

**MINUTES**  
**LOWER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
**FULL BOARD MEETING**  
Calhoun County Museum  
313 Butler Street, St. Matthews, SC 29135  
August 11, 2022

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LSCOG Board Members present:

Aiken County: Gary Bunker, Det Haislip, John Simmons  
Allendale County: Larry Cohen, Dorothy Riley, William Robinson, Dawan Smith, Theresa Taylor  
Bamberg County: Jerry Bell, Sharon Hammond, Marvin Dueck, Dr. Gerald Wright (Treasurer)  
Barnwell County: Daniel Alexander, Freddie Houston, David Kenner (Past Chair)  
Calhoun County: Helen Carson-Peterson, John McLaughlin, James Haigler (Chair), Roger Hill, John Nelson, Rep. Russell Ott  
Orangeburg County: Michael Butler (Vice Chair), Janie Cooper-Smith, Delores Frazier, Joseph Garvin

LSCOG Board Members excused:

Aiken County: Danny Feagin, Lessie Price  
Allendale County:  
Bamberg County: Larry Haynes  
Barnwell County: Ben Kinlaw, Jason Stapleton  
Calhoun County:  
Orangeburg County:

LSCOG Board Members absent:

Aiken County: Willar Hightower, Andrew Siders, Thomas H. Williams, Rep. Melissa Oremus  
Allendale County: Rebecca Gooding  
Bamberg County: Clint Carter, Rep. Justin Bamberg  
Barnwell County: Rep. Lonnie Hosey  
Calhoun County: Ken Westbury  
Orangeburg County: Johnny Ravenell, Sen. Vernon Stephens, Harry Wimberly, Rep. Brad Hutto

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

Guests present: Larry Taylor, Linda Bell, Resyl Warner, Vincent Jacobs, Brandy Roberson, Richard Hall, Cecil Thornton, Richard Carson, Phleisha Lewis, Hope Warren, Vernon Jacobs, Gary Robins, Al Jenkins

**WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman James Haigler called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

**ROLL CALL AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

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

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Haigler asked for approval of the board meeting agenda.

*Ms. Dorothy Riley made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Freddie Houston seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

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**APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Haigler asked for approval of the full board meeting minutes on June 9, 2022.

*Mr. Gary Bunker made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Ms. Theresa Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS**

Dr. Gerald Wright presented the financial report for July 2022 for information.

**ARPA-FUNDED STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM (ASIP)**

Ms. Phleisha Lewis, Mitigation Director from the South Carolina Office of Resilience (SCOR), presented the ASIP to the full board.

Funding for the ASIP is offered regionally and statewide for stormwater infrastructure projects to mitigate flooding across the state. Approximately \$55M is set aside exclusively for stormwater and infrastructure. All funds must be spent by the end of December 2026. This program may be run by a community/COG or SCOR can manage the project for you.

Currently, SCOR is looking into matching opportunities through other grant funding but this cannot be matched with another ARPA-funded projects. Project scoring that has been designed will assist in prioritizing the rural communities.

Mr. Al Jenkins informed the board that FEMA now recognizes heir property owners with disaster damage in a town, city, or county as recipients of the Disaster Recovery Relief. The property owners only need to show proof of living on the property with a piece of mail, such as a light bill, to receive the relief.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Representative Russell Ott presented the legislative update to the full board.

The state has not spent all of the ARPA funds. Approximately \$900M has been held in reserve to allocate across the state and local governments via the RIA project. This unprecedented funding should be used to assist our communities with our projects. We may be criticized greatly if this funding is squandered. Everyone is encouraged to come up with new ideas/projects and see them through to fruition.

Next year with the General Assembly, we will have at least 24 new SC Representatives across the state due to retirement or lost the primaries. We also have a new speaker, Murrell Smith from Sumter, has taken over and will bring about changes.

**WORKFORCE DIVISION UPDATE**

Mr. Andre Anderson provided a Workforce Division update for the board.

COVID-19 still continues to affect our SC Works Centers. Our Jumpstart program, which has been in its sixth year, has served 34 teens across the 9 school districts. Those teens have been placed into jobs at the school site to learn a skill, such as IT, facility maintenance, etc.

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LSCOG has rolled out our Mobile Unit on June 14, 2022. We have served 53 people at this point at various locations. We are asking for recommendations of new location ideas. The schedule is created about a month prior to the mobile unit events taking place.

We are very proud to announce that we were able to meet all and exceeded many of the programmatic/financial measures from the state/feds for Workforce Development in our local workforce area.

We have been instrumental with the creation of 27 apprenticeship positions at SRNS and we are still working on pulling together in other places.

In an attempt to share resources and cut the costs due to receiving less funding and resources from the federal government over the past four years, we have begun to share a SCWOS Coordinator, our database person, with another Workforce area. This saves us approximately \$65k per year.

The Workforce Division is also looking for ways to increase traffic to our more rural sites. We are looking to use our Mobile Unit to expand access to rural communities.

We also have another regional grant that is a part of a local workforce engagement with Lowcountry COG's rural counties (Hampton, Colleton, and Jasper) and three of our rural counties (Allendale, Bamberg, and Barnwell) to hire someone to reduce overall cost Workforce has a new shared position that is paid for by SCDEW. This new position would be a workforce development convener between representatives of Economic Development, K-12 secondary education, technical colleges/universities and local employers; just to name a few.

Dr. Molnar discussed the loss of funding within the Workforce Division due to cut backs by SCDEW and within the Federal Department of Labor. Funding is predicated on unemployment numbers and as those numbers drop so does funding and the number of people coming into the SC Works Centers. Over the last four years there has been a significant decrease in funding for the WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs. There has been a decrease in traffic at the brick-and-mortar locations. It costs approximately \$130k each to run our larger SC Works Centers in the area, which contains multiple other agencies. The smaller facilities cost us more to run. We are currently looking at closing a couple of the smaller centers due to the decrease in traffic and the reduction in funding. The goal is to have the mobile unit scheduled in those areas a few times a month, which would be more cost effective. This is currently being discussed with the Workforce Board and we will present to you at the next meeting which centers have been recommended for closure.

In the board meeting packets, some additional information was included to discuss the loss of funds to the Workforce Division. Over the last four years there has been a significant decrease in funding for the WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs. There has been a decrease in traffic at the brick-and-mortar locations. It costs us approximately \$130k to run one of our larger Works Centers, which contains multiple other agencies. The smaller facilities together cost us more to run.

#### **RURAL 5310 UPDATE**

Dr. Molnar provided an update on the Rural 5310 Ranking Results.

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The purchase of a new vehicle is approximately \$70k plus a local match. We have four organizations that submitted applications for this – Aiken Senior Life Services, Allendale Area Council on Aging, Bamberg Area Council on Aging, and Orangeburg Disability and Special Needs Board (DSNB). The Executive Committee votes on the rankings.

Rankings: 1) Orangeburg DSNB, 2) Allendale Council on Aging, 3) Bamberg Council on Aging, and 4) Aiken Senior Life Services

*Mr. Harry Wimberly made a motion to approve the Rural 5310 Ranking Results. The motion was seconded by Mr. Larry Cohen. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **CEDS 2022-2027 DRAFT**

Ms. Brooke Morris presented the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Draft to the full board.

This is designed to encourage a diverse economy and enhance the quality of life. The CEDS is a prerequisite for designation of economic development by the Economic Development Agency (EDA).

*Ms. Dorothy Riley made a motion to approve the CEDS 2022-2027 Draft. Mr. Bill Robinson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Molnar presented the Executive Director's Report:

1. NADO Training Conference – October 15-18, 2022. Participants have been selected.
2. SCCOGs Training Conference, Myrtle Beach – November 20-22 – The agenda is currently being finalized. We need to know who will be planning to attend. A registration form will be emailed to board members. Please return registration form by Friday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
3. Roof Update – The roof contract was signed last month. The roof work will be occurring October through December. We may be working out of different offices during this time so please be patient with us.
4. Aging Fund Update – State just gave us our new budget numbers. We are working on the allocation formulas right now and should have a letter to the COAs within the next couple weeks. William Price is doing a great job as the vice-chair of the Regional Aging Advisory Committee. The next meeting for the Regional Aging Advisory Committee is September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 2pm.
5. Opioid Settlement Funds – In February 2022, the National Prescription Opioid Litigation Settlement split \$26b between states and local governments. SC counties and eligible municipalities to allocate more than the \$360m over the next 18 years. Approximately 92% of these funds go directly to address the opioid crisis. There is around \$231m set aside to go directly to counties and some municipalities like Aiken, North Augusta, and Orangeburg. This calculates to \$12.8M annually. SC Opioid Recovery Fund Board has organized a long list of core strategies and approved uses for this funding. Counties and municipalities MUST submit requests that seek funding for an approved statement strategy listed in the settlement agreement. If funds are not used in 3 years, it will move to another community. We encourage you to talk with your local health departments and drug and alcohol facilities to develop local or regional strategies for approved used and address the local needs.

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6. SC Brownfields Environmental Site Testing (SC BEST) program - \$1M has been distributed to all 10 COGs. The LSCOG has received \$97,525 to be used over two years. Funds to conduct Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, testing, etc. The program became official with the EPA last week and the processes are still being developed. About 50% of all funds needs to be distributed by June 30, 2023. COG board or committee will be involved in the ranking process. Both public and private property are eligible. You are eligible for federal clean-up funds if you follow and use this program.

**ADJOURN**

Chairman Haigler requested a motion to adjourn the full board meeting.

*Motion to adjourn by Mr. Cohen and seconded by Mr. Robinson. Chairman James Haigler adjourned the meeting at 7:31 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.