

Minutes

Board of N.C. Open Government Coalition

Oct. 10, 2013

In attendance: Steve Riley, Sue Rowland, Paul Parsons, Mark Prak, Hugh Stevens, Rick Willis

By phone: Monica Hill, Rick Gall, Roger Sarow, Annette Privette Keller

Non-voting members attending: Brooke Barnett, Jonathan Jones

President Steve Riley called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

Financial report: Jonathan Jones reported the endowment value as of June 30, 2013 was \$515,384.07. The yield from the endowment for 2013-14 is \$19,958.80 and the coalition has a rollover of \$6,696.43 from the previous year.

Director's report: Jonathan Jones reported that the Elon Poll was preparing to conduct an open government poll across the state and had solicited input from the NCOGC on current issues in open government that would be valuable to poll.

Jones also reported that since he had begun in late August the hotline had received 10 open government inquiries – 7 related to public records and 3 related to open meetings. Jones asked for some direction on how involved in the requestor's disputes the board was comfortable with the director getting. This led to a discussion of the need for some resource that can actively represent records requestors on a pro bono basis. Paul Parsons indicated that Elon Law School would have a new dean soon and that after that person arrives the NCOGC should consider approaching the law school again to gauge interest in creating a government transparency clinical program.

Membership: Paul Parsons announced his desire to end his term on the NCOGC board and nominated former executive director Connie Book as a potential replacement. Book was unanimously approved. The board also discussed one other potential board member.

State Public Records Policy: Hugh Stevens explained that beginning in July some state agencies public records policies had changed and that any request that took more than 15 minutes to fulfill would be considered extensive, allowing the agency to charge a special service fee to fulfill the request. Stevens said that he and law partner Mike Tadych had met with several officials in the governor's office to discuss the policy change. Stevens indicated that the officials were concerned about a large volume of requests coming in and that requests for email appeared to be the primary source of concern.

The board then discussed some possible solutions that would not lead to litigation or a change in the existing public records law. Those included encouraging state agencies to take advantage of technology to put the public records requests and the fulfilled requests on their websites. Mark Prak mentioned the role of the NCOGC in helping to teach requestors how to frame a request that is reasonable and would not be as burdensome. The board also discussed the formation of a coalition of records seekers that could potentially involve Jones as a mediator to discuss the

situation and propose solutions to the governor's office. Stevens indicated he would work on assembling such a group.

Sunshine Day 2014: A committee chaired by Sue Rowland was formed to plan Sunshine Day 2014. The board discussed what day to set Sunshine Day during the week of March 16-22, 2014, and settled on Monday, March 17, 2014.

The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.