



MINUTES

**APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2023 – 10:30 A.M.
COUNCIL BOARD ROOM WITH ZOOM OPTION
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA**

Members Present:

Rick Bradley, Bob Briggs, David Cauthen, Dennis Claramunt, Rep. Neal Collins, Roy Costner, Roel Cruz, Rick Danner, Joe Dill, Ed Elliott, Ensley Feemster, Lillian Brock Flemming, Mike Forrester, Britt Gillespie, Don Godbey, Robert Halfacre, Glenn Hart, Henry Jolly, Jack Mabry, Alan Mitchell, E Riley, Jeff Roberts, Brett Sanders, Bob Walker, Cindy Wilson

Guests Present:

Lance Estep, Daniel Gambrell, Jay Jenkins, Mary Mason Jolly, Bryan Webb, Megan Young

Staff Present:

Chip Bentley, Chris Eanes, Brooke Ferguson, Steve Pelissier, Tim Womack, Don Zimmer

Call to Order

Chairman Collins called the meeting to order. Mr. Costner offered the invocation. Mr. Pelissier introduced the guests in attendance. Chairman Collins asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 22, 2023, board meeting. Mr. Forrester made a motion to adopt the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Godbey. The motion was unanimously approved.

Recognition of Employee Milestone Anniversary with ACOG

Chairman Collins presented a plaque to Ms. Chris Eanes, Aging Services Assessor, for five years of service to ACOG. She is devoted to helping seniors by visiting them in their homes to assess and coordinate in-home services.

OneSpartanburg, Inc.

Chairman Collins introduced Mr. Jay Jenkins, the Director of Small Business and Minority Business Development. Mr. Jenkins discussed the Power Up program in Spartanburg. He explained that Spartanburg is known for its big business, but is behind the national average in starting, developing, and maintaining small businesses. Spartanburg County gave \$6.2 million to develop this program. Power Up was launched in March 2023 with two main objectives, to create a supportive small and minority business environment and to reduce racial equity gaps in entrepreneurship and small business. Mr. Jenkins gave the ideology and methodology behind building the program, which includes loans, grants, space, various types of technical support, social capital, and an online resource hub called The Grid. He answered questions from the board.

Regional Transportation Updates

Chairman Collins called on Mr. Chip Bentley to give the regional transportation update. Mr. Bentley explained that the SCDOT Guideshare program has directed funding to strategic purposes identified at the state level: targeted roadway improvements, access management, signal system/ITS solutions, and safety issues. Program funding was increased from \$138 to \$237 million. MPO boundaries that were previously discussed have been finalized. He presented maps of the region showing the new boundaries and answered questions from the board about the changes. Mr. Bentley discussed the Regional Mobility Program and funding amendments to seven projects in the TIP. He showed that long-term funding is available for the projects. He gave a preview of other upcoming projects.

Appalachian Region 2023-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

Chairman Collins asked the Economic Development Committee for a report. Mr. Godbey, Committee Chair, asked Mrs. Brooke Ferguson, to provide the annual performance report. Mrs. Ferguson stated that the 2023-2027 CEDS was adopted last year. She gave updates on population, income, housing, education, employment, unemployment, capital investment and job investment, wages, and job growth. Mrs. Ferguson gave updates for each of the six priorities of the CEDS. The Economic Development Committee recommended that the annual performance report be approved for submittal to the EDA. Chairman Collins called for a vote. 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 the new Transportation Planner, Mr. Jake Whitmire. He also announced Mr. Jeff Guilbault as the new Planning Director. He asked Mrs. Jessica Winters, Regional Long Term Care

Ombudsman, to speak about the Ombudsman Winter Wishes Project. She explained the annual project of adopting a long-term care facility and providing gifts and necessary items in December. The project will serve Seneca Residential in Oconee County this year. Board members may donate financially through Venmo or may adopt a resident through the wish list. More information will be sent.

Member Updates

Mr. Claramunt referred to a previous meeting regarding veteran services, resources, and partners. He shared that he was able to get his Veteran's ID at a facility in Anderson.

Mr. Walker invited everyone to visit Spartanburg on November 9-12, to see the mobile replica of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington, DC.

Ms. Wilson stated that Clemson is working on securing facilities for the equine school as part of the veterinary program.

The next board meeting will be held on December 8, 2023, at 10:30 AM in the ACOG Board Room. Members may also attend through Zoom.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Rep. 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.

