



## MINUTES

**SouthEast Regional Directors Institute  
Spring Council of Peers Meeting  
May 18, 2019  
Wilmington, North Carolina**

### **Council of Peers Attendees:**

Anthony Starr, Vice President (N.C.)  
Greg Clark (Ala.)  
Pat Steed (Fla.)  
Chris Rietow (Fla.)  
Mike Burress (Ky.)  
Leanne Mazer (Md.)  
David Richardson (N.C.)  
Sarah Smith (S.C.)  
Martha Shickle (Va.)  
Wayne Strickland (Va.)  
Carol Jackson (W.Va.)

Rodney Larsen, Treasurer (Ark.)  
Sasha Grist (Ark.)  
Scott Koons (Fla.)  
Lloyd Fraiser (Ga.)  
Eric Sexton (Ky.)  
Robert Hiett (N.C.)  
Ron Mitchum (S.C.)  
Randy Imler (S.C.)  
Kevin Byrd (Va.)  
Sheena Hunt (W.Va.)

*Mississippi and Tennessee were not represented at the meeting*

### **Others in Attendance:**

Jennifer Codo-Salisbury (Fla.)  
Bill Molnar (S.C.)  
Joe McKinney (NADO)  
Jim Youngquist (SERDI Support)

Danna Stansbury (N.C.)  
Dennis Stripling (Ala.)  
Vicki Glass (SERDI Support)

### **I. Call to Order**

#### **Anthony Starr, Vice President, SERDI Council of Peers**

Anthony Starr, Vice President of the SERDI Council of Peers called the Spring Meeting of the SERDI Council of Peers to order, welcoming all and noting that SERDI President, Suzanne Burnette (Ala.) had retired earlier in the month. He thanked her for her many years of service to the Lee-Russell Council of Governments as well as her leadership in SERDI as a council of peers' members, and, as President over the last two years. Vice President Starr had all in attendance introduce themselves.

### **II. Financial Report**

#### **Rodney Larsen, Treasurer, SERDI Council of Peers**

Rodney Larsen, Treasurer of the SERDI Council of Peers presented the latest financial report. The current balance in the account stands at \$126,862.42. SERDI finances are on sound financial ground which was not the case in 2015 when SERDI became the administrator of its own finances from NADO that had been the financial management entity. It was at that time the SERDI Council of Peers increased annual dues to \$800 annually and began its climb to financial stability. The financial solid ground has enabled the Council to financially support training and

conferences as well as subject specific fly-ins. Hats off to Treasurer Larsen and his financial assistant Tina Roush for their prudent administration of SERDI's financial management over the years.

A motion was made by Wayne Strickland (Va.) and seconded by Ron Mitchum (S.C.) to accept the report. The motion carried without opposition.

**III. Membership Report Anthony Starr, Vice President**

Vice President Starr called everyone's attention to the 2019 Membership List in the meeting packet noting that membership was the highest it had been since the dues increase in 2016, at 82 members. The goal for membership for 2019 was 80. Vice President Starr challenged the Council of Peers to improve the membership for 2020 to 90. There are 139 councils in the 12-state footprint. Arkansas has 100% membership while South Carolina has 90% in 2019.

**IV. Fund Balance Committee Report Committee Members: Pat Steed (Fla.), Carol Jackson (W.Va.), Ron Mitchum (S.C), Rodney Larsen, Treasurer, & Anthony Starr, Vice President**

The SERDI Council of Peers took positive steps to improve the financial position of the organization over the last 5 years. These steps have resulted in building a healthy fund balance to meet organizational and membership needs. At the Fall Planning Meeting in 2018 the Council discussed the need to establish a fund balance policy to guide future decisions. A Committee was appointed to consider relevant factors that would go into the development of a fund balance including (1) cash flow needs of SERDI (2) current contracted services by SERDI (3) SERDI Assessments; and, (4) SERDI Executive Director Searches.

The Committee established four policy goals: (1) Maintain cash reserves to deal with unforeseen expenses or circumstances (weather impacts on the conference, sudden changes in membership levels, etc.); (2) Meet cash flow needs to accommodate lower cash balance periods during the year; (3) Maintain enough cash reserves to pay one year of contract services (currently \$41,500); and, (4) Make funds available to act on strategic opportunities to further the interest of SERDI and its members.

**IV. Fund Balance Committee Report (See attachment)**

Based on the review of the Committee, it recommended that SERDI target a fund balance of \$65,000. Furthermore the Committee recommended that an Opportunity Fund be established for strategic initiatives. At the end of each fiscal year, the Treasurer would transfer funds in excess of the fund balance to the Opportunity Fund. Expenditures from this fund would only occur with the approval of the Council.

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A discussion of the Committee's report followed. A motion was made by the committee, and seconded, to approve the proposed Fund Balance Policy. A motion to amend the motion was made by Randy Imler (S.C.) and seconded by Robert Hiatt (N.C.) to not use the Opportunity Fund for lobbying. Motion carried without dissent. A second motion to amend the motion was made by Sasha Grist (Ark.) and Greg Clark (Ala.) to have the Opportunity Fund focused on professional development period. Motion carried without dissent. The motion, as amended, to approve the Fund Balance Policy was approved unanimously.

**V. Marketing Your Regional Council Fly-In Martha Shickle (Va.)  
Brief Overview**

For the second time in 2 years, SERDI hosted a subject-specific fly-in in February in Atlanta, Ga. This year's fly-in was on Marketing Your Regional Council. Seventy-One (71) participants attending the fly-in that considered all aspects of marketing and communications to enhance regional councils and their state associations in the 12-state region. Erica Allison of Formations PR in Hendersonville, N.C. facilitated the event. While the summary of the fly-in was distributed to participants, the Council asked Jim Youngquist to distribute the summary to all 2019 members.

Marketing and Communications is a very important aspect of the success and relevance of regional councils. It was the opinion of the Council that a focus on this area needs to continue.

**VI. 2020 Fly-In Possibilities Jim Youngquist (SERDI Support)**

At the conclusion of the Atlanta Fly-In, there was a discussion of possible topics, if, there was a 2020 fly-in. There were eight (8) suggestions made that included (1) Employment Law (2) Financial Issues (3) Human Resources Practices (4) Managing People (5) Leadership Development of Your Staff & Yourself (6) Engaging Your Board (7) Supervisor Training for Middle and Upper Management; and, (8) Technology.

A thorough discussion followed. It was determined that there should be a Human Resources/Talent Development fly-in in 2020. Continuing a focus on Marketing and Communications was also discussed. A motion was made by Ron Mitchum (S.C.) and seconded by Kevin Byrd (Va.) for the Council to sponsor a Fly-In in February 2020 in Atlanta. Motion carried.

A Fly-In Committee consisting of Chris McKinney (S.C.), Sasha Grist (Ark.), Brandon Davis (Va.); and, Lori Corley (Ala.) will work with Jim Youngquist to develop the fly-in focus and agenda.

Martha Shickle (Va.), Randy Imler (S.C.); and, Eric Sexton (Ky.) will determine the next direction for Marketing/Communications.

**VII. At-Large Member Nominations Anthony Starr, Vice President**

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The SERDI Council of Peers has three At-Large seats. These seats are open to assistant directors or senior staff by nomination of a state association. One of the three seats was filled going into the Spring meeting. The Florida Regional Councils Association nominated Jennifer Codo-Salisbury, Deputy Director of the Central Florida Regional Planning Council for one of the open seats. The North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments nominated Danna Stansbury, Deputy Director for the Land of Sky Regional Council for one of the open seats.

A motion was made by Robert Hiett (N.C.) and seconded by Chris Rietow (Fla.) to accept the nominations for the two open at-large seats and carried without dissent. Codo-Salisbury and Stansbury join John Byers, Community Economic Development Director of the Three Rivers Planning & Development District (Miss.) as the at-large members.

**VIII. SERDI Training and Conference Refund Policy**

**Anthony Starr, Vice President**

Vice President Starr noted that at the 2018 Fall Planning Meeting there was discussion regarding the need to consider a refund policy for SERDI Training and Conference registration. No formal decision was made. However the multiple number of last minute cancellations for this year's training and conference highlight the need to develop a refund policy. Vicki Glass and Jim Youngquist, SERDI support stated that last minute cancellations have an impact on meal counts, meeting room structure, etc.

After thorough discussion Martha Shickle (Va.) made a motion to assess an administrative fee of \$50 prior to one-week before the training/conference with a refund of the remainder of the registration fee. There will be no refund for a cancellation of 7 or less days. Wayne Strickland (Va.) seconded the motion. Motion passed without dissent. It was noted that the policy is to appear on future registration forms.

**IX. Scholarship Fund Discussion/Meeting Structure**

**Jim Youngquist, SERDI Support**

Jim Youngquist, SERDI Support staff observed that there were some new executive directors who were attending the New Executive Directors Training, but not staying for the Annual Professional Development Conference. Some had told him they could not afford to stay for the conference. Related to that were conversations that he had had with some of the new directors from the millennial and generation X eras that like SERDI but did not like the meeting structure causing them to give up weekends to attend. Jim noted that had received multiple emails from new directors that did not belong to SERDI because they were not going to participate in organizations that did not meet on workdays.

Scott Koons (Fla.) noted that the Florida Regional Councils Association pays for 1<sup>st</sup>-Year executive directors to attend SERDI as a way to show them the benefits of participating in SERDI and hopefully getting them involved.

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The Council of Peers directed Jim to develop a survey that would be poll all 139 regional councils in the SERDI footprint on their thoughts of the current meeting structure and training and conference participation.

Vice President Starr appointed a Futures Structure Committee consisting of David Richardson (N.C.), Sarah Smith (S.C.), and, Chris Rietow (Fla.) will work with Jim Youngquist to analyze survey results and present findings and recommendations to the Council of Peers at their Fall Planning meeting in October.

**X. Nominating Committee Report  
and Election of Officers**

**Randy Imler (S.C.),  
Nominating Committee Chair**

Nominating Committee Chair, Randy Imler, referred the Council to their meeting packets and the Nominating Committee Report Memorandum. Chair Imler noted that serving with him on the Nominating Committee were Pat Steed (Fla.) and Kevin Byrd (Va.). The Committee presented the following slate: President, Anthony Starr (N.C.), Vice-President, Martha Shickle; and, Carol Jackson (W.Va.) Secretary/Treasurer.

Chair Imler nominated the slate as the officers per the SERDI By-laws for the next two years. The slate was elected unanimously.

Newly elected President Starr thanked the Council, as did Vice President Shickle and Treasurer Jackson. Starr presented a plaque of appreciation of service to Rodney Larsen for his time as Treasurer. He presented a gavel to the Alabama directors to present to Suzanne Burnette recognizing her leadership as retiring President.

**XI. Fall Council of Peers Meeting**

**Jim Youngquist, SERDI Support**

Jim Youngquist asked the Council their preference for the meeting site for the Fall Council Planning meeting. The choices were to meet in Atlanta, Charlotte, or another site in the region, or, to meet in conjunction with the NADO Annual Training Conference in October in Reno, Nevada.

The consensus was to meet at the NADO training Sunday October 20<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM. Breakfast will be served.

**XII. Other Agenda Items & Adjournment**

**Anthony Starr, President**

They're being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

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# ATTACHMENT

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## Approved Fund Balance Policy

### May 2019

**Background:** The SERDI Council of Peers (COP) took positive steps to improve the financial position of the organization in recent years. These steps, including wise financial management, have resulted in the building of a healthy fund balance to meet organizational and membership needs. At the fall meeting in October 2018, the COP discussed the need to establish a fund balance policy to guide future decisions. At that meeting, the COP authorized the appointment of a Fund Balance Policy Committee to draft a policy.

**Relevant Factors:** The following represent the factors relevant to the organizations interests for an appropriate fund balance.

- Cash flow needs of SERDI.
  - Membership payments mostly occur at the end of one calendar year and extends into the beginning of the next year.
  - Payments for conference costs occur mostly following the conference and after conference registration payments by attendees are made to SERDI.
  - Conference registration fees usually cover the costs of the conference and do not present a cash flow concern as a result.
- Current contracted services by SERDI include a total of \$41,500.
  - Website maintenance (\$1,500, billed annually).
  - Staffing (\$25,000, divided into 3 payments each year).
  - Meeting/conference logistics (\$10,000, billed annually).
  - Financial administration (\$5,000, billed annually).
  - Membership dues generate about \$64,000 annually and cover the costs of these service contracts.
- SERDI provides assessments to local members at a cost of about \$4,500. A portion of that fee is paid to SERDI (\$500) and the remaining amount covers the cost of the participating consultants. Payments made to the participating consultants are made after the employing organization makes payment to SERDI.
- SERDI manages executive director search processes for a fee of \$10,000. A portion of that fee is paid to SERDI (\$2,000) and the remaining amount covers the cost of the participating

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**Policy Goals:**

- Maintain cash reserves to deal with unforeseen expenses or circumstances (weather impacts on the conference, sudden changes in membership levels, etc.).
- Meet the cash flow needs to accommodate lower cash balance periods during the year.
- Maintain enough cash reserves to pay one year of contract services (currently \$41,500).
- Make funds available to act on strategic opportunities to further the interest of SERDI and its members.

**Target Fund Balance:** The target fund balance to meet the needs of SERDI is \$65,000.

**Opportunity Fund:** This policy establishes an Opportunity Fund to make cash available for strategic initiatives as directed by the SERDI COP. At the end of each fiscal year, the Treasurer shall transfer funds in excess of the fund balance target to the Opportunity Fund. These funds shall be held in a separate account and the Treasurer shall report on the balance and all activities to the COP with the regular financial reports. Expenditures from this fund shall only occur with the approval of the COP. No expenditures from the Opportunity Fund will be made for lobbying and the Fund will be used for professional development.

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