**MINUTES**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**PEE DEE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

**6:00 PM, MONDAY, July 12th, 2021**

**PDRCOG CONFERENCE ROOM**

**FLORENCE** **SC**

The Executive Committee of the Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, July 12th,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

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**

After a review of the minutes of the last Executive Committee meeting, which was held May 10th, 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.

Ms. Dukes addressed the financial cuts that were made to the program for this year (starting July 1st), and referenced a handout that details some of this information. Since the last full board meeting, we have been accounting for the fact that we do not have as much funding as we did last year. We reached out to some other local areas in the state because some areas receive more money than they can spend or obligate by a certain deadline. The Midlands Council of Governments and workforce area was in danger of loosing some of its youth funding due to not being able to obligate this funding before June 30th. The Pee Dee area local workforce promptly accepted 100,000 from them to use in our program. We have a year to spend this money. We also met with the Department of Workforce to receive an explanation of how the allocation and calculations were made. Jeffrey Delung, a member of the Workforce Board, accompanied us. He has a background and knowledge of statistics related to unemployment & labor force. We understood what SCDEW were communicating to us. In order to cope with the funding cuts, here at the Council of Governments, we allocated some of our staff members to other departments. These people have skill sets that could benefit other departments. One of our staff members moved over to Administration to assist the finance director, and one employee is working on a part time basis in the CDBG department. We are happy and appreciative that we are able to make those changes.

We are exploring another federal grant for dislocated workers, possibly being an applicant along with another Council of Governments in the state. This is an effort to bring additional resources to our area.

The H1B Rural Healthcare Grant: We are looking to enroll our first set of participants in August.

We are having additional conversations with the Marion Healthcare Foundation, in which we had insufficient funding to do the renovations in that location, due to the pandemic driving up pricing and construction costs. We will keep you all posted on any resolutions.

We received traditional incumbent worker training funds to help support our local businesses to upscale their existing workforce. We obligated about $170,000 to local businesses in the month of June. (We are underway with this grant.)

Since 2018 we have lost approximately 43 percent of our funding, the number of participants we have served has not decreased correspondingly. The number of dislocated workers we have served has increased. A total of 31,812 distinct individuals received services through the SCWorks system between July 1, 2020-June 30th, 2021. We had 30 hiring events, provided 10,000 employer services, and made approximately 100,000 job referrals in the past year.

We have a job fair coming up on July 14th from 3pm to 7 pm at the Florence Center. This event will have employers from all over the Pee Dee.

Questions were open to the floor.

**COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Ms. Lindsay Privette distributed the Community and Economic Development Department Report.

At last months meeting our 2 new CDBG grants had not been awarded yet. We are happy to report that were awarded shortly after in June. These grants are for the City of Dillon and the City of Darlington (both for 750,000), to fund pump station upgrades/sewer main.

At I-95 @ 327 the area will be completely transformed. The Buccee’s project is underway. The COG’s portion is almost complete.

The EDA Dillon County water and sewer study that was funded through Cares Act money is complete. The Inland port study is almost complete. Within the next couple of months we will have the consultants come and talk about their findings and give a presentation of the study. We will inform everyone of when those presentations will take place.

The South Carolina Office of Resiliency is a brand-new state office. This office was created in March of this year. Some staff have transitioned from the state disaster recovery office. There was a CDBG grant out there for storm water, flooding, and hazard mitigation measures that came about approximately a year and a half to 2 years ago. They went directly to HUD and FEMA, there was a direct allotment to this agency. They have had trouble getting people to apply for this grant due to it being very confusing. They confusion was about who they were, what the money could be used for, the fact that they moved offices, etc.

They came to the COG on Friday to explain their services to us. They will be attending a town hall meeting in Bennettsville this coming week. Florence County had 4 people at this meeting. Florence and Darlington may have some joint problem areas that this money could potentially help. The Resiliency Office Staff is happy to come back if anyone has any questions. This is a resource that could do a lot of good in the area. Please let us know if you need any contact information. Some of Money has been awarded to the Town of Pamplico for a storm water study, to help them to try to narrow down where they need to spend the money to get the most benefit.

**ENGINEERING REPORT:**

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

County Line Road in Chesterfield: Right away stake out, we should start seeing work on this soon.

Commanchee Drive in Darlington is complete. Have gotten the survey.

Marion County- Senator Clementa Pinckney Park’s Grand Opening is July 30th- by invitation only, and July 31st, open to the public.

We are getting some estimates and sketches together for the Marion County administration parking area. Looking to turn this into a Veterans and Fallen Heroes Memorial w/ the road improved into this area.

Questions were opened to the area.

**The Financial Statement** for June 2021 was distributed, and Mr. Brown reviewed it with the Board.

**Other Business:**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by John Q. Atkinson and seconded by Leon Johnson. \*All were in favor.