LEAST 24 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.