

CATAWBA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
REGULAR MEETING

Catawba Regional Center
May 21, 2020

A regular meeting of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments was held via Zoom at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 21, 2020. Notice of the meeting was sent to the local newspaper and posted on the Council's website.

The following members were present:

Chester

Joe Branham
Jim Fuller
Wanda Stringfellow

Lancaster

Alston DeVenny
Steve Harper
Charlene McGriff

Union

Rep. Doug Gilliam
Frank Hart, Chair
Margaret Holloway
Harold Thompson
Leroy Worthy

York

Paul Basha
Wes Burton
Sen. Wes Climer
Mike Fuesser
Todd Lumpkin
Scott Patterson
Greg Rutherford
Wes Spurrier
Robert Winkler
Rob Youngblood

Members Elect

Nikita Jackson
Derrick Lindsay

The following members were absent:

Chester

Nettie Archie
Sen. Mike Fanning

Lancaster

Jimmy Neal
Rep. Mandy Powers Norrell
Russell Patrick
Ann Taylor

York

Christi Cox
Michael Johnson
David O'Neal
P. N. Saksena
Guynn Savage

Others present included:

Guests

Adam Bernstein
David Hudspeth
Jerome Pearson
Steve Willis

Fenton Overdyke
Sig Huitt
Tye Price
Cole McKinney

Staff

Randy Imler
Amy Chitwood
Nicole Lawing
Kathy Rice

Autumn Cauthen
Kara Drane
Grazier Rhea

The Quarterly Meeting of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments was called to order and roll was called. Chairman Hart welcomed new Member Mike Fuesser and Members Elect Nikita Jackson and Derrick Lindsay. Following the Invocation, the minutes from the February 13, 2020 meeting were approved as written.

I. Review of March 31, 2020 (9 month interim) Operating Statement.

Ms. Chitwood reviewed the nine month interim operating statement. Through March 31, 2020 operating revenues were \$1,634,804 and operating expenditures were \$1,642,506 resulting in a deficit of (\$7,702). Pass throughs totaled \$1,739,753 for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and \$331,321 for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grant. A total of \$362,912 of the SC Agribusiness Loan Fund (SCALF) has been expended which required a \$90,728 match by the COG. Net revenues exceeded expenditures by \$264,482 through March 31, 2020.

II. Insights – COVID-19 Impact Survey – Chernoff Newman.

Mr. Price and Mr. Overdyke from Chernoff Newman presented research findings from a consumer survey on COVID-19. The survey was conducted in South Carolina April 13-18, 2020. The survey and presentation offered insights into how consumer opinions have changed since the onset of the coronavirus. A copy of the presentation, as well as a presentation looking at North Carolina and South Carolina together, are posted on the COG's website. Plans are in place to conduct the survey again in June, a few weeks after the States have reopened. Additional information and updates will be available at www.insidechernoffnewmann.com.

III. Consideration of Transportation Items.

A. FY21-27 Rural Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Allen presented the Rural Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the region. In October 2019, the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) notified the SC Department of Transportation (SC DOT) that the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) needed to be updated. In doing so, SC DOT decided to adopt a new program window of 2021-2027 to better align with the State Transportation Asset Management Plan and the State's 10-year funding plan.

As a result, the TIP is being updated to match the horizon year of the STIP. SC DOT has asked the 11 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and ten Councils of Governments to adopt the amended TIP window by June 1, 2020. The updated TIP includes all of the existing projects from the current 2017-2022 TIP. No additional projects will be added until a new projects list is vetted during the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update process scheduled for later this year. The update was reviewed by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) in April 2020 and is being presented to the Board for approval.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the 2021-2027 Rural Transportation Improvement Program as presented.

B. Consideration of Guideshare Advance/Repayment from SC DOT

Mr. Allen shared that the COG has requested an advance of guideshare funding in the amount of \$1,476,000 for 2020 and 2021 in order to cover expenses of projects that have been scheduled. These funds will be paid back in full in 2023. This action is needed to ensure the program is fiscally constrained.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the \$1,476,000 advance against future guideshare funds for the current Transportation Improvement Program.

C. Consideration of 5310 Rural Transit Grant Recommendations

Ms. Drane presented details of the Section 5310 Transit Funding announced by the SC Department of Transportation. These funds are available to transit providers serving the elderly and disabled and are used primarily for vehicle replacement and service expansion.

A Transit Grants Review Committee, consisting of a representative from each of the four Counties in the Catawba Region, prioritized and recommended the Section 5310 Rural applicants as follows:

- #1 – York County Council on Aging – Vehicle 1
- #2 – York County Council on Aging – Vehicle 2
- #3 – York County Disabilities and Special Needs
- #4 - GoldenCare (serving participants in Lancaster County and Great Falls and Fort Lawn in Chester County)

#5 - Lancaster County Council on Aging

The Committee also recommended funding for York County Disabilities and Special Needs, the only applicant in the Section 5310 Small Urban category.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the recommendations of the Transit Grants Review Committee for the Section 5310 Transit Grants and to submit the rankings to SC DOT for funding consideration.

IV. Consideration of FY2021 Program of Work.

Mr. Imler presented the COG's proposed Program of Work for FY2021. The COG's mission is to facilitate growth of the economy; assist in planning for the region's future; support communities in need; and encourage collaboration, communication, and cooperation among leaders and governments of the Catawba Region. Catawba Regional is celebrating 50 years of service to the region.

The Program of Work is integrated across three areas: Economic Development, Community Development, and Government Services.

A. Economic Development

1. The COG administers approximately \$3 million annually in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act pass through funds and operates three SC Works Centers. The three Centers are currently operating virtually. A Pandemic Recovery and Re-opening Plan has been developed and approved. Challenges still remain to obtain personal protective equipment for clients and staff in preparation of reopening the Centers. New opportunities for FY21 include a York County United Way grant and a Rapid Response Grant for COVID-19.
2. Catawba Regional has closed 313 economic development loans life-to-date for \$73.4 million, leveraging \$152.9 million of private capital, and creating more than 3,000 jobs. Opportunities for FY21 include \$8.2 million from the CARES Act through the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for expansion of the Revolving Loan Fund throughout the 29 counties served by Catawba Regional Development Corporation along with \$820,000 for administration. Funds must be deployed within two years. Total lending assets and available capital exceeds \$32 million.
3. The COG is currently administering three EDA infrastructure grants for \$8.65 million. FY21 will see an increase in EDA projects as a result of the CARES Act. The COG is applying for a \$400,000 Economic Recovery and Resiliency Planning grant which will focus on resiliency planning and improved broadband coverage in rural areas of the region. Projects are also being identified for Economic Adjustment funding through EDA for economic recovery from COVID-19.
4. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) will be updated to maintain the Region's eligibility for EDA funding.

B. Community Development

1. The COG is currently administering 24 Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) Grants, and SC Parks and Recreation Grants for \$10.75 million and a total project investment of \$20.18 million. For FY21, four new RIA grants have been awarded and applications are underway for the next round of CDBG grants. Additional CARES Act funding opportunities are anticipated through the Department of Commerce, but have yet to be announced.
2. In FY21, COG staff will be marketing, maintaining, and selling 149 lots acquired through the Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP) as they reach the end of the required three-year holding period.
3. Final environmental assessments and closeout of the \$600,000 EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant will occur during FY21.

C. Government Services

1. CRCOG has 28 ongoing planning projects and technical assistance contracts with local governments in the Catawba Region providing a variety of services.
2. The COG is already talking to local governments about ten new projects for FY21 excluding EDA Recovery and Resiliency Planning projects.

The cumulative Return on Investment of total grants and loans generated in the Catawba Region is \$50.80 for every \$1.00 invested through local government dues to the COG. This figure does not include transportation guideshare funding or impacts from planning and technical assistance provided by COG staff.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to approve the COG's Program of Work for FY2021.

V. Consideration of FY2021 Operating and Pass through Budgets.

Ms. Chitwood discussed the proposed budget for FY2021. The most significant revenue changes reflect the Public Assistance grant and EDA CARES Act grants, as well as the RLF-COVID19 grant. There is also an increase expected in WIOA administration, Community Development funds, and Technical Assistance contracts. The largest increases in expenses are personnel and professional services. Additional personnel is expected to be needed for the RLF-COVID19 grant as well as a contractor for the EDA planning grant. As a result, other line items such as rent, telephone, travel, office supplies, and printing/advertising expenses are expected to increase.

The budget was presented as a motion by the Executive Committee (no second needed) and passed unanimously. A copy of the budget is attached and made a permanent part of these minutes.

VI. Other Business.

COVID-19 data and trends are being posted to the COG's website on a weekly basis.

VII. Regional Roundup.

Representatives from each county provided brief highlights about projects and activities in their respective cities and counties.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy Imler".

Randy Imler
Executive Director