**MINUTES**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**PEE DEE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**6:00 PM, MONDAY, May 10th, 2021**

**PDRCOG CONFERENCE ROOM**

**FLORENCE** **SC**

The Executive Committee of the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, MAY 10th,2021 at 6:00 PM in the COG’s Conference Center in Florence.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

K.G. Rusty Smith, Jr., *Chairman* Carolyn Prince, *Vice-Chairman*

John Q. Atkinson, *Secretary-Treasurer*  Leon Johnson

Harold Moody

Rhett Butler

**COG STAFF PRESENT**

Johnny Brown, Executive Director

Joette Dukes, Workforce Development Director

Lindsay Privette, Economic Development Director

Kim Ethridge, Community and Economic Development

Sandy Watford, Project Engineer

Alicia Pippin, Executive/Administrative Assistant

Chairman Rusty Smith called the meeting to order and determined that a quorum was present. The invocation was then given.

**ACTION ON MINUTES FOR December 14th, 2020 (previously approved)**

After a review of the minutes of the last Executive Committee meeting, which was held December 14th, 2021 a motion to approve these minutes as written was made by Mr. John Q. Atkinson and seconded by Mr. Leon Johnson \*All were in favor.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM REPORT**

Ms. Joette Dukes, Workforce Development Director, distributed a Workforce Department Report.

Our SC Works centers across the region have been closed to the public some days during the week, out of an abundance of caution, and to ensure the safety of staff and customers. We were operating on a part time/hybrid schedule, with services being offered virtually. Effective May 3rd all of our work centers have returned to their pre-Covid operating hours. Customers are still asked to wear masks, and we are still by appointment only.

Since July 1, 2020 we have served 10,541 people in person at our SC Work centers. There was a recent announcement that the federal unemployment benefits will be ending in June, and this will probably cause an increase in participants/customers needing the center’s services.

We have used a service called on the job training. Some participants went straight to work with employers, and we subsidized their wages. Between July 1 and now, we have had 111 participants to use this opportunity. This program has worked well in order to fill employer need during the pandemic. We have had 62 hiring events/job fairs for employers across the Pee Dee Region.

Funding Update:

There have been minimal changes since last month’s report. We were awarded a 200,000 grant from the Marion County Healthcare Foundation. The bids we received were twice that amount. We had a meeting the architectural firm in Marion, and it does not look like we will get any relief on the costs. We will have some upcoming decisions to make. We will need to either abandon the project or find alternative funding to supplement the funds from the Healthcare Foundation. This decision will be taken up with the Workforce Board.

As reported, we received a Healthcare Grant from the Department of Labor. We are in the 9-month implementation phase. Right now, many of the things that we are doing are administrative. We anticipate that our first round of students will start in the fall of 2021. We are ironing out procedures and memorandums of agreements and working with DOL to make sure we have all our systems and processes in place.

Incumbent worker training grant- We received funding from the State Workforce Development Board and SCDEW. We released a solicitation by ad on social media pages, website, economic developers, and businesses who asked to be informed. We received $138,000 in applications. We need to have 175,000 - 250,000 to be awarded. We will be asking for additional applications for that money. Some business did not meet the deadline, so that may put us where we need to be able to keep the funding.

We have an extension of our existing Security Grant through November 17, 2021. Pending State Workforce Board approval. (we anticipate needing them)

PY 2021- We have been told that the state of South Carolina can expect a 9.5% decrease in each funding stream for the new year. We do not yet know what that means for the Pee Dee Region.

This will be determined by formula funding. We will keep the board posted.

**COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Ms. Lindsay Privette distributed the Community and Economic Development Department Report. A full list of all current projects was submitted to the board. Kim Ethridge reported last month that she was going to submit 2 new CDBG applications, one for the City of Dillon, the other for the City of Darlington. These should be announced in June. We have high confidence in the applications. The spring round is always the water, sewer, and infrastructure projects. These projects are more intensive to put together and expensive for localities. We try to get as much funding as we can.

EDA- We have no new projects to report. Please see continuing project reports.

For the future, we have a study that we commissioned for the Inland Port. It has been active for a little over a year and is 99% complete. We will be presenting the findings of this study soon.

We received an EDA grant for Darlington pump stations. The bids were just opened for the construction of this project. Several pump stations will be replaced on the southside of town, on the same side as Georgia-Pacific. It will have a major impact on their sewer capacity. There is also a new school in that neighborhood. The sewer project will partner well with the CDBG grant that was submitted last month. (an identical project for the other side of Main Street).

The floor was open for any questions.

**ENGINEERING REPORT:**

Ms. Sandy Watford, PDRCOG Project Engineer, distributed the transportation and engineering report. A list of current projects was submitted to the board.

In County lien road in Chesterfield: We had a bid opening. Low bid of $637,135.75 was higher than original 2011 estimate, as expected. Low Bidder: Furr Grading & Paving, Inc.

Hillcrest Lane project is complete. PDCOG sent final invoice to County on 4/23/21.

Comanche Drive in Darlington is awaiting final Survey points/surface.

Titan & Old Race Trac Road in Dillon project is complete. PDCOG send final invoice to county 4/23/21.

Senator Clementa C. Pinckney Memorial Park: awaiting pavement markings 7 final infiltration testing.

The floor was open to questions from the board.

**The Financial Statement** for April 2021 was distributed, and Mr. Brown reviewed it with the Board. The Chairman remarked that the financial statement looks good.

**Other Business:**

Dr. Carolyn Prince commented on the City of Bennettsville. The city has begun Planning Process sessions. Cameron Sabin, an employee for PDRCOG came, and she hopes to see him at the additional sessions. They are excited about this process. They plan to concentrate on financial stability and tourism.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by John Q. Atkinson and seconded by Dr. Carolyn Prince. All were in favor.