

**Minutes of the
South Carolina Association of FSA County Office Employees
Board of Directors Meeting with the State Committee
June 3, 2011**

1. Call to Order and Welcome

The SCASCOE Board of Directors met with State Executive Director, Laurie Lawson; Administrative Officer, Toni Turner; State Committee Chairman, Robert Battle; and State Committee Members, Warren Dixon and Mary Frances Koon on Friday, June 3, 2011 at 3:30PM at the Magnolia's Restaurant across Ocean Blvd from the Anderson Ocean Club and Spa in Myrtle Beach, SC. SCASCOE President, Glenn Thomas, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:35PM. During his welcome, Glenn thanked Mr. Lawson, Toni, and the State Committee for meeting with SCASCOE. Glenn asked Mr. Lawson to share a few words with the group.

Mr. Lawson expressed his feelings for the SC FSA employees by saying that he felt they were the best FSA had to offer. Mr. Lawson went on to say that he thinks highly of everyone and if there is anything he can do please ask. Glenn said that it means so much for SCASCOE to have Mr. Lawson's support. Mr. Lawson stated that the State Committee and Administrative Officer had traveled on their own dime to support SCASCOE. They would not be receiving any funds due to the budget. He then stated that two State Committee members were unable to attend due to personal reasons.

2. Concerns

The concerns were then address by the Board of Directors with the SED, AO, and STC.

- A. Mr. Lawson, we really appreciate your keeping us up-to-date into the hiring's and other items of interest and concern within the state and ask that we continue this relationship in the future!

Glenn Thomas stated that he knows every state does not have the same relationship that the STO and SCASCOE have and SCASCOE really appreciates it.

- B. Will the IT system support CARS during heavy workload activity? At the current time it appears to be working well, but know that additional heavy certification times are coming.

Mr. Lawson said he had received the same inquiry from others on conference calls and emails, but he has no answers. He hasn't heard anything. Wes Daniels suggested that maybe an extension to the crop reporting deadline could be granted if the software doesn't allow the reporting of acreage. Nancy Meyer expressed how slow the software goes after the entire nation has logged on.

- C. Is there a possibility of going to a 4-day work week in order to save money?

Mr. Lawson's response was no, this would not happen. Wes Daniels stated that this would not save the government money. We are a Service Center and we must service at the best of our ability. Mr. Lawson said that one of our strengths is being a Service Agency because we are great at providing services.

3. Discussion

After the Board addressed the concerns with the SED, AO, and STC, the discussion points were addressed.

- A. At this time, County Committees are encouraged to limit the number of meetings at a time when more outreach is being required on elections and programs. Newspapers in many counties are not prone to print many articles without paying a fee and budget has limited the ability for additional personal mailings. We understand that Mr. Lawson and the Administrator support the Committee system and want Committees to meet when necessary!

Mr. Lawson said he was asked for us to only have meetings when needed and do not have a meeting if it is not necessary. Money is very tight right now. Something must be done to handle business. Mr. Lawson doesn't want the County Committees to think they are worthless.

- B. Budget. Where do we stand?

Mr. Lawson's response was that Washington DC will not be telling us any more about the FY 2011 budget than what we have already been told. For FY 2012 Mr. Lawson has been informed that there will be some buy-outs available, but not many. He is hoping to be able to have some input. The early-outs are available immediately. No one has approached Mr. Lawson so far. He isn't sure how the buy-outs will be handled without knowing how the FY 2012 budget will look. As soon as Mr. Lawson has the information, he will let SCASCOE know.

Toni Turner thanked the counties for cutting back with their spending. She said that SC looks better than many other states. Mr. Lawson added it was because SC has the best employees. Glenn Thomas complimented Mr. Lawson, Toni, and the STC for all of their hard work on the budget issues. Toni stated she would be sending out some allocations for the counties on Tuesday, June 7, 2011, so every county would be receiving some more supply and travel money. EPM procedure is used to calculate the money that is given out. As soon as Toni sends out the allocations she has asked that the counties make their supply purchases immediately.

- C. Staffing. What information can you provide as far as filling future vacancies in county offices?

If someone is approved for the FY 2012 buy-out, that position will not be refilled. Wes Daniels showed concern with right sizing. He asked how will the STO handle things if certain areas have more vacancies than others? Will employees be moved to different offices? Mr. Lawson responded by saying he doesn't know what the plan will be.

- D. With all of the time spent using the new ARS system, do we have a timeframe as to when this data will be used in staffing?

Toni Turner said that the 2nd Quarter of FY 2012 will possibly be when the ARS system can be used for workload counts. Toni also said that if anything is completed by a CO employee for the farm loan side to load it under farm loan because the money for their salaries is taken from a different pot.

- E. Jackson-Lewis report

Mr. Lawson said that this was a wonderful topic to save for last. In his opinion we were treated "flat out wrong being written up that way." Wes Daniels said that FSA has taken a tremendous slap in the face with the lawsuits. He went on to say that it is an insult for the Administrator to pay \$8 million to do a review and put out a report that is inaccurate. He said that if we were doing anything incorrectly, he would hope Mr. Lawson would inform us. Mr. Lawson said he would, but we aren't doing anything wrong in SC. He appreciates everything we do.

4. Adjournment

No one else had anything to add, so Glenn Thomas thanked Mr. Lawson, Toni Turner, and the State Committee again for meeting with the SCASCOE Board of Directors. Mr. Lawson asked the Chairman, Robert Battle, to say a few words. Mr. Battle agreed with Mr. Lawson and Toni that SC FSA has wonderful employees and said he appreciates each and everyone.

Glenn thanked them again. Wes Daniels invited them to the reception at 5:00PM. With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 4:13PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Star W Elliott - Secretary-Treasurer