

CATAWBA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Catawba Regional Center
Rock Hill, South Carolina
May 16, 2025

A regular meeting of the Catawba Regional Council of Governments Executive Committee was held in-person and by Zoom, at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, May 16, 2025.

The following members were present:

Nettie Archie	Stacey Moore
Joe Branham, Vice Chair	Harold Thompson
Alston DeVenny	Chad Williams
Todd Lumpkin (Zoom)	Leroy Worthy
Charlene McGriff, Chair	

Others present were:

Staff

Steve Allen	Eleanor Mixon
Amy Chitwood	Jessica Sawyers
Randy Imler	

Following the Call to Order and Invocation, a motion was made to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2025, COG Executive Committee meeting. The motion was duly seconded and approved unanimously.

I. Consideration of Revisions to FY25 General Operating, Special Funds, and Passthrough Budgets

Ms. Chitwood and Mr. Imler presented the highlights of the proposed amended FY25 budget (attached). Ms. Chitwood explained the significant changes to revenues.

- In FY25, the COG received a one-time State allocation of \$100,000, which caused an increase in the state aid to Councils of Governments budget line item.
- Interest income was less than anticipated due to lower deferred revenues throughout the year and a slightly lower current interest rate environment.
- CDBG grant revenues were lower as well. However, income from other funding sources, including Economic Development Administration (EDA) infrastructure grants, the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC), and the State Revolving Fund (SRF) increased this fiscal year. One Community Development Planner left during the fiscal year and was not replaced, which caused a drop in total grant revenue.
- EDA planning grant income was lower than anticipated because the three-year Partnership Planning grant has been delayed. This planning grant should extend from January 2025 to

December 2028. (Note: Subsequent to the Executive Committee meeting, the Partnership Planning grant awards have been completed for the state of SC. Staff expects to receive these grant agreements in July 2025, but retroactive to January 1.)

- Following Hurricane Helene, EDA awarded a disaster recovery and planning grant to Catawba Regional COG in December 2024. This is a \$500,000 grant for five years.
- Technical assistance contract and transportation planning revenue was mostly in line with expectations.
- The lending programs' revenues were down due to management's decision to defer hiring another full-time lender, which was anticipated at the start of the FY25 fiscal year. Additionally, the SC BEST and EPA Brownfields grants end in 2025 and 2026, which will free up staff capacity.
- Workforce revenue did not change from the original budget to the proposed revised budget.
- All of the preceding operational shifts caused a cumulative decrease of revenues from \$3,569,877 in the original budget to a proposed revised FY25 amount of \$3,413,877.

Ms. Chitwood then explained the significant changes proposed to the COG's expenses:

- The proposed revised personnel expense was lower than anticipated due to not hiring a full-time lender and not replacing the Community Development Planner who left in 2024.
- Professional services expenses were much lower than originally estimated as well. Staff anticipated litigation costs related to CDBG-funded demolitions. The SC Insurance Reserve Fund covered these costs.
- The proposed revised total operating expenses for FY25 are expected to be \$3,030,154.

Ms. Chitwood then reported on expected FY25 passthrough and extraordinary revenues and expenses:

- WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) passthrough funds were not as high as anticipated because the State did not release discretionary grants this year.
- The SC BEST (SC DES) grant was extended into next fiscal year, so some of the environmental assessment funding will be deployed next fiscal year.
- The EPA Brownfields assessment grant funds will be spent by the end of the grant period in 2026.
- There were approximately \$140,000 in insured air conditioning unit replacement costs from storm damage. These costs were covered by insurance but had to be capitalized because they were capital expenditures.
- The COVID RLF grant is now complete with the final drawdown totaling \$804,295.
- The COG transferred \$49,650 to the Catawba Regional Development Corporation to repave the parking lot, which was less than the \$100,000 originally budgeted for the work.
- The revised excess of revenues over expenditures is therefore anticipated to be \$975,542.

Following discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to approve the revised FY2025 budget.

II. Executive Session to discuss Contractual and Services Items per SC Code § 30-4-70

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously for the Committee to go to executive session with Ms. Chitwood and Mr. Imler invited to remain. At the conclusion of executive session, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to come out of executive session. No actions were taken in executive session.

III. FY26 Program of Work

Mr. Imler presented the Council's proposed FY26 Program of Work, including planning and programmatic work with federal, state, and local governments and agencies.

Community Development

The total Community Development portfolio, inclusive of grants under administration, submitted applications, applications in progress, and Environmental Review Records, is approximately 80 projects for a total grant amount of \$151,775,473 and a total project amount of \$207,456,725. Based on the current federal fiscal climate and the anticipated completion of SCIIP projects through FY26, the FY26 projection for the total grant dollars under administration is \$120 million by May of 2026, which is a decrease from the \$143 million currently being administered. Mr. Imler shared that grant balances are anticipated to continue to decline throughout FY26 and into FY27, due to the current federal fiscal environment. CRCOG has worked to broaden its grant portfolio by widening the variety of funders with which it works and serving new grantees.

Economic Development

On behalf of the consortium of counties (Chester, Lancaster, and York), CRCOG administers approximately \$2.2 million of federal workforce (WIOA) funding. These funds are used to operate three SC Works offices and provide training and re-employment services to qualified participants. In the second quarter of program year 2024, the Catawba Region Program's scores exceeded the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SC DEW) goals in all categories, with the overall program scores for each category (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) exceeding 100 percent. SC DEW projected a slight increase in statewide WIOA programmatic funding prior to the recently released federal Executive budget draft. Given the uncertainty, staff is attempting to reduce workforce center costs for FY26 in all three centers. This includes the number of phone lines, the elimination of on-site security, and reduced operating hours.

Inclusive of business and brownfields loans, lending assets under management as of March 31, 2025, totaled \$37,166,965. In light of current uncertainty, staff reviewed every loan in the 90+ loan portfolio and identified borrowers with significant Medicaid exposure, international trade exposure / import tariffs, and fundamental financial and / or collateral weakness. One-third of the portfolio is subject to these risks.

The SC BEST statewide project will wrap up in August / September 2025. Seventy-seven environmental assessment reports have been completed or are underway across the state. The Catawba Region's EPA Assessment Grant will continue through 2026. Significant site assessment work will be completed on the Lancaster Mill site and the former York Wastewater Plant.

New for 2026 is a Regional Workforce Housing Study. This study will target households making 80% to 150% of the Area Median Income. The projected cost for the study is \$250,000, with \$231,000 of this already budgeted or committed to date by counties, cities, the private sector, and non-profit / special purpose districts. The CRCOG FY26 budget includes \$25,000 in project administration costs.

Government Services

The COG continues to provide transportation services in the form of Regional Mobility / Guideshare Planning, Rural Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Alternatives Program, and Transit Planning. SCDOT provides \$125,000 of FHWA and FTA funds, which require a 20% local match (\$31,250). Therefore, the total funding available for transportation planning work is \$156,250.

CRCOG currently has service contracts with 10 towns and cities, 3 counties, 4 school districts, and 2 non-profits. This has been an area of growth for the COG.

CRCOG continues to be a resource for advocacy, leadership, and connectivity within the region and beyond. This year, CRCOG was recognized with a SCDES Power of Partnerships Award.

Financial Sustainability

As of March 31, 2025, the total CRCOG fund balances equaled \$21.4 million while the total CRDC net position was \$3.0 million. Annual direct, passthrough, and “managed” (grants, DOT guideshare, etc.) revenue equates to roughly \$61.5 million. The Return on Local Investment is currently \$65.77:\$1. Since 1971, Catawba Regional has deployed \$567.1 million across the four counties of the region, while member counties have paid a cumulative total of \$8.6 million in dues.

IV. Consideration of Preliminary FY26 General Operating, Special Funds, and Passthrough Budgets

Mr. Imler and Ms. Chitwood reviewed the proposed FY26 budget (attached). The budget was developed conservatively, given the federal fiscal environment.

FY26 budgeted revenue:

- Projected interest income is lower in the FY26 budget due again to lower deferred revenues and the declining interest rate environment.
- Grants revenue is projected to be slightly lower in the coming year due to declining grants balances.
- Because the EDA Partnership Planning grant has not yet been awarded, staff budgeted a modest \$40,000 for FY26.
- The EDA Disaster grant is funded, and revenue is anticipated to be \$100,000 for the fiscal year.
- Technical assistance contract revenue is projected to be higher in FY26 due to ongoing growth in new work and clients.
- A slight decrease in lending program interest income is anticipated due to interest rate

decreases on deposits.

- Workforce revenue is also projected to decrease.
- Total revenue is expected to decrease from \$3,413,877 in FY25 to \$3,244,526 in FY26.

FY26 budgeted expenses:

- Proposed personnel expenses include the cost of hiring additional lending staff as well as increasing compensation for existing staff to assume communication duties (i.e. social media, etc.).
- There is a slight increase in budgeted expenses for information technology services as the COG's service provider indicated that a cost increase is anticipated.
- All other expenses remained relatively consistent from the revised FY25 budget to the proposed FY26 budget.
- Total expenses are expected to be \$3,209,266 for FY26, resulting in net operating revenue over expenses of \$35,260.

The only significant addition to passthrough revenues and expenses for FY26 is a regional workforce housing study. Total anticipated excess of revenues over expenditures for FY26 is \$35,260.

A motion was made to recommend the proposed FY2026 budget to the full board at the May 22, 2025, COG Board meeting. The motion was duly seconded and unanimously approved.

V. Consideration of Transportation Items

Mr. Allen presented the FY 26-27 Rural Planning Work Program (RPWP) amendment. The RPWP must be updated every two years but may be amended from time to time. The RPWP identifies the transportation planning activities and studies to be performed by staff. The document includes a two-year budget. The work program begins in July 2025 and ends in June 2027. This document was reviewed and recommended to the Executive Committee by the Transportation Advisory Committee at its May 13 meeting.

A motion was made, duly seconded, and, following discussion, passed unanimously to recommend the FY 26-27 RPWP plan to the full COG Board for approval.

Additionally, Mr. Allen reviewed the 2025-2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update, including the financial summary and priority projects list. The LRTP must be reviewed, updated, and approved at least every five years. The COGs are working with SCDOT to update the planning agreement between the COGs and SCDOT. The updated agreement will be included in the new LRTP as an appendix. The 2025-2050 LRTP document was reviewed and recommended to the Executive Committee by the Transportation Advisory Committee at its May 13 meeting.

A motion was made, duly seconded, and, following discussion, passed unanimously to recommend the 2025-2050 LRTP update to the full COG Board for approval.

If the full Board approves the RPWP plan and LRTP update, there will be a 30-day public comment period. Once the comment period concludes, the approved plans will be sent to SCDOT.

VI. Formation of Nominating Committee for Officer / At-Large Executive Committee Members

The election for officers and at-large Executive Committee members will be held at the next COG board meeting on August 14, 2025. As expressed in the Bylaws, the Executive Committee appoints the nominating committee with at least one member from every county. Following discussion, it was decided that the full Executive Committee would serve as the nominating committee, and Mayor Alston DeVenny will serve as the nominating committee chair.

VII. Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Randy Imler
Executive Director

**CATAWBA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
FY2025 REVISED and FY2026 PROPOSED BUDGET**

	Operating Fund 4/30/2025 COG	Restricted Legacy 4/30/2025 RLF	Restricted COVID 4/30/2025 SCBLF	Restricted 4/30/2025 SCALF	Consolidated (75% of original) 4/30/2025	Original Budget	Revised FY2025	Consolidated Proposed FY2026
REVENUE								
Participating Local Governments	\$ 208,818	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 208,818	223,293	\$ 223,293	\$ 225,182
State Aid to Councils of Governments	244,345	-	-	-	244,345	144,344	244,344	144,344
Interest and Other Income	52,118	-	-	-	52,118	85,000	60,000	45,000
	505,281	-	-	-	505,281	452,637	527,637	414,526
Community Development Contracts	202,187	-	-	-	202,187	375,000	242,000	230,000
Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) Contracts	36,818	-	-	-	36,818	50,000	45,000	50,000
SC Infrastructure Investment Program	174,428	-	-	-	174,428	225,000	208,000	210,000
EDA Infrastructure Program	41,727	-	-	-	41,727	-	50,000	35,000
Southeast Crescent Regional Commission	15,231	-	-	-	15,231	-	19,000	15,000
SRF Infrastructure Program	11,877	-	-	-	11,877	-	14,000	10,000
ARC Planning Grant and Projects	56,065	-	-	-	56,065	80,000	65,000	50,000
Union County ARC Planning Grant Match	9,180	-	-	-	9,180	12,240	12,240	10,000
Neighborhood Initiative Program	6,148	-	-	-	6,148	5,000	8,000	5,000
	553,661	-	-	-	553,661	747,240	663,240	615,000
EDA Planning Grant	53,548	-	-	-	53,548	95,000	60,000	40,000
EDA Disaster Grant	12,979	-	-	-	12,979	-	23,000	100,000
	66,527	-	-	-	66,527	95,000	83,000	140,000
Technical Assistance Contracts	347,598	-	-	-	347,598	410,000	415,000	425,000
Transportation Planning	85,229	-	-	-	85,229	125,000	115,000	125,000
	432,827	-	-	-	432,827	535,000	530,000	550,000
EDA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) - Interest on Loans	-	166,676	-	-	166,676	375,000	200,000	190,000
EDA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) - Interest on Deposits	-	156,419	-	-	156,419	200,000	190,000	170,000
EDA - COVID19 RLF - Interest on Loans	-	-	234,915	-	234,915	300,000	280,000	290,000
EDA - COVID19 RLF - Interest on Deposits	-	-	127,689	-	127,689	90,000	155,000	120,000
SC Agribusiness Loan Fund - Interest on Loans	-	-	-	9,277	9,277	40,000	12,000	15,000
SC Agribusiness Loan Fund - Interest on Deposits	-	-	-	28,465	28,465	15,000	35,000	25,000
Other Loan Funds	17,313	-	-	-	17,313	12,000	20,000	15,000
Intermediary Relending Program	19,168	-	-	-	19,168	20,000	20,000	20,000
Regional Development Corporation	99,097	-	-	-	99,097	100,000	110,000	115,000
Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund	97,052	-	-	-	97,052	118,000	118,000	115,000
EPA Brownfields Assessment Contract	16,251	-	-	-	16,251	20,000	20,000	20,000
	248,881	323,095	362,604	37,742	972,322	1,290,000	1,160,000	1,095,000
Workforce - WIOA	377,442	-	-	-	377,442	450,000	450,000	430,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 2,184,619	\$ 323,095	\$ 362,604	\$ 37,742	\$ 2,908,060	\$ 3,569,877	\$ 3,413,877	\$ 3,244,526

**CATAWBA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
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OPERATING EXPENSES								
Personnel	\$ 1,646,614	\$ 216,954	\$ 205,149	\$ 14,717	\$ 2,083,434	\$ 2,700,000	\$ 2,600,000	\$ 2,775,000
Rent	30,000	-	-	-	30,000	36,000	36,000	36,000
Utilities	15,183	-	-	-	15,183	20,000	20,000	20,000
Telephone	18,666	630	135	-	19,431	25,000	25,000	25,000
Travel and Meetings	48,037	5,245	1,868	-	55,150	75,000	70,000	70,000
Office Supplies	25,143	618	1,528	-	27,289	45,000	42,000	40,000
Postage	1,760	-	-	-	1,760	3,000	3,000	3,000
Memberships, Dues, Publications	14,142	7,451	7,451	726	29,770	18,000	35,000	35,000
Maintenance & Service Contracts	9,757	-	-	-	9,757	20,000	12,000	12,000
Employee/Board Member Training	11,988	825	-	-	12,813	20,000	17,000	15,000
Capital Costs	19,153	-	-	-	19,153	30,000	19,154	25,000
Professional Services	23,027	1,957	5,365	25	30,374	130,000	40,000	40,000
Audit	23,190	-	-	-	23,190	25,000	25,000	25,000
Information Technology Services	49,618	-	-	-	49,618	60,000	60,000	62,500
Insurance and Bonding	15,735	643	-	-	16,378	25,000	20,000	20,000
Miscellaneous	4,334	-	-	-	4,334	5,250	6,000	5,766
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,956,347	234,323	221,496	15,468	2,427,634	3,237,250	3,030,154	3,209,266
EXCESS REVENUE (LOSS) BEFORE OTHER ITEMS	\$ 228,272	\$ 88,772	\$ 141,108	\$ 22,274	\$ 480,426	\$ 332,627	\$ 383,723	\$ 35,260
WIOA Pass-Thru Revenues	1,761,883	-	-	-	1,761,883	2,400,000	2,100,000	2,000,000
SC BEST DHEC Assessment Grant	248,327	-	-	-	248,327	700,000	300,000	350,000
EPA Brownfields Pass-Thru Revenues	94,253	-	-	-	94,253	238,000	115,000	158,000
Workforce Housing Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200,000
WIOA Pass-Thru Expenditures	(1,761,883)	-	-	-	(1,761,883)	(2,400,000)	(2,100,000)	(2,000,000)
SC BEST DHEC Assessment Grant	(248,327)	-	-	-	(248,327)	(700,000)	(300,000)	(350,000)
EPA Brownfields Pass-Thru Revenues	(94,253)	-	-	-	(94,253)	(238,000)	(115,000)	(158,000)
Workforce Housing Study	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(200,000)
Uninsured Replacement Cost-Storm Damage	-	-	-	-	-	(10,000)	-	-
Insured Replacement Cost-Storm Damage	(139,881)	-	-	-	(139,881)	-	(139,881)	-
COVID RLF Grant	-	-	804,295	-	804,295	752,915	804,295	-
Transfer to RDC - Capital Improvement (parking)	(49,650)	-	-	-	(49,650)	(100,000)	(49,650)	-
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	\$ 38,741	\$ 88,772	\$ 945,403	\$ 22,274	\$ 1,095,190	\$ 975,542	\$ 998,487	\$ 35,260