

**MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
UPPER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
430 HELIX ROAD
GREENWOOD, SOUTH CAROLINA
MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2021**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Buddy Agan, Diane Anderson, Jackie Brown, John Calhoun, John Carter, Edith Childs, Scott Cooper, Otis Grier Jr., Charlie Henry, Charles Jennings, Wes McAllister, Garrett McDaniel, Marian Miller, Matthew Miller, Sen. Floyd Nicholson, Willie Neal Norman, David Sawyer, Ernie Segars, Brandon Smith, Melissa Spencer, Jerry Strawbridge, Albert Talbert and Faye Thomas.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Coleman, Ken Durham, Amelia Herlong, Shirley Jenkins, Theo Lane, Sen. Shane Massey, Milliken Matthews, Rep. Anne Parks, Roy Smith Jr., Don Smoak and Sen. Danny Verdin.


STAFF PRESENT: Patricia Hartung, Sam Leaman, Rick Green, Melissa Phillips, Keith Smith, Sandra Moore, David Hays, Cason Wright

GUESTS PRESENT: None.

Call to Order	<p>Meeting was held via Zoom video conference due to COVID-19 social distancing. Eight Upper Savannah staff members attended the meeting in the USCOG Board room while Board members joined via Zoom. Chairman Willie Neal Norman was present in the Board room and called the meeting to order.</p> <p>The February 22, 2021, minutes were approved upon motion by Floyd Nicholson, seconded by Buddy Agan.</p>
Transportation	<p>Government Services Director Rick Green requested approval of the USCOG Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) for 2021-23 as e-mailed to Board members. The RPWP provides technical assistance funding from the SCDOT planning office to COGs each year. COGs must apply for the funding, which supports DOT planning activities such as public hearings and consultation with rural elected officials. The amount of the grant is \$85,000 per year for two years, with a \$20,400 COG match. The full copy of the RPWP document has been posted to the Upper Savannah web site. The RPWP was approved upon motion by Diane Anderson, seconded by Scott Cooper.</p> <p>Green discussed SCDOT Public Transit 5310 applications which have recently been submitted to the COG and are being reviewed. Transit providers annually apply for van replacement funds and Upper Savannah staff ranks their requests. Piedmont Agency on Aging has applied for one replacement van while McCormick Area Transit has applied for six vans. McCormick is applying for two replacement vans in its current fleet, two new vans for transit expansion into Greenwood County, and two federal DOT funded vans, if approved, for possible transit service expansion into Abbeville County. The final rankings will be presented to the Board in June and sent to SCDOT Commission for approval.</p>

	<p>Green said there is much discussion about public transit in the Region with only McCormick and Edgefield counties currently offering public transit. McCormick Area Transit's expansion into Greenwood County is expected to begin July 1, 2021, but has not been finalized. Abbeville County is also being discussed for possible inclusion into McCormick's system. Also, Saluda County will potentially spend COVID funding for temporary transit services. Laurens County is also taking part in transit discussions. There are only six counties in the state that do not have public transportation and four are in the Upper Savannah Region (Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens and Saluda).</p>
<p>Economic Development</p>	<p>Assistant Director Sam Leaman presented a Board Resolution to Request the Defederalization of the EDA Revolving Loan Fund as attached in the Board agenda package. The topic was discussed at the February Board meeting, but Leaman said EDA had since made changes to the amendment procedures. The Resolution states that the Board supports the request to release EDA's federal interest, confirms that the funds will continue to be used to carry out activities consistent with the economic development purposes of the Public Works and Economic Development Act, confirms that the funds will be used to continue the operation of the RLF, certifies that USCOG is in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Award, and authorizes the Board Chairman to request the release of EDA's federal interest in the Award and sign agreement(s) and or other documents as needed to expedite this release. The Resolution was approved upon motion by Jackie Brown and seconded by Floyd Nicholson.</p> <p>Leaman also presented an amendment to the CARES Act RLF Plan, also attached in the agenda package. Leaman said that while working capital funding rules would remain unchanged, the amendment states that any real estate and equipment loans of more than \$50,000 would require financing from a participating lender. The amendment also states that the maximum amount to be borrowed will be \$100,000. The Amendment has been approved by EDA and also requires approval from the Board. The Amendment was approved upon motion by Floyd Nicholson, seconded by Otis Grier Jr.</p>
<p>CDBG-Coronavirus Funding Program</p>	<p>Economic Recovery Specialist Cason Wright updated the Board on CDBG/Coronavirus funding opportunities.</p> <p>She said there are two pots of available CDBG-CV funding, including \$3 million for competitive statewide public facilities projects. Upper Savannah has received project requests and submitted the intent to apply to Guidehouse, the consultant hired by the Department of Commerce, expecting to get access to the application portal any day now. The other pot is \$1.2 million to the Upper Savannah region for public services projects. USCOG has received project requests, has also submitted the intent to apply to Commerce, and will meet with Guidehouse to discuss the proposed projects. Potential projects must benefit low-to-moderate (LMI) income individuals, and either respond to, prepare for and/or prevent Coronavirus.</p>

<p>FY20 Audit Review and Upper Savannah COG/Development Corporation Lease Amendment</p>	<p>Assistant Director Sam Leaman presented Upper Savannah’s final audit report for FY 2020. The draft audit was presented in February. During FY 2020, revenues exceeded expenditures by \$62,416. At year end, the fund balance was \$1,483,108. The report concluded that there were no deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting or compliance. There were no findings or questioned costs. The audit was approved upon motion by Floyd Nicholson, seconded by Diane Anderson. Leaman and Chairman Norman thanked USCOG Finance Director Melissa Phillips for her work with the audit.</p> <p>Leaman requested the Board’s approval of an addendum to the Upper Savannah COG/Development Corporation Lease. In 2015, USCOG entered into a lease agreement with the Development Corporation, which owns the building and leases it to the COG. A portion of the lease payments were used to make payments to West Carolina Telephone Company on a loan they provided to help finance the building. USCOG will continue to pay the lease to the Development Corporation as outlined in the addendum. The lease agreement addendum to modify the rent payment schedule and enabling the Development Corporation to pay off West Carolina loan ahead of schedule was approved upon motion by Diane Anderson, seconded by Floyd Nicholson.</p>
<p>Director’s Report</p>	<p>Director Patricia C. Hartung urged local governments to comply with the spending restrictions of the American Rescue Plan (ARP), which is providing close to \$43 million to counties and municipalities in the Upper Savannah Region. The funding is being provided to combat the effects of COVID on local governments as well as fund some infrastructure, water, sewer and broadband programs. The ARP also allows local governments, with restrictions, to pass the funding on to transportation providers and non-profits. The first tranche of ARP funding is projected to filter down to counties and municipalities the second week of May. Hartung stressed that local governments spend the money properly in compliance with the Plan so that funds will not have to be returned to the federal government.</p> <p>Hartung announced that the SC COGs annual conference will be held Nov. 21-23, 2021, at the Kingston Plantation in North Myrtle Beach. She said the COGs are negotiating with the hotel to determine head counts for the meeting. Hartung polled the Board members present in this meeting as to whether they planned to attend the conference. The majority of the respondents indicated they would attend.</p>
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.</p>



Patricia C. Hartung
Executive Director