

**MINUTES
 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
 UPPER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
 DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
 430 HELIX ROAD
 GREENWOOD, SOUTH CAROLINA
 MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Diane Anderson, Jackie Brown, John Calhoun, Jim Coleman, Frank Daniel, Charles Goodwin, Otis Grier Jr., Tiffani Ireland, Charles Jennings, Theo Lane, Wes McAllister, Marian Miller, Willie Norman, Randy Randall, David Sawyer, Ernie Segars, Brandon Smith, Albert Talbert, and Faye Thomas (conference call).

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Carter, Ken Durham, Qwen Etheredge, Charlie Henry, Sen. Shane Massey, Miliken Matthews, Matthew Miller, Floyd Nicholson, Roy Smith Jr., Don Smoak, David Tribble and Sen. Danny Verdin.

STAFF PRESENT: Patricia Hartung, Sam Leaman, Rick Green, Melissa Phillips, Keith Smith, Ann Skinner, Willie Matthews, Linda McAllister, and Peggy Merritt.

GUESTS PRESENT: Sabrina Miller, Executive Director – Boys and Girls Club of the Lakelands Region, Scott Neely - Dominion Energy, Jim Walden - SCDOT, and Myranda Butler, Saluda Town Councilmember.

<p>Call to Order</p>	<p>Meeting was held in person with the option to attend via conference call. Chairman Albert Talbert called the meeting to order and Rev. Willie Norman gave the invocation.</p> <p>The April 24, 2023, minutes were approved unanimously.</p> <p>Talbert recognized guests Sabrina Miller, Scott Neely, Jim Walden, and Myranda Butler.</p>
<p>Guest Presentation: Boys and Girls Club of the Lakelands Region</p>	<p>Director Sabrina Miller reported that the Boys and Girls Club of the Lakelands Region began meeting in August 2019 at the Brewer Center. The programs are available for all children between the ages of 4 and 18. The Club has expanded services into Saluda County and hopes to have a presence in all the GLEAMNS counties.</p> <p>There are approximately 200 students taking part today. During the school year, programs are available after dismissal to 6:30 pm for younger students and 7:30 pm for older students. In the summer, teens can use the facility until 8 pm and transportation home is available. Local NFL star Josh Norman contributed \$1 million to support the program.</p> <p>Today, there is a 12,000 square foot facility for teens aged 13 – 18 to use. Job training and workforce development activities are important parts of the overall program.</p> <p>Greenwood Mayor Brandon Smith spoke about the positive impact the group is having on the community and urged all to support it.</p>

<p>Transportation: Consideration of approval for the Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) and Update on the Roadway Departure Study</p>	<p>Government Services Director Rick Green presented the Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) for board review. This program spells out what administrative activities SCDOT expects USCOG planning staff to undertake in the next two years. These funds are administrative and not for construction activities.</p> <p>Jim Coleman made the motion to approve the RPWP and Jackie Brown provided the second. The RPWP was approved unanimously.</p> <p>Green then updated the Board on the Roadway Departure Study that is being undertaken in partnership with the Federal Highways Administration and SCDOT. This study will attempt to explain the high number of roadway departure crashes leading to death and injury in rural areas. Roadway departure is described as a vehicle leaving the road and striking a fixed object or leaving the roadway and returning to strike another vehicle. The study will be presented the last week of August 2023 and all USCOG Board members will be invited to attend.</p>
<p>SC Brownfields Environmental Site Testing (SC BEST)</p>	<p>Four more applications were presented for consideration in the brownfields testing grant program. One potential economic development project near Calhoun Falls in Abbeville County was discussed. Then, the two parts of the Pottersville/Crest site were discussed as a potential public history park in Edgefield. Finally, the Edgefield High School site was presented as a possible parking lot and event space.</p> <p>Ernie Segars made the motion and Marian Miller provided the second to recommend all four projects for consideration. The motion passed without dissent.</p>
<p>Workforce: Report on new provider for Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Service</p>	<p>Workforce Development Deputy Director Willie Matthews announced that Eckerd Connect would be the new provider for the Youth Program services related to Workforce Development. Matthews reviewed the location and contact information for all the One Stop Centers in each county. The Employee Directory for graduating High School Seniors was presented to each Board member. Vendors were listed and flyers distributed for the Saluda County Job Fair at Piedmont Tech the next day.</p> <p>Jackie Brown asked that later hours be considered on a limited or trial basis at the McCormick One Stop Center to accommodate people who may be working during the day but looking for a different job. Matthews said he would pass that information along to Ann Skinner.</p>
<p>Aging Program Update</p>	<p>Linda McAllister reported that the American Rescue Plans (ARP) are allowing the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to offer different programs. Among these are dentures and dental cleanings, pest control, private transit payments, air conditioning or heaters, weather radios, limited lawn services, and programs to end social isolation and learn new skills.</p> <p>Assessments must be done for people 60+ to determine if they qualify for these services. Priority is given to low income, minorities and other special needs</p>

	<p>individuals.</p> <p>McAllister is retiring June 30, 2023 and Peggy Merritt was introduced as the new Aging Program Director.</p>
<p>Presentation of FY2023 Budget and Annual Board Resolution on Select Operating Policies</p>	<p>Assistant Director Sam Leaman presented the FY 2024 Budget. The operating budget decreased 3.1%, and the total budget increased by 19.5%. The operating budget is \$3,952,526 and the total budget \$8,546,036.</p> <p>Leaman reported on changes to major revenue items including State Aid to COGs which decreased as last year's non-recurring funding was not included in this year's state budget. The state provided funds to the Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) so that the 10 COGs could provide technical assistance to applicants and recipients of SCIIP funding. The budget includes \$175,000 for that purpose. Aging funding decreased by 13.4% as one-time pandemic funding begins to expire. Community Development funding will increase by 10.3% as several new projects are being developed for funding.</p> <p>On the expense side of the budget, employee salaries and fringe benefits totaled more than half of the \$3.9 million operating budget. The budget included a 4.0 percent cost of living salary increase for eligible employees. A new line item was added to account for contributions that will be made to Upper Savannah's Retiree Health Insurance Trust. Many expense items remained virtually unchanged from last year. Aging Direct Services decreased by 29.5% as revenues declined in this program.</p> <p>Having been previously approved by the Executive Committee, the budget was approved unanimously by the full board.</p> <p>Leaman then presented the Annual Board Resolution of Select Operating Policies for July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024, proposing that the reimbursement rates for the use of a personal vehicle be increased to 60 cents per mile. No other changes were made from last year's resolution. Having been previously approved by the Executive Committee, the resolution was approved unanimously by the full board.</p>
<p>Director's Report</p>	<p>Hartung gave update on the annual appropriation from the SC State Legislature, explaining that while the state Councils of Governments did not receive non-recurring funding this year as in last year, but did remain at its new higher level in recurring funds. She said that since USCOG region has the lowest population in the state, we receive the smallest share of state funding. Hartung also informed the board that staff received training from Edgefield County Clerk of Court Sonny Reel on how to properly handle uninvited guests who claim to be "First Amendment Auditors" and go around filming public offices. She mentioned that numerous city, county and other public offices such as utilities offices and school district headquarters have been subjected to such "audits." The COG has placed "authorized personnel only" signage on non-public areas. Hartung distributed the staff activity reports and encouraged members to contact any staff member if they have questions.</p>

Adjourn

Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. Hartung".

Patricia C. Hartung
Executive Director