

CATAWBA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
REGULAR MEETING

Catawba Regional Center
February 4, 2021

A regular meeting of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments was called to order at 4:40 p.m. on Thursday, February 4, 2021, via Zoom. This meeting immediately followed the Annual Meeting of the Catawba Regional Development Corporation. Notice of the meeting was sent to the local newspaper and posted on the Council's website.

The following members were present:

Chester

Nettie Archie
Joe Branham
Sen. Mike Fanning
Jim Fuller

Lancaster

Charlene McGriff
Rep. Brandon Newton
Russell Patrick

Union

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

York

Paul Basha
Wes Burton
Mike Fuesser
Brandon Guffey
Nikita Jackson
Derrick Lindsay
Greg Rutherford
P. N. Saksena
Wes Spurrier
Chad Williams

The following members were absent:

Chester

Wanda Stringfellow

Lancaster

Sean Corcoran
Alston DeVenny
Steve Harper
Eddie Moore

York

Sen. Wes Climer
Todd Lumpkin
David O'Neal
Scott Patterson
Guynn Savage
Robert Winkler
Rob Youngblood

Others present included:

Guests

Briana Bateman	Susan Britt
Brian Broughton	Angela Cook
Paul Dillingham	Rep. Annie McDaniel
Dwight Neese	Tony Pope
Teresa Thomas	David Turner
Steve Willis	

Staff

Randy Imler	Steve Allen
Autumn Cauthen	Amy Chitwood
Kara Drane	Nicole Lawing
Tyler Lewis	Randy Pellisero
Grazier Rhea	Kathy Rice
Christine Schwartz	Cole McKinney

The Quarterly Meeting of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments was called to order on Zoom by Chairman Hart. The minutes from the November 12, 2020 meeting were approved as written.

I. Presentation of 6/30/20 (FY20) Audited Financial Statements and the 12/31/20 Interim (six months) Financial Statement.

Ms. Chitwood shared that the CPA firm of McKinley, Cooper & Co., LLC issued an unmodified, or clean, audit opinion with no deficiencies or material weaknesses of internal controls. Copies of the FY20 audited Financial Statements are available on the COG's website.

Ms. Chitwood reviewed the Governmental Funds Summaries which do not include GASB 68 liabilities, representing the COG's pro-rata share of the state's unfunded pension liability, and GASB 75 OPEB liabilities, representing the COG's pro-rata share of the state's unfunded post-employment benefits liability. Under Assets, Loans Receivable have grown from \$3.8 million in the 2019 Audit to \$5.3 million in the 2020 Audit to \$7.7 million at the 6-month interim. The increase is largely due to closing over \$2 million in COVID-19 Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) since July 2020. These funds will continue to have an impact on the COG's financial statements. Under Liabilities, the COG received a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan in the amount of \$349,669. The COG is in the process of applying for forgiveness for the PPP loan. Under Fund Balances, Restricted for Revolving Loans/ Special Revenue has increased from \$7.2 million to \$7.7 million to \$10 million between FYE 2019-Interim FY 2021. Total Fund Balances have increased from \$8.6 million to \$8.8 million to \$11.2 million over the same time period. On the COG's Income Statement, the COG experienced an Operating loss of (\$131,143) primarily related to COVID-19 associated expenses. The PPP loan, once forgiven, should cure that deficit.

Mr. Imler reviewed the ten-year trend for the Council of Governments' Fund Balances. The COG's Unassigned/Unreserved Fund Balances (UFB) increased from approximately \$953,000 in FY10 to \$1.3 million in FY19. There was a slight decrease in FY20 and to-date in FY21 due to COVID-19 expenses. It is anticipated that the PPP loan forgiveness will bring the UFB to \$1.2 million - \$1.4 million by the end of FY21. Restricted Fund Balances for Revolving Loans and Special Revenue increased from \$3.1 million in FY10 to \$10 million in FY21. This increase has been driven by the assumption of Revolving Loan Funds and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) COVID-19 RLF grant. Total Fund Balances increased from \$5.7 million in FY10 to \$11.8 million to-date in FY21.

II. Transportation Issues.

Mr. Allen presented the 2021 Public Participation Plan (PPP) update. The plan provides policy direction on how Catawba Regional Council of Governments communicates to the public and transportation partners during transportation planning activities. The plan must be updated every five years and be consistent with the SC Department of Transportation (SC DOT) Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The plan is included in the COG's LRTP update. The plan was reviewed by the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) on January 26, 2021. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to adopt the Public Participation Plan as presented.

Mr. Allen also presented the FY 2021-2023 Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) update. The RPWP is a two-year work program funded annually that identifies the allocation of funding to transportation planning activities. It is part of the SC DOT Statewide Planning Program and is mandated under the planning agreement. SC DOT contracts annually with the COG for transportation planning services, for a contract amount of up to \$85,000. The required 20% match results in a total project budget of \$106,250. The RPWP was reviewed by the TAC on January 26, 2021. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to adopt the Rural Planning Work Program as presented.

III. Consideration of Letter Requesting De-federalization of Economic Development Administration Revolving Loan Fund.

As discussed in the Annual Development Corporation Meeting which immediately preceded the COG Board meeting, Mr. Imler presented a draft letter to EDA with Chairman Hart's signature which requests de-federalization of \$7.2 million in EDA Revolving Loan Funds. The draft letter was provided to the Board and states that de-federalized funds will be utilized according to the federal Comprehensive Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (PWEDA). This action was presented as a motion from the Executive Committee and no second was needed. The Board unanimously approved the letter requesting de-federalization of \$7.2 million in Revolving Loan Funds as written.

IV. Presentation Regarding Rural Broadband Expansion.

Mr. Basha, CEO of York Electric Cooperative, and Mr. Broughton, CEO of Lynches River Electric Cooperative, shared plans for broadband expansion in rural service areas. York Electric has a total of 65,000 customers, 5,000 of which have no broadband services. The co-op plans to begin putting fiber in the air in May and hopes to hook up the first customers this summer. They will be running a total of 500 feet of fiber over the next 24-30 months. Lynches River has a total of 22,000 customers, 19,000-20,000 of which have no internet service. Over the next three to five years, Lynches River plans to provide broadband service to all customers in their service area.

V. Presentation of 2020 National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Impact Award – City of Tega Cay Comprehensive Plan.

The City of Tega Cay was presented with the 2020 NADO Impact Award for their Comprehensive Plan 2025 Update. Ms. Drane shared the innovative planning tools and methodology used in the plan. This included a new Health and Active Living element, community engagement, an online community survey and interactive mapping tool, and a visual preference and mapping exercise with residents from the City's 37 neighborhoods. More than 700 residents completed the online community survey. The interactive mapping tool allowed residents to identify places they liked to walk and bike in the city and new areas they would like to see sidewalks and trails constructed. It also allowed them to "like" other individuals' comments. Susan Britt, Tega Cay Planning and Development Director, and Rob Jackson, Catawba Regional GIS Analyst and Drone Pilot, worked on the project with Ms. Drane.

VI. Consideration of Extension of Lease for Suite 200, 215 Hampton Street and Modification of the Purchase Option between CRCOG and CRDC.

Mr. Imler stated that the Catawba Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) owns the building at 215 Hampton Street in Rock Hill. The COG leases the second floor from CRDC. The lease has expired, and the Executive Committee is presenting the proposed terms for a new seven-year lease as follows:

- \$2,500/month for years 1-3 (\$5.50/ft²)
- \$3,000/month for years 4-7 (\$6.00/ft²)
- Extend the existing purchase option throughout the length of the renewed lease

The new lease agreement is presented as a motion from the Executive Committee and no second is needed. After discussion, the Board approved the lease unanimously as presented.

VII. Other Business/Regional Roundup.

Mr. Imler reminded the Board of meeting dates for the remainder of 2021. These are tentatively scheduled for May 6, July 29, and October 21 which will also recognize Catawba Regional's 50th year of service. All meetings begin at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Imler also invited Board Members and guests to attend the SC Councils of Governments (SC COGS) Zoom presentation on February 17, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. featuring Dr. Laura Ullrich, a regional economist from the Charlotte branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Randy Imler
Executive Director