



MINUTES
FULL BOARD MEETING
February 10, 2022
Orangeburg County Public Library & Conference Center
1643 Russell Street, Orangeburg, SC 29115

LSCOG Board Members present:

Aiken County:	Gary Bunker, Danny Feagin, Willar Hightower, Lessie Price, John Simmons
Allendale County:	Larry Cohen, Dorothy Riley, Bill Robinson, DaWan Smith
Bamberg County:	Jerry Bell, Sharon Hammond, Larry Haynes, Gerald Wright
Barnwell County:	Freddie Houston, David Kenner (<i>Chair</i>), Ben Kinlaw, Jason Stapleton, Thomas L. Williams
Calhoun County:	James Haigler (<i>Vice Chair</i>), Roger Hill
Orangeburg County:	Michael Butler (<i>Treasurer</i>), Janie Cooper-Smith, Johnny Ravenell, Vernon Stephens, Harry Wimberly, Delores Frazier, Joseph Garvin

LSCOG Board Members excused:

Aiken County:	Det Haislip, Andrew Siders (<i>Past Chair</i>), Thomas H. Williams
Allendale County:	
Bamberg County:	
Barnwell County:	Daniel Alexander
Calhoun County:	
Orangeburg County:	

LSCOG Board Members absent:

Aiken County:	Rep. Melissa Oremus
Allendale County:	Rebecca Gooding, Theresa Taylor
Bamberg County:	Clint Carter, Marvin Dueck, Rep. Justin Bamberg
Barnwell County:	Rep. Lonnie Hosey
Calhoun County:	Helen Carson-Peterson, John McLauchlin, John Nelson, Ken Westbury, Rep. Russell Ott
Orangeburg County:	Sen. Bradley Hutto

LSCOG staff present: Dr. William Molnar, Nora Sanders, Emory Langston, Eric Carrier, Meizi Wolven, Brooke Morris, Nicole Davis, Frances Owens

Guests present: Linda Bell, Dan Ellzey, Ellen Andrews-Morgan, Duncan Crotwell, Peggy Kinlaw, Richard Drayton, Anna Chappell, Shambra Garvin, Davis Wright, Spencer Donaldson, PK Hightower

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman David Kenner called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Ms. Deloris Frazier led the invocation. A special guest, Ms. Olivia Goodwine, led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

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

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Kenner asked for approval of the meeting agenda.

*A motion was made by Ms. Deloris Frazier and seconded by Mr. Larry Haynes. **The motion carried unanimously.***

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Kenner asked for approval of the meeting agenda. Attendance was noted to be incorrect for Bill Robinson and should be shown as not attending the Annual Banquet on December 2, 2021.

*A motion was made by Ms. Frazier and seconded by Mr. Larry Haynes to accept the minutes and modify the minutes from Annual Meeting on December 2, 2021, with the correction were accepted. **The motion and the correction carried unanimously.***

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Mr. Michael Butler, LSCOG Treasurer, presented the financial report for February 2022. The report was accepted as information.

PRESENTATION OF DRAFT FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Ms. Frances Owens, LSCOG Finance Director, presented the draft financial statement of operations. This format was previously presented to the LSCOG Executive Committee in January 2022 for approval. The new format was presented to the board for approval to adopt the new report layout.

*A motion was made by Mr. Michael Butler and seconded by Mr. Danny Feagin to adopt the new Statement of Operations report layout. **The motion carried unanimously.***

SC DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE UPDATE

Executive Director of SC DEW, Dan Ellzey, gave an informative update regarding the employment and workforce in South Carolina.

During March 2020, we had approximately 2,000 initial claims (job losses) per week and rose to 88,000 claims in one week by April 2021 (currently 1500-1600 initial claims per week). The rates came back down by August 2021 and initial claims are now dropping considerably below the 2008-2009 rates in South Carolina. Around 958,000 claims (\$6.6B) were filed in South Carolina over the course of the two-year pandemic period. Current unemployment statewide rate is approximately 3.5% with Lower Savannah Region having the second highest unemployment rate in South Carolina.

The Workforce Reemployment Assistance Programming (WRAP) is a short-term program designed to help an individual to obtain the training necessary to get a better job or change professions. A \$500 incentive is offered for training to those that utilize this program.

SCDEW is hosting a Regionalism Forum on March 2, 2022, to facilitate an open dialogue with LWDAs regarding approaches to reducing overhead costs through cost-sharing administrative functions.

The Labor Force Participation Rate Task Force has reconvened and labor economists are working on this concern. Employee and citizen surveys will assist in figuring out the cause of South Carolina's low Workforce participation rate.

REGIONAL EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE UPDATE

Dr. Walt Tobin, from Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College (O-C Tech) spoke about workforce opportunities.

A South Carolina resident can enroll in at least 6 hours at O-C Tech or any technical college for free or almost free. They offer students the chance to transfer to a 4-year college with a baccalaureate degree if they spend two years at O-C Tech first. Their major focus is on direct entry into the workforce. Technicians are in demand for all workers on all skill levels.



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They built a very strong partnerships with the local high schools. Around 600 students are earning college credit while still in high school. Some students will be able to earn an associate degree when they graduate high school, complete a first year of college or earn some kind of education to go into the workforce directly after finishing high school and any program leading to a job is tuition free. They established new education programs for HVAC repair, pharmacy technician, and advanced EMT programs.

FAST ACT SAFETY PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Mr. Eric Carrier present information regarding FAST Act Safety Performance Targets. These targets are a Federal requirement for all State Departments of Transportation. The State's COGs and MPOs can either adopt SCDOT's targets or develop their own. The South Carolina Department of Transportation Developed their performance targets based on current trends in safety data throughout the state. The Lower Savannah Council of Governments' Planning Department requests the Board to support and adopt the State's performance targets to fulfil the Federal requirement.

*A motion was made by Ms. Deloris Frazier and seconded by Mr. Larry Cohen. **The motion carried unanimously.***

PLANNING, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT(PCED) UPDATE

Ms. Emory Langston gave an update on funding pertaining to planning, community and economic development and housing. This was accepted as information.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Senator Vernon Stephens provided an update on the Legislative Session.

Bill S952 "Authorize Expenditure of Federal Funds to Distribute to State Regarding ARPA Money": This is how and where funds might be allotted. Department of Treasury (DOT) proposed \$453,499,758 goes to the SC Department of Transportation to accelerate projects that have not yet been finished.

- RIA: \$900M to improve water, wastewater, storm water, and infrastructure.
- \$400B allocated for broadband. This is to be utilized in under-served and unserved municipalities/regions.
- \$800M to go to competitive infrastructure programs and various water quality improvement projects.
- \$20M of funds will go towards operating planned grant programs to assist local small counties that cannot apply for grants without matching funds.

Bill S956 "Savannah River Settlement Appropriations": There has been communication with counties around SRS, to include Aiken, Bamberg, Barnwell, Hampton, and Allendale. Aiken will receive the largest share of the funds.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- ARPA/SC RIA Funding Update – The maximum for large projects is \$10M and small projects is \$1M. There will be a 25% match for large projects and 15% match for small utilities. We are currently in the process of hiring employees to help with those program funds.
- Bike & Pedestrian Plan – We asked for assistance to get the word out.
- SCCOG Legislative Request – Back in 2007 and 2008, the 10 COGs receive a total of \$1.1M and then Great Recession happened and in 2012 our budget was cut in half. We have been reduced to \$556K for the 10 COGs approximately \$46K for us. Dr. Molnar went before the Ways and Means Constitutional

Sub-Committee and asked for \$2M for our regularly recurring expenses and an additional \$1M proviso (\$100K each) for administrative ARPA funds.

- SCCOG Annual Conference – We are hosting the Annual Conference this year for the State in Myrtle Beach in November 2022.
- Roof Update – We sent out for bid packages in January 2022 and only 1 company submitted a bid in response. We are required to have 3 separate bids before accepting any so we are having to modify and resubmit for new bids. We asked 6 of 7 potential contractors who attended our pre-bid meeting due to issues stemming from significant sub-framing and manpower, only one contractor submitted a bid. Companies will most likely need to contract out for the project. The pre-bid meeting is March 1, 2022, and bid opening is March 23, 2022.
- Executive Committee Meeting March 10, 2022
- LSCOG Board Meeting April 14, 2022 - Allendale County

ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn by Ms. Deloris Frazier and seconded by Ms. Lessie Price. Chairman David Kenner adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William Molnar, Ph.D.
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 THE LOWER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS WEBSITE AND BULLETIN BOARD AT LEAST 24 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.