

SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK
Grants Review Committee
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday June 4, 2025 - 10:00 am
2711 Middleburg Dr., Columbia, SC 29204

1) WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Grants Review Committee (GRC) was called to order by Committee Acting Chairman Tommy Lavender at 10:00 am on June 4, 2025. Chairman Lavender stated that a notice of the date, time and place of the meeting was posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2) ROLL CALL

Committee members present included GRC Acting Chairman Tommy Lavender, Peter King, and ex-officio member Mike McShane. Members absent were Chairman Rob Howell, Richie Wilhoit, Sean Connolly for SC Department of Transportation, and Russell Hubright for SC Forestry Commission.

3) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Lavender welcomed guests Eric Fosmire of the SC Office of Resilience. He then opened the floor to anyone interested in making public comments. There being no one, the Committee moved to the next agenda item.

4) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. Lavender stated that the GRC was given a draft copy of the 03/05/2024 GRC meeting minutes to review. The Chairman asked for any additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes. There being none, Mr. Lavender asked for a motion to adopt the minutes of the meeting as distributed. Dr. King made the motion, Mr. McShane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

5) PROJECT UPDATES

Director West presented two requests related to the assignment of prior approved projects. The Nature Conservancy requested a transfer the Salt Landing property (Charleston County) to Edisto Island Open Land Trust and Naturaland Trust requested a transfer of the River Road property (Greenville County) to SC Department of Natural Resources. Following discussion, Mr. McShane made a motion to recommend that the Board approve these transfer requests, Dr. King seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lavender distributed a list of closed and outstanding projects for FY25 year-to-date. Director Raleigh West stated that 52 projects totaling \$53 million and protecting 21,336 acres have closed this year. Of the 28 outstanding projects, most are on track to close without issue before fiscal year end. Bank staff will provide a full update of outstanding projects at the next Board meeting. However, two of the outstanding projects, Culler 3 and Big Garvin Creek Farm, have been outstanding for over a year, and Board extensions of grant closing terms have expired. The Committee discussed options to either approve another extension or de-obligate the grant approval. After discussion, Mr. King made a motion to recommend extending the closing terms of Culler 3 project to 09/17/2025, Mr. McShane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Next, Dr. King made a motion to recommend extending the closing terms of Big Garvin Creek Farm to 09/17/2025, Mr. McShane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

6) FINANCIAL REPORT

Director West distributed the financial update and pointed out that the Bank has just over \$15 million available for grants: \$10.5 million in Standard Grants, \$0 in Working Ags, and \$4.7 million in SHEP funds.

7) EXECUTIVE SESSION (*PROPOSED CONTRACTUAL MATTERS*)

Mr. Lavender called for a motion to enter Executive Session for the purposes of discussing proposed contractual matters in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act *Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)* and to invite guest Eric Fosmire and Bank staff to stay for Executive Session. Mr. McShane made the motion, Dr. King seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Lavender noted that action may thereafter be taken on items discussed during Executive Session and requested that committee members recuse themselves as appropriate.

At the conclusion of Executive Session, Mr. McShane made the motion to return to regular session. Dr. King seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Once in open session, Mr. Lavender stated that no action was taken during Executive Session. Mr. McShane made a motion to approve the recommendations of Bank staff and subject to the availability of funding by the Board with the following exceptions:

Item 5: Coakley Chapel Park: conditioned on the long-term takeout agency providing evidence of their legal ability to take title and the expertise and resources to manage the site and staff approval of a conservation easement that ensures the historical and conservation values are protected

Item 8: Sasquatch Ridge: conditioned on a formal update to the Board regarding reimbursement status at the June 2026 Board meeting.

Item 13: Moore Farm at Horsepen Creek: recommend funding amount of \$780,00, defer to staff as to conditions of the easement.

Item 17: Bradley Property: application withdrawn by the applicant.

Dr. King seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Lavender stated that the Grants Review Committee will make these recommendations to the full Board at the next scheduled Board meeting.

7) ADJOURN

Mr. Lavender called for a motion to adjourn. Dr. King made the motion, Mr. McShane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.