

CATAWBA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
REGULAR MEETING

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Catawba Regional Center  
December 2, 2021

A regular meeting of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments was held via Zoom at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 2, 2021. Notice of the meeting was sent to the local newspaper and posted on the Council's website.

The following members were present:

Chester

Rep. Randy Ligon  
Wanda Stringfellow

Lancaster

Sean Corcoran  
Alston DeVenny  
Steve Harper  
Charlene McGriff  
Russell Patrick

Union

Margaret Holloway  
Harold Thompson

York

Paul Basha  
Wes Burton  
Brandon Guffey  
Nikita Jackson  
Stacey Moore  
David O'Neal  
Scott Patterson  
P. N. Saksena  
Wes Spurrier  
Chad Williams  
Robert Winkler

The following members were absent:

Chester

Nettie Archie  
Jim Fuller  
Wanda Stringfellow

Lancaster

Eddie Moore  
Rep. Brandon Newton

Union

Rep. Doug Gilliam  
Frank Hart  
Leroy Worthy

York

Wes Burton  
Sen. Wes Climer  
Mike Fuesser  
Derrick Lindsay  
Todd Lumpkin  
William Roddey  
Guynn Savage

Others present included:

Guests

Gail Jeter  
R. Pinckney  
Teresa Thomas

Christina Lewis  
Peter Whitehouse  
Steve Willis

Staff

Randy Imler  
Autumn Cauthen  
Nicole Lawing  
Eleanor Mixon  
Grazier Rhea

Steve Allen  
Amy Chitwood  
Tyler Lewis  
Rob Jackson

The Quarterly Meeting of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments was called to order by Chairman Winkler. This was a hybrid meeting (Zoom and in-person attendees). Paul Basha delivered the Invocation. A motion was made to approve the minutes from the August 19, 2021 COG Board meeting. The motion was duly seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously as written.

I. Review of October 31, 2021 (4 month) Operating Statement.

Ms. Chitwood reviewed the four-month interim operating statement. Through October 31, 2021, total operating revenues were \$832,732, and total expenditures were \$823,846. Operating revenues exceeded expenditures by \$8,886. Passthrough revenues and expenditures were the following: \$1,130,488 for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Passthrough, \$1,786,795 for the COVID-19 Revolving Loan Fund Grant, \$275,504 for the EDA SC Agribusiness Loan Fund Grant with required match of \$68,876. Net revenue less expenditures totaled \$2,002,309. The Board received this report as information.

II. Consideration of Amendment FY 2021-2027 Rural Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Allen provided an overview of recommended TIP amendments. Project SC 5/Steel Hill Rd (S-29- 358) intersection increased from an original estimated cost of \$750,000 to a new estimated cost of \$1,500,000. The conditions of the site were not sufficient to cover the cost. Project SC 55 (Kings Mountain Street) from Beersheba Street to Barrett Rd. type Sidewalk (Bike/Ped) went from \$1,200,000 to \$1,600,000 because of a scope change due to safety concerns. These changes will be coming out of the rural guideshare funding to cover the increase. Mr. Imler added that the SCDOT is increasing guide share amounts in the coming years, so some of these costs will be absorbed. A motion to adopt the recommended TIP amendments was made, duly seconded, and unanimously to approved. These amendments will be forwarded to SC DOT for inclusion in the STIP.

### III. Overview of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Update.

Ms. Lawing presented an update regarding recent program year-end results for the Catawba Region's workforce development program, including program-year (PY) metrics as measured by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SC DEW). Catawba Regional's workforce area includes Chester, Lancaster, and York counties. Union County in part of the Upstate Workforce Development area.

After explaining the services and funding of the workforce program, Ms. Lawing stated that Catawba met all WIOA performance measures for the most recent program year. Federal measures of adult, dislocated workers, and youth participants were used as indicators of participant employment in the second and fourth quarter after exiting the program, their mean earnings, credential rates and measurable skills gains. All the indicators met or exceeded the 80% goal. Federal funding obligation rates and fund utilization rates were met for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funding streams for the most recent program year. WIOA participants have decreased over the past two programmatic years due to funding reductions, lower regional unemployment rates, and lower labor participation rates due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### IV. Consideration of 50% Match Commitment for US Economic Development Administration (EDA) Planning Grant (3 years).

Mr. Lewis provided an overview of the EDA Planning Grant application for 2022-2025. This grant is utilized for economic development planning including preparation of the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). Stated action items are: to promote a diverse regional economy, thereby lowering unemployment in the region; to assist local governments with industrial and commercial recruitment efforts, and to assist local governments with air quality and water resources/treatment/preservation. The grant will include coordination with local governments to provide access to federal EDA grant funding as it relates to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in areas of infrastructure and regional workforce projects. Other federal grant funding sources may include, but are not limited to, Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) and the American Recue Plan Act (ARPA).

Catawba Regional will need to commit to a local 50 percent match rate which is based upon economic factors in the four counties of the Catawba Economic Development District. The total project (grant and local matching funds) is \$420,000, spread across three years. This will require local matching funds of \$70,000 per year. A motion was made, duly seconded, and passed unanimously to provide the EDA grant matching funds commitment of \$210,000.

### V. Overview of US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Assessment Grant Application Update.

Mr. Lewis from Catawba Regional, Mr. Peter Whitehouse and Ms. Gail Jeter, environmental

consultants with CARDNO, provided an overview of the FY2022 EPA Brownfields Community-Wide assessment grant application which was submitted on November 30, 2021. The application required identification of top priority sites which are: the Springs Mill Administration Building and Lancaster Mill Site in City of Lancaster, Buffalo Mill in Union County, and Republic Mills #1, #2, & #3 in Town of Great Falls.

Mr. Whitehouse and Ms. Jeter also highlighted how the previous Brownfields Assessment grant had provided impact to the Catawba region. The grant used \$114,087 of funding to assess the Republic Mill #1 Site in Great Falls, SC. This led to a Community Development Block grant of \$500,000, with the Town of Great Falls matching \$50,000. The Town also received a SC Brownfields Cleanup RLF Subgrant of \$126,000. Ms. Jeter share that this is the ideal process for mill sites to be redeveloped, and the team looks forward to continuing the process for other mill sites.

VI. Elected Officials Forum Update.

Mr. Imler discussed the Annual Elected Officials Forum. This event will include the COG's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration that was postponed due to COVID-19. The Forum and Anniversary Celebration will be held on Thursday, January 6, 2022 from 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. at the Gateway Center in Richburg, SC. Staff will continue to watch the COVID-19 trends in anticipation of the upcoming event.

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 5:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Randy Imler  
Executive Director