



MINUTES
Spartanburg County
Legislative Delegation
Monday, February 6, 2012
5:30 p.m.

A public meeting of the Spartanburg County Legislative Delegation was held on Monday, February 6, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. in County Council Chambers of the Spartanburg County Administrative Office Building, located at 366 North Church Street, Spartanburg, SC. Representative Mike Forrester presided. The following members were present or absent as indicated:

Senator Glenn Reese – Present
Senator Lee Bright – Present
Senator Shane Martin – Present
Senator Harvey Peeler – Present
Representative Harold Mitchell – Absent
Representative J. Derham Cole, Jr. – Present
Representative Edward R. Tallon, Sr. – Present
Representative Mike Forrester – Present
Representative William Chumley – Present
Representative Rita Allison – Present
Representative Steve Parker – Present
Representative Doug Brannon – Present
Representative Mike Anthony – Present

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, notices of this meeting were mailed in advance to the local news media and other interested parties.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation was rendered and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Representative Rita Allison.

Representative Eddie Tallon honored Mr. Gil Bulman with a House Resolution for his decades of public service as the Spartanburg County Assessor.

1. APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 14 AND NOVEMBER 22, 2011 MEETING MINUTES

Representative Allison moved to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 14 and November 22, 2011 as printed and mailed. Representative Brannon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The agenda was re-arranged to accommodate a presenter.

2. Ms. JO WILLA GRAMLING LOPEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER – TREATING CHILD ABUSE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Ms. Lopez reported that Spartanburg County has an issue that is growing in an alarming rate of child abuse, primarily sexual abuse. This issue affects all children's safety and therefore all teachers.

The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) performs four basic functions with respect to child abuse. CAC assist law enforcement, the solicitor's office and the Department of Social Services in forensic interviews to verify alleged cases of child abuse. CAC do their best with their five highly trained examiners who interview children in a legally sound manner in their child family surroundings. Secondly, CAC provides medical examinations for children who are victims of alleged abuse. Third, the CAC leads a multi-disciplinary team of law enforcement, guardians ad litem, DSS, all interested parties with respect to each case so that character of free exchange of information and collaboration about what is in the best interest of the child. Most of all, CAC provides therapy to abused children.

In the 2010/2011 fiscal year, CAC saw 529 children. Forty-five percent of those children were under the age of six. The 7th Circuit Solicitors office has an impressive record of prosecuting child abuse offenders. However, they have a backlog of 370 cases at most.

Over the past few years, CAC has received, on average, 28 to 32 reported allegations of child abuse referred to CAC by law enforcement for DSS. For the month of January, there were 44 referrals, which is a very alarming number. That number engulfed 51 children.

At the moment, CAC has 23 children on the waiting list for therapy. The CAC is the only resource for services for child abuse victims in Spartanburg, Union and Cherokee Counties.

3. MR. BOB WALKER, CITIZEN – VETERAN AFFAIRS

Mr. Walker thanked the delegation for seeing that veterans in Spartanburg receive number one service. Members of the Delegation are very influential in how veterans are taken care of in the County.

Mr. Walker recognized the staff of the Veteran Affairs office.

Mr. Walker would like for the Chairman of Education and Public Works Committee to proceed for passage of House Bill # 3760 as it has been in the Chairman's hands for almost a year and half, but has not been heard. The Bill deals with veterans. No longer does the federal veteran's administration issue identification cards to everybody that has served in the Service. Identification cards are only issued to retirees and people who receive federal medical services. Therefore, most of the veterans do not receive an identification card. A number of businesses and organizations issue discounts to veterans, but they no longer have a way to prove they are a veteran. This bill would add the word 'veteran' to the veteran's driver license, which would be a positive way to show proof of service for the veteran to receive offered discounts.

4. MS. ELIZABETH SMITH, AREA MANAGER AND BUSINESS CONSULTANT FOR SPARTANBURG AREA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER – SERVICES OF THE SPARTANBURG SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Ms. Smith announced the Small Business Development Center has been re-opened in Spartanburg County. Ms. Smith requested to open the Center and start doing what she really believes needs to be done for the area.

The Small Business Development Center assists small businesses in their start-up or assists them as they exist if they are having difficulties. In 2008 and 2009 Ms. Smith spent a lot of time helping businesses either get something or restructure their business in order to be able to stay open. Along with ordinary business planning, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) assists businesses with their financial forecast, performance, and assists them to get loans. In addition to that, free and confidential consulting is provided to all small business owners. This year, seminars will be provided at Spartanburg Community College in the Duncan facility, as well as at the Chamber of Commerce in Spartanburg. Third, the Center refers the small business owners to a network of area professionals such as attorneys, accountants, and or CPAs.

The SBDC have their hands in the midst of what is going on so they will know how to refer small business people to individuals that can help them. They also teach small business owners how to get into the world of government contracting, starting with registration on the central contract registry.

Most recently, Ms. Smith has had the pleasure of being the only SBDC person in the state of South Carolina who was assigned to Carolina's nuclear cluster project. Ms. Smith identified small businesses throughout the state of South Carolina, who could create components for the new nuclear technology that all are looking forward to implementing. With this project, she spent a lot of time outside of Macon, but also in DC, and, worked with Duke Energy in the local area. It was through the Duke project that she learned about the fabulous prowess that we have in the Spartanburg County area.

Funding in the State of South Carolina is approved as a line item in the state budget, and then the SBA matches those dollars. Without the State funding there is no federal dollar for dollar match.

5. MS. BARBARA MANOSKI, FIRST STEPS – COUNTY FIRST STEPS QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (QRIS)

The Mary Black Foundation, in partnership with Spartanburg County First Steps, is piloting a quality rating improvement system in Spartanburg County called Quality Counts.

Quality Counts is a voluntary rating system to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in child development centers serving children birth to five in Spartanburg County. It is open to all Child Development Centers in Spartanburg County from faith based, profit, non-profit, head start, early head start and hospital affiliations.

This program kick-off was held on January 5th with a very large crowd with a very positive attitude. Forty percent of the Child Development Centers in Spartanburg County responded by applying to participate in the pilot.

High quality early care and education are a crucial link to children arriving at school ready to learn – when that happens the achievement gap begins to close. Quality Counts will ensure our young children receive the best possible care and education through high quality care. It will also be a tool for parents so they will be able to recognize and to choose the best care and education for their children.

Quality Counts is not a silo initiative. First Steps is collaborating with many community partners. Nationally, there are twenty-five states currently operating a full statewide quality rating improvement system. Twenty other states are developing one. The Upstate has been studying and meeting together for

the past four years trying to decide the feasibility of ‘Could this really happen for Spartanburg County’, ‘Could Spartanburg be the model?’ ‘Could First Steps be the one to take that step and make it happen in the County?’ The answer is yes. Between the community partners and the work that First Steps has done, building very strong relationships with the child care community, the result of the forty percent applying to participate in the pilot.

The future prosperity in Spartanburg County is directly related to whether or not our children are prepared to go to school. First Steps knows that investing in high quality development care in early learning experiences begins to close the gap and will have long lasting effects for the community.

6. BRAD BRAMLETT, SC FORESTRY COMMISSION – FORESTRY COMMISSION AND BUDGETS

Trees are the number one cash crop in South Carolina. There are 13.1 million acres of forest land in South Carolina of which 67% is forested. Pine types trees are usually located on the hills and near the roadways, as hardwoods are located on bottom land and near creeks. Here in South Carolina 88% of the land base is privately owned, whereas 12% is public.

Forestry is the number one manufacturing segment in the South Carolina economy; number one in wages paid at \$4.1 B; exports at \$1.3 B with a total economic impact to the state of \$17.4 B. The impact is “1800” times the SC Forestry Commission budget creating an ideal industry while providing clean air and water, wildlife habitat, recreation, and a desirable quality of life.

The SC Forestry Commission mission is to protect, promote, enhance, and nurture the forest lands of South Carolina in a manner consistent with achieving the greatest good for its citizens.

The Forestry agency has the responsibility of four programs: Management, Protection, Resource development, as well as Information and Education.

The Forest resource development is bringing in industry. Industries coming into South Carolina want to know the forest can provide the kind and amount of wood needed for a facility.

The Forestry Commission has not been able to provide many information and education programs during the last few years due to the reduction of staff.

Thankfully, during last year, South Carolina has had a fairly wet year and fire members have been not been needed, which has helped with staffing levels. The Forestry Commission is very concerned when the fire numbers go up. Fires put the fire fighters at risk, as they work longer hours due to staffing numbers. The staff has plummeted from 410 in 2000 to 310.

Some equipment has been replaced, but the Forest Commission is trying to implement a fifteen year replacement cycle. The equipment on hand now is past the fifteen year cycle. Recently, \$3M purchased nine suppression units to be distributed around the state. Three are going to the Spartanburg Union County sector, and one is going to Lexington County. There were 240 suppression units back in 2000 and now the state is down to 140 units. The available units can take care of a low to normal fire season, but once you get into and above the high fire season, the remaining staff just would not be able to handle the fires.

Overall, the Forestry Commission staff protects 15,000,000 acres with an average of 20,000 acres burn a year. A 20,000 acre fire burns for about two to three day. The average fire sight is about six acres.

The Rocky Ridge Road fire was the largest fire in Spartanburg County in at least the last twenty five years. With current staff, if there were fires like those in the 1998-99 season, it would be almost impossible to handle.

Urban sprawl is moving out to the woodlands. Large wildfires are very difficult to contain, dangerous to fight, and very costly.

South Carolina is the only southern state without enclosed cabs to protect tractor operators. With less firefighters and aging equipment, there are greater threats to life and property.

State Forestry funding has been cut 45% since 2008 as 2008/2009 funding was \$18.0 million, but in 2010/2011 the budget was cut to \$9.8 million.

House Bill 4082 is asking for funding to improve firefighting capacity, replace aging firefighting equipment and restore diminished staffing levels to protect lives, property, jobs and natural resources.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

7. REPRESENTATIVE ALLISON – SPARTANBURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

In 2011, the Economic Futures Group achieved 22 new economic development commitments worth \$267 million and 1000 new jobs.

Renovations have been made on the first floor of the Chamber where they will host an increasing number of meetings for the Chamber and community organizations.

Already in 2012, the commitment level is approaching \$1 billion with the Amazon project and BMW expansion.

A new entrepreneurial program has resulted in contracts with 65 clients already. This is a joint program with the Chamber, the George and Community College.

8. REPRESENTATIVE DERHAM COLE – CHAPMAN CULTURAL CENTER

No report.

9. REPRESENTATIVE FORRESTER – COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT (COG)

No report.

10. REPRESENTATIVE FORRESTER – SPATS

No report.

11. REPRESENTATIVE DERHAM COLE – CHILDREN’S SHELTER OF THE UPSTATE

No report.

12. REPRESENTATIVE ALLISON – DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

No report.

13. REPRESENTATIVE MITCHELL – PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

No report.

14. REPRESENTATIVE PARKER – POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Representative Cole expressed his gratitude to all the veterans at the meeting as well as worldwide for enormous sacrifices they have made.

The delegation wants to be sure the returning veterans receive the best possible service from the County VA office by improving the procedure by which the VA officer is selected.

Therefore, Representative Cole presented the proposal developed by the Policy and Procedures committee in the form of a motion beginning with the familiar application process once a notice of vacancy occurs. Following the vacancy notice, there will be a forty-five (45) day period in which the delegation office will receive applications for the position. At the conclusion of the forty-five day period, the delegation chairman will appoint a screening committee which will consist of the following people:

A Senator and a House member on the Delegation (preference will be given to those Delegation members who are veterans); and, three additional member representatives from the local American Legion, the Local Veteran of Foreign Wars organization, and, a member of the local Disabled Veterans of America organization.

Once the committee is appointed by the Chairman of the Delegation the committee will meet. The Chairman of this committee will be a delegation member appointed by the Delegation chairman. The committee will meet as it sees fit to consider the applications. Depending on the number of applications received, the committee will recommend at least three (3) applicants to the delegation for consideration at the next scheduled delegation meeting after the committee submits its report, which would be two weeks after the screening deliberation. The screening committee will have sixty (60) days to conduct proceedings.

Representative Tallon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

15. SENATOR MARTIN – UPSTATE CAUCUS

No report

16. SENATOR MARTIN – SPARTANBURG COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Spartanburg County Transportation Committee approved set-aside funding for the following:

Representative Tallon for the Gateway project in the Town of Pacolet;

Representative Parker for flashers approved for the North Spartanburg Fire District; the SCDOT will provide for and position the flashers for the Boiling Springs Fire Department; and the Compton Bridge sidewalks project will now have full funding to proceed with the project.

Representative Chumley's money for Theo Circle has been denied as the project cost estimate

was well over \$300,000.

17. REPRESENTATIVE HAROLD MITCHELL – UPSTATE ALLIANCE

The Upstate Alliance reported to Representative Forrester they have had several project requests.

NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENTS

18. CHILDREN’S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD 7A.

Terms of Lizzie Foster and Kirin Mitchell. Application received: None

Representative Allison moved to carry this appointment over until the next meeting. The motion was seconded and carried.

19. BOILING SPRINGS FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSION.

Resignation of Joey Lathan. Applications received: Fred McAbee, Brian Turnage, and Marcus R. Coggins.

Senator Reese moved to nominate Fred McAbee. Representative Parker seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. The motion carried.

20. VETERANS AFFAIRS OFFICER.

Resignation of Terry Simmons. Applications received: Robert Morris, George Harakas, Robert D. Wells, R. Greg Walker, Terry Sanders, Jimmie E. Lawson and Mason L. Harris, Jr.

The Veterans Affairs Officer appointment will be addressed according to the newly established policy.

21. GLENDALE FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSION

Term of Terry B. Gilmer. Application received: Michael Watkins

Senator Martin moved to nominate Mr. Michael Watkins. The nomination was seconded by Representative Tallon. The motion carried.

22. FIRST STEPS BOARD

Terms of Sue G. Schneider and Brantlee Fulmer. Application received: Kelly Pope

Senator Reese moved to nominate Kelly Pope by acclamation. Senator Martin seconded the

motion. The motion carried.

23. LIBERTY CHESNEE FINGERVILLE WATER DISTRICT COMMISSION

Term of Thomas A. (Tony) Powell. Application received: Thomas A. Powell

Representative Brannon moved to nominate Mr. Thomas A. Powell. Senator Reese seconded the motion. The motion carried.

24. ELECTION COMMISSION

Terms of Melba Blakely, Rosemary Byerly, and Robert G. Hamilton. Applications received: Rosemary Hill Byerly, Robert G. Hamilton, Melba Blakely and David Collins.

Representative Tallon moved to nominate Rosemary Byerly, Melba Blakely and David Collins. Representative Brannon seconded the motion.

Senator Bright felt the appointment should be carried over to let more people be aware of the appointment; or at least Robert Hamilton's seat.

Representative Tallon stated that it is important with the upcoming election and the certification process, that if a seat is carried over Mr. Hamilton does have the experience.

Therefore, Representatives Tallon and Brannon withdraw their motions.

Senator Martin moved to nominate Melba Blakely and Rosemary Byerly and carry over the term of Mr. Hamilton. Senator Reese seconded the motion. The motion carried.

25. REGISTRATION BOARD

Terms of Dottie Broyles, Cindy Church and F. Don Watson. Applications received: F. Don Watson, Dorothy Anita Broyles, Cynthia Williams Church, and Sean Coburn

Senator Martin moved to nominate Dorothy Broyles, Cynthia Church, and Don Watson. Senator Reese seconded the motion. The motion carried.

26. UPSTATE REGIONAL EDUCATION CENTER ADVISORY BOARD

Terms of Pamela Heath – Parent-Teacher Organization Representative; Fred Marsh - Business and Civic leader. Applications received: Frederick Marsh and Isaac Quick for Business and Civic leaders; Sherri Yarborough for Career Center Director; and, Cynthia Langley for Business and Civic Leader from Union County

Senator Harvey Peeler moved to nominate all applicants to serve on the Upstate Regional Education Center Advisory Board. The motion was seconded and carried.

27. SJWD WATER DISTRICT COMMISSION

Term of Sanford Carlton. Application received: Sanford Carlton

Senator Bright moved to nominate Sanford Carlton. Representative Allison seconded the motion. The motion carried.

28. SPARTANBURG AREA MENTAL HEALTH BOARD

Term of Juanita Robinson from Spartanburg county and John Anthony from Union county. Application received from Union county: James E. Palmer.

Representative Anthony moved to nominate James E. Palmer from Union County. Senator Peeler seconded the motion. The motion carried.

29. SPARANBURG COUNTY COMMISSION FOR TECHNICAL AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Terms of Danny Philips (District 3); William Bruce Johnson (District 5); and Anthony (Tony) Bell (District 7). Applications received: William Bruce Johnson (District 5), Tony Bell (District 7), Tracy Keller (District 3), and Michael Gene Meissner (District 3)

Mr. Michael Meissner withdrew his application prior to the scheduled meeting time.

Representative Allison moved to nominate William Bruce Johnson from District 5. The motion was seconded and carried.

Representative Tallon moved to nominate Tracy Keller from District. 3. The motion was seconded and carried.

Senator Martin moved to nominate Tony Bell from District 7. The motion was seconded and carried.

Representative Forrester abstained from all votes for the Spartanburg County Commission for Technical and Community Education commission seats.

30. PACOLET FIRE DISTRICT COMMISSION

Terms of Carroll Rhinehart and Dale R. Campbell. Applications received: Carroll Rhinehart and Dale R. Campbell.

Representative Tallon moved to nominate Carroll Rhinehart and Dale Campbell. Senator Martin seconded the motion. The motion carried.

31. INMAN CAMPOBELLO WATER DISTRICT COMMISSION

Term of Carroll C. Campbell. Application received: Carroll C. Campbell.

Representative Brannon moved to nominate Carroll C. Campbell. Senator Reese seconded the motion. The motion carried.

32. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed.

33. NEW BUSINESS

Senator Reese requested the delegation sponsor a South Carolina Heritage or the Order of the Palmetto award for a musician that lives in Spartanburg County – Mr. Todd Taylor. Senator Reese nominated Mr. Taylor several years, but is requesting he be re-nominated. A booklet of information was distributed to the delegation. Mr. Taylor holds the world record for the banjo. Mr. Taylor is a world famous Nashville artist.

WITH NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING ADJOURNED.

Paul M. Forrester, Chairman

Attested: Carol Crowe