



Executive Committee
William Brice Edwards Administration Building Reynolds Galley Rm 211
USC Sumter, 200 Miller Rd, Sumter, SC 29150
November 17, 2021

MINUTES

Members Present

Clarendon County: Julia Nelson

Lee County: Grady Brown, Will Wheeler

Sumter County: Steve Corley, Jim McCain, Vivian McGhaney

Kershaw County: Alfred Mae Drakeford, Jeffery Graham

Members Absent

Clarendon County: Kevin Johnson, Dwight Stewart

Lee County: Travis Windham

Kershaw County: Sammie Tucker

Guest Member: Chuck Wilson

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** Chairman Julia Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:06pm.
2. **Invocation:** Mrs. Vivian McGhaney provided the invocation.
3. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Mr. Jim McCain led the pledge and all attendees participated.
4. **Quorum Determination:** The Board Clerk, Linda Jackson, informed Chairman Julia Nelson we had reached a quorum with 8 of 12 board members present.
5. **Adoption of Agenda:** Chairman Julia Nelson called a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Will Wheeler made the motion and Mrs. Vivian McGhaney seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion pass unanimously.
6. **Executive Director Presentation:** Mr. Christopher McKinney presented questions for the Executive Leadership Team to answer regarding their experience working at the Santee-Lynches and how they feel about Mr. McKinney's leadership style.

- a. **How is your experience working at the COG?**
 - i. **Dennis Cyphers** stated that working at the COG is very collaborative, staff can share their opinions and have creative solutions.
 - ii. **Rachel Katorkas** stated working at the COG, there is always a listening ear and advice is readily available, and if there are any disagreements, they are productive. In her transition to the role as a Department Chief she stated she has been fully supported.
- b. **How is staff treated?**
 - i. **Areatha Clark-** mentioned that the COG has a solid team, and everyone is treated with respect. She also mentioned how staff could have a professional and personal development that can take them far in their career either at the COG or outside the COG.
- c. **Does the COG preserve a hostile work environment?**
 - i. **Areatha Clark-** does not believe that the COG is a hostile work environment. She says everyone can agree to disagree when necessary and that everyone can voice their opinion.
 - ii. **Dennis Cyphers-** mention that the COG has a different environment from when he first arrived, but in a good way. The environment is collaborative and productive.
 - iii. **Linda Jackson-** stated that there is a steep learning curve at the COG, but leadership is very supportive which makes it easier to learn my role. It is much different from the corporate environment where it is less forgiving and welcoming.
- d. **What is the hiring process like?**
 - i. **Dennis Cyphers-** says that hiring process goes through a panel discussion and everyone provides input on the candidates. The final decision lies with the Executive Director, but the Department Chief input weighs heavily into the decision.
 - ii. **Linda Jackson-** agreed with Dennis and added that the process is consistent for levels of hires.
- e. **What is the termination process like?**
 - i. **Dennis Cyphers-** stated that the termination process is similar to the hiring process where ELT is involved. Prior to a termination the Department Chiefs are engaged and have provided written counseling to try and correct/change behaviors. Again, the final decision lies with the Executive Director, but the Department Chief input weighs heavily into the decision. No one has been terminated without Department Chief input/awareness.
- f. **What is the culture like at the COG?**
 - i. **Areatha Clark-** mentioned that staff utilize collaboration, teamwork and trust one another.
 - ii. **Dennis Cyphers-** stated that the culture is inspiring and passionate.
 - iii. **Linda Jackson-** stated we are doing what we can to make the COG better.
 - iv. **Janae Stowe-** stated the culture is collaborative. An example is there has been collaboration between an HHS frontline staff member and Government Services Chief to address unmet needs across our region for our seniors which speaks to the culture. Meaning that at any level your voice/ideas will be heard.
- g. **What type of impact does Mr. McKinney have on you?**
 - i. **Linda Jackson-** stated that after working in the banking industry for over 20 years, transitioning to the COG she was a steep learning curve. Working under Mr. McKinney's leadership has been the best experience for learning, and growing. Mr. McKinney will take the time to show her the information that has been a challenge for her. She stated that Mr. McKinney does not hold what she does not know against her, takes the time to demonstrate the task at hands, allowing her to ask questions, and provides the safe atmosphere for her to grow. The training resources that are available to her are the best that she's had to sharpen her leadership skills, and to gain the knowledge to empower her team.

- ii. **Janae Stowe-** mention when she transitioned from manager to Department Chief Mr. McKinney provided one on one time with her, Mr. McKinney allowed room for risk/fails.
- iii. **Dennis Cyphers-** When I think about Mr. McKinney as a leader the word inspiring is the first thing that comes to mind. When employees aren't just engaged, but inspired, that's when organizations see real breakthroughs. Him inspiring employees makes all of us far more productive and, in turn, makes everyone in our organization inspirational to the next. His inspiring leadership style is the strength to motivate not just me but my team to take on bold new ideas and stay innovative. The inspiration runs alongside accountability and creates high performing teams through empowerment and not command.
- iv. **Janae Stowe-** Transitioning from peer-to-peer to a peer-to-leader working relationship with my team was a challenging adjustment for me and without Mr. McKinney's mentorship and encouragement I honestly could not have endured the adjustment on my own. Mr. McKinney has invested countless hours of his time towards my professional development and growth as a young leader.

Additionally, Mr. McKinney gave a verbal overview of the package he provided to each Executive Committee member.

7. **Executive Session:** Chairman Julia Nelson entertained a motion to enter executive session, Mr. Grady Brown made the motion to enter executive session to discuss the matter related to an employee, in accordance with Section 30-4-70 (a)(1) of South Carolina Code and was seconded by Mrs. Alfred Mae Drakeford. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Chairman Julia Nelson entertained a motion to come out of executive session, the motion was made by Mr. Grady Brown and was seconded by Mrs. Vivian McGhaney. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously. There were no actions taken during or after the executive session.

8. **Chairman's Remarks:** None

9. **Adjourn:** Mr. Jim McCain made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Mrs. Vivian McGhaney seconded. All were in favor and the motion was passed unanimously.

Submitted by:



Linda Jackson
Board Clerk:

Approved by:



Christopher McKinney
Executive Director