



MINUTES

APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2024 – 10:30 A.M.
COUNCIL BOARD ROOM WITH ZOOM OPTION
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Members Present:

Sen. Thomas Alexander, Rick Bradley, Bob Briggs, Rockey Burgess, Rep. Mike Burns, David Cauthen, Dennis Claramunt, Brooke Coleman, Rep. Neal Collins, Roy Costner, Roel Cruz, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, Lillian Brock Flemming, Mike Forrester, Britt Gillespie, Don Godbey, Robert Halfacre, Glenn Hart, Laura Hinty, Henry Jolly, Butch Kirven, Rep. Brian Lawson, Jack Mabry, Alan Mitchell, Charles Pinson, Brian Ramey, E Riley, Bob Walker, Cindy Wilson

Guests Present:

Lance Estep, Daniel Gambrell, Andrea Smith, Jason Zacher

Staff Present:

Chip Bentley, Brooke Ferguson, Jill Francisco, Jeff Guilbault, Amanda Miller, Steve Pelissier, Tim Womack, Arlene Young

Call to Order

Chairman Collins called the meeting to order. Mr. Riley offered the invocation. Mr. Womack introduced a new staff member, Amanda Miller, an assessor in the Aging Program. Mr. Pelissier introduced the guests in attendance. Chairman Collins asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2023, board meeting. Mr. Jolly stated that he was in attendance through Zoom at the last meeting, but his name was not listed. Mr. Elliott made a motion to adopt the minutes with the noted correction. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pinson. The motion was unanimously approved. The financial statement was accepted as information.

Senior Action

Chairman Collins introduced Ms. Andrea Smith, the Executive Director/CEO of Senior Action in Greenville. Ms. Smith reviewed statistics on the number of aging adults compared to the funding allocated for aging services. She discussed the effects of social isolation on the elderly as well as the economic impact. Ms. Smith explained the Senior Center Permanent Improvement Program (PIP), the difficulties with it, and asked for advocacy to increase funding and flexibility in using the money. She also discussed the Appropriations Act and stated the need for increased funding for programs.

South Carolina Legislative Report

Chairman Collins asked Mr. Jason Zacher, Executive Director of Upstate Chamber Coalition to present the legislative priorities for the year. Mr. Zacher presented an overview of the Upstate Chamber Coalition (UCC) and handed out the Greenville Chamber Policy and Advocacy Guide. He reported on survey results from members of UCC, including challenges in hiring and specific state issues. Mr. Zacher discussed the 2024 state agenda: improve the business climate, boost economic development and infrastructure, increase educational attainment and talent attraction. He reviewed the top five issues: legal liability reform, reform economic incentives for knowledge-based jobs, expand accessibility to childcare, small business “Bill of Rights”, and closing the state pension system. He also showed a list of upcoming UCC priorities.

Mrs. Brooke Ferguson, ACOG Economic Development Director, reminded everyone of the April 1 filing deadline with the State Ethics Commission. She stated that the Secretary of Transportation will retire at the end of March. She reported that with the reorganization of DHEC, Aging Services will be under the Executive Office of Health and Policy. Mrs. Ferguson discussed upcoming bills to look for in February and asked for suggestions from board members for topics of interest.

ARC Revolving Loan Funds, Request to Close Out Grants

Chairman Collins called on Steve Pelissier to explain the request to close out grants in the Revolving Loan Fund Program. Mr. Pelissier reported that ARC revised its policies pertaining to the RLF program. Because ACOG has successfully operated the program for over seven years, ARC recommended that ACOG close out the grants. The funds will continue to be used for the intended purposes and there will be no operational impact on the program. Financial management policies will remain in effect. Grant closure will not increase ACOG’s liability for RLF funds but will allow some flexibility for the program. Mr. Godbey, the Chair of the Economic Development Committee, stated that the committee met, discussed, and recommended action to close out the grants. Chairman Collins called for a vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

Action Item

Nominations for 2024 Regional Board Members

Chairman Collins asked for Regional Board Member nominations from each county. The term for regional members is one year. Cindy Wilson, from Anderson County, nominated Rockey Burgess. Ed Elliott, from Cherokee County, nominated Henry Jolly. Rep. Mike Burns, from Greenville County, nominated Joe Dill. Glenn Hart, from Oconee County, nominated E Riley. Roy Costner, from Pickens County, nominated Ensley Feemster. Mike Forrester, from Spartanburg County, nominated Jane Hall. Chairman Collins asked for a motion to approve the appointment of all regional nominees to the board. Mr. Godbey made a motion to approve the appointment of all regional nominees to the board. Sen. Alexander seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Action Item

Executive Director's Report

Chairman Collins called on Mr. Pelissier to give the Executive Director's report. Mr. Pelissier introduced a new board member, Laura Hinty, from Pickens County. She works with Disney Corp. There will be a meeting with the board officers following the board meeting.

The next board meeting will be held on February 23, 2024, at 10:30 AM in the ACOG Board Room. Members may also attend through Zoom.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Neal A. Collins, Chairman

The South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments has complied with the Freedom of Information Act in scheduling and conducting this meeting.

