

**MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
UPPER SAVANNAH COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
430 HELIX ROAD
GREENWOOD, SOUTH CAROLINA
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2021**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Buddy Agan, Diane Anderson, Jackie Brown, John Calhoun, Edith Childs, Jim Coleman, Charlie Henry, Shirley Jenkins, Charles Jennings, Theo Lane, Milliken Matthews, Garrett McDaniel, Marian Miller, Sen. Floyd Nicholson, Willie Neal Norman, David Sawyer, Ernie Segars, Brandon Smith, Roy Smith Jr., Jerry Strawbridge, and Albert Talbert.

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Carter, Scott Cooper, Ken Durham, Otis Grier Jr., Amelia Herlong, Sen. Shane Massey, Wes McAllister, Matthew Miller, Rep. Anne Parks, Don Smoak, Melissa Spencer, Faye Thomas and Sen. Danny Verdin.

STAFF PRESENT: Patricia Hartung, Sam Leaman, Rick Green, Melissa Phillips, Keith Smith, Linda McAllister, Sandra Moore, David Hays, Shannon Hill, Cason Wright

GUESTS PRESENT: Scott Neely.

Call to Order	<p>Meeting was held via Zoom video conference and also on conference call due to COVID-19 social distancing. Nine Upper Savannah staff members attended the meeting in the USCOG Board room while Board members and one staff member joined via Zoom/conference call. Chairman Willie Neal Norman was present in the Board room and called the meeting to order.</p> <p>The October 26, 2020, minutes were approved upon motion by Marian Miller, seconded by Jim Coleman.</p>
SCDOT Survey Request	<p>Government Services Director Rick Green said the S.C. Department of Transportation, as a federal requirement, sends out a survey every five years to evaluate the effectiveness of consulting with non-metropolitan officials (such as COGs) in the transportation planning process. Green presented a sample of the Rural Officials Survey, asking Board members to fill out the survey either online or by mail. Green said he will send the online link to Board members on Wednesday and will also mail self-addressed stamped envelopes for the surveys to be returned to USCOG if they are not completed online. Executive Director Patricia C. Hartung added that SCDOT is asking for total survey participation from COG Boards.</p>
CDBG – Current Activity and Spring Update	<p>Community Development Director Keith Smith updated Board on Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications and current activities.</p> <p>He said Community Development staff is submitting two CDBG applications for the spring infrastructure round due April 16, 2021. Greenwood County will be requesting \$1 million for a \$2.4 million sewer project through Greenwood Metropolitan District. Saluda County is requesting \$1 million for a sewer project with Saluda CPW.</p>

	<p>Smith updated the Board on current CDBG activities. He said the Laurens County Highway 56/76 Sewer Upgrade is in the engineering phase and will go out to bid in four to eight weeks. It will improve the sustainability of the system by replacing aging sewer mains that carry approximately 50 percent of the wastewater from the City of Clinton. Total project cost is \$835,000 with \$715,000 CDBG and \$120,000 from Laurens County Water and Sewer.</p> <p>The Clinton Mill Sewer Upgrade is in the engineering phase and will go out to bid in four to eight weeks. It will involve replacing pipe and will total \$1,399,720, with \$500,000 from the S.C. Rural Infrastructure Authority and \$750,000 from CDBG.</p> <p>The Greenwood County Baptist Area Sewer Upgrade is in the engineering phase and will be out to bid four to eight weeks. It will involve installing and replacing sewer line and manholes. Project cost is \$1,012,317 with \$750,000 from CDBG and \$262,317 from Greenwood Metro. The Town of McCormick Streetscape for N. Main and Augusta streets is in the engineering phase. The total project cost is \$826,567 with \$750,000 from CDBG and the Town supplying the matching funds.</p> <p>The Town of Johnston received \$454,545 in CDBG funds to replace a 1973 fire truck. The truck has been bid and the package is being reviewed. The City of Greenwood Demolition Project including \$177,571 CDBG funding and involves the demolition and clearing of 10 vacant, condemned houses. The project will go out to bid in March or April.</p> <p>The Greenwood County College Heights, Laurens County Lydia Mill, and Greenwood County Milwee Area sewer upgrades are complete and are each in the closeout phase. The Regional Planning grant is awarded each year with \$50,000 in CDBG funds and is used to assist local governments in project development, needs assessment and technical assistance in the CDBG program.</p>
<p>Opportunity to Defederalize EDA Revolving Loan Program</p>	<p>Assistant Director Sam Leaman discussed the opportunity to request defederalization of the EDA Revolving Loan Fund. A sample letter was included in the Board packet recently mailed to members. The RLF would continue to operate but would not be required to report to the EDA. Leaman asked the Board for a motion to approve authorization for Chairman Willie Neal Norman to sign and send letter to EDA. The authorization was approved upon motion by Charles Jennings, seconded by Jim Coleman.</p>
<p>Impact of CARES Act funding on Seniors in the Upper Savannah Region</p>	<p>Aging Program Director Linda McAllister updated the Board on CARES Act funding to the Area Agency on Aging.</p> <p>She said Upper Savannah has received and spent approximately \$1,243,000 in CARES Act funds to date, mostly on home-delivered meals (HDMs) to qualifying seniors but has also provided medical and essential shopping transportation, home care services and respite services.</p> <p>McAllister said the AAA has received an additional \$203,606 in CARES Act funding that is earmarked strictly for HDMs. The goal is to remove seniors from</p>

	<p>the HDMs waiting list. Currently, there are more than 300 seniors on the waiting list. One of the obstacles to reducing the waiting list is the increasing need for services. In the last seven months, more than 500 seniors have been assessed for new services.</p> <p>The AAA continues to provide HDMs to group dining clients. Edgefield Senior Citizens Council is the only senior center in the region that is open. All group dining clients who are uncomfortable with returning to centers can continue to receive HDMs.</p> <p>The AAA is educating and informing seniors about the COVID-19 vaccine, helping them register for vaccines, providing transportation for seniors to get to the vaccine sites, and identifying seniors who are unable to leave their homes but would like to receive vaccines.</p>
<p>CDBG-Coronavirus Funding Program</p>	<p>Economic Recovery Specialist Cason Wright informed the Board about CDBG coronavirus funding opportunities. Potential projects have to meet two criteria, including an emphasis on meeting low-to-moderate (LMI) income requirements, and having to either respond to, prepare for and/or prevent the coronavirus.</p> <p>Wright said the COG has a list of potential projects and is working with the S.C. Department of Commerce to determine which might be eligible. After the eligible list is finalized, Upper Savannah will be submitting an Intent to Apply to Commerce.</p> <p>Board member Diane Anderson asked what kind of projects have been requested. Wright said the project requests have mostly related to emergency medical services, law enforcement, fire services, and public facilities UV lighting for disinfection.</p> <p>Hartung said the Department of Commerce has hired the Guidehouse consulting firm to help them with the prioritization and application process. Upper Savannah is working on documenting the threshold for LMI and identifying the projects that have the best chances of being funded, Hartung said.</p>
<p>FY20 Audit Review and Annual Board Resolution on Select Operating Policies</p>	<p>Assistant Director Sam Leaman presented Upper Savannah's <u>draft</u> audit report for FY 2020. During FY 2020, revenues exceeded expenditures by \$62,416. At year end, the fund balance was \$1,483,108. The report concluded that there were no deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting or compliance. There were no findings or questioned costs. The final audit will be presented at the April Board meeting.</p> <p>Leaman presented the annual Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Certification Resolution to the Board. The Economic Development Administration requires the RLF to leverage no less than \$2 in private investment for every \$1 in RLF funding, and Upper Savannah's RLF is leveraging \$7.56 per dollar. The cost per job ratio requirement is no more than one job for every \$10,000 loaned, and Upper Savannah's RLF loans as of December 31, 2020, are creating/retaining one job for every \$6,390.46 loaned, Leaman said. The Board approved the</p>

	<p>resolution unanimously upon motion by Albert Talbert, seconded by Floyd Nicholson.</p>
<p>Director's Report</p>	<p>Director Patricia C. Hartung asked for opinions about the meeting being available on both Zoom video conference and telephone conference call. Last year's June, August and October meetings were held via conference call, and this meeting was the first to be made available on Zoom. Diane Anderson, Theo Lane, Floyd Nicholson, Buddy Agan, Shirley Jenkins and David Sawyer commented. Most comments were favorable while some complained of audio issues and feedback. Hartung suggested USCOG would eliminate the conference calling at the April meeting and allow Board members to call into the Zoom meeting by phone, which would not require an internet connection.</p> <p>Hartung said the statewide COG directors met earlier in the morning and asked directors to request feedback from their Board members about whether they felt safe to meet for the Annual Training Conference in Myrtle Beach in November. The meeting was canceled last year due to COVID-19. The hotel which would host the meeting in November 2021 is asking for a decision by April on whether to cancel the meeting. Hartung said COVID-19 vaccinations which are ongoing could play a role in determining how safe COG Board members feel about meeting in November. Brandon Smith, Jim Coleman, Nicholson, Charles Jennings and Agan commented. The prevailing comment was vaccinations might lead to a safer environment in November, but that it is too early to know. Jennings suggested polling Board members on whether they would want to attend. As a result, Hartung said she would mail out a poll in early April asking whether each member would be interested in attending or not.</p> <p>Hartung discussed a Zoom session where regional economist at the Charlotte branch of the Federal Reserve Bank Laura Ullrich made a presentation, focusing her program on South Carolina's prospects for economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Hartung said the recording/slides are available for Board members and hoped they would participate in presentations from Ullrich in the future.</p>
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.</p>



Patricia C. Hartung
Executive Director