

**Southeast Regional Directors Institute
Council of Peers Annual Meeting
Isle of Palms, South Carolina
April 26, 2026**

Attendees (69%)

Sasha Grist, President (Ark)
Anthony Starr (N.C.)
Jeremy Buchanan (Ky.)
Kevin Byrd (Va.)
Jim Livingston (Ga.)
Lori Burdine (Tenn.)
Jennifer Codo-Salisbury (Fla.)**
Rodney Larsen (Ark.)
Mark Farley (Tenn.)
Melisa Earle (W.Va.)
Danna Stansbury, At-Large
Lisa Sandt (Ala.)
Lori Sokol (Ala.)

Eric Sexton, Vice President (Ky)
Randy Imler (S.C.)
Mike Fleak (W.Va.)
Michelle Allen (Ky.)
David Richardson (N.C.)**
Rick Yakubic (Tenn.)
Robert Hiett (N.C.)
Ashley Garris, At-Large
Ron Mitchum (S.C.)
Beth Payne (Fla.)
Martha Shickle (Va.)

** Teams participants

Others Present

Melissa Kraemer Badtke (Wisc.) Amy Roddey, SERDI Staff
Jim Youngquist, SERDI Staff

I. Welcome and Introductions

Sasha Grist, President

President Sasha Grist called the Annual Meeting of the SERDI Council of Peers to order and noted that a quorum was present. She welcomed the members and asked that each member introduce themselves. She noted that in addition to those present in the room that Jennifer Codo-Salisbury and David Richardson had joined via Teams.

**II. Minutes of the Council of Peers
2025 Fall Planning Meeting
October 15, 2025
Salt Lake City, Utah**

Eric Sexton, Vice President

Vice President called everyone's attention to their packet and the Minutes of the Council's Fall Planning Meeting in Salt Lake City. A motion was made by Ron Mitchum and seconded by Beth Payne to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

III. Financial Report

Amy Roddey, SERDI Staff

Amy Roddey, SERDI Staff, presented the SERDI Budget and Actual Worksheet to the Council for review. As of April 15th, operating revenue was \$178,492.58, operating expenses were \$155,871.29, with residual operating income of \$22,621.29. This included an estimate of the conference expenses for the annual conference which will be updated to actual after the conference. The fund balance as of April 15th was \$163,918.57. After a review of the worksheet by the Council, a motion was made by Lori Sokol (Ala.) and seconded by Martha Shickle to accept and approve the Financial Report as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Update on SERDI Training 2026-2027 **David Richardson, Committee Chair**

Chair David Richardson stated that the February Financial Management Training in Greenville in February was a great success with 130 attendees. He stated that 73 of those participants responded to the post-training survey with overwhelming positive comments and suggestions.

The Chair noted that the 2027 Leadership Development Training with a focus on the departmental directors and deputy/assistant directors will be held September 22-24, 2027. The staff training dates are being moved from February to the September dates to spread out the SERDI event dates throughout the year. This will be the last contracted training in Greenville. The Council of Peers will decide at their Fall Planning Meeting if further training will be in Greenville or perhaps other easily accessible locations.

V. The 2026 Membership Report/Approval of 2027 Membership Dues **Sasha Grist**

President Grist called the Council's attention to the Membership Roster for 2026 in their meeting packet. She stated that there were 99 members at the time of the meeting printing but there were several late enrollees and that final membership number for 2026 would be 102, second largest number of members of SERDI ever.

Following the membership report, she stated that she was recommending that dues for SERDI membership remain at \$800 for 2027. A motion was made by Rick Yakubic (Tenn.) and seconded by Mike Fleak (W.Va.) to approve the dues remaining at \$800 for 2027. Motion carried.

VI. Establish Audit Committee **Sasha Grist**

President Grist stated that with the discussion in Salt Lake City at the Fall Planning Meeting and the updating of the By-Laws since then that there was a now call for the establishment of an Audit Committee. That being the case she has requested that Michelle Jordan (Ala.), Rick Yakubic (Tenn.), Chris Rietow (Fla.), and Anthony Starr (N.C.) serve as the SERDI Audit Committee. All had accepted her request.

A discussion followed regarding the financial payments by SERDI. The Council of Peers decided not to use the debit card that the bank that has the account in South Carolina provided. SERDI will make its payments by use of an issued credit card or checks. A motion was made by Rick Yakubic (Tenn.) and seconded by Martha Shickle (Va.) regarding SERDI payment methods. Motion carried.

VII. Discussion of SERDI By-Laws Updates/Revision Considerations **Sasha Grist**

President Grist referred to the By-Laws documents in the Council members packets and pointed out that they had received the revisions previously and that they had been adopted. No other action was necessary.

VIII. Approval of Updated Accounting Policies And Procedures Manual **Sasha Grist**

A group of the Council have been working on developing accounting policies and procedures for SERDI over the last several years. The Council had seen various versions of the manual. It was presented for adoption to the Council. The Manual was adopted unanimously.

IX. SERDI Assessment Update **Jim Youngquist, SERDI Staff Consultant**

Jim Youngquist, SERDI Staff Consultant provided the Council with an update on the Assessment program during the year. An assessment was completed for the Central Shenandoah PDC in Virginia during the Fall of 2025. Jim had just completed an assessment of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission in northwest Wisconsin, the newest Associate SERDI Member. Jim and Wendell Lawrence will be beginning in May a statewide assessment of the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments that will include interviews with legislators, state department leaders, association executives, and focus groups of the 16 executive directors.

X. Fall Planning Meeting **Sasha Grist**

The ***Fall Planning Meeting of the SERDI Council of Peers will be held on Tuesday October 20th from Noon to 1:30 PM Pacific Time at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino in Reno, Nevada*** in conjunction with the National Association of Development Organizations Annual Training Conference.

President Grist said that for those members that will not be attending NADO that members will have access to the meeting via Teams.

XI. Other Business **Sasha Grist**

President Grist informed the Council of a recent claim by Higbee & Associates of copyright infringement on the SERDI website. The copyrighted images, owned by R M Media were in a PowerPoint presentation posted on the SERDI website from a financial training that had been held previously. The settlement was in the amount of \$975. Grist discussed this issue with David Richardson and Sarah Smith who both have law degrees and law experience. President Grist communicated back with the Higbee & Associates that SERDI was a nonprofit and not a commercial entity, and SERDI does not derive income from our website.

After hearing back from Higbee & Associates that this was not going to close the case and further discussion with the SERDI Executive Committee, President Grist stated that SERDI would just be paying the \$975. It was also stated that for all future trainings, PowerPoints or training materials will not be posted on the website. Grist informed the Council that Jeremy Holmes has taken down all the presentations for all the years from the SERDI website. He has created two memory stick copies of the presentations. He and Jim Youngquist have the copies. Jim and Jeremy will be reaching out to a random group of council members to test possible ways of creating a password system to enable members to reach presentations.

XII. Adjournment