

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
JANUARY 19, 2017
NOON**

MINUTES

Members Present:

Graham, Pat
Blechinger, Linda
Denson, Nancy
Ferrelle, Dodd
Houston, Lamar
Lyon, Tommy
Palmer, Bill
Smith, Jeffery
Crow, Tom
Plott, Roy
Shaw, Jim
Pennamon, Carl
Workman, Stone
Scarborough, John
Gandy, Roy
Ainslie, Andy
Perriman, Fred
Bentley, David
Banes, Marcello
Roseberry, Jerry
Daniell, John
Ivie, Charles
Harden, Amrey
Berry, Rick
Little, Kevin
Fordyce, Cary
Ledford, Howard
Roberts, Roy

Members Absent:

Jennings, Tommy
Guest, Larry
Brock, Phil
Dyer, David
Blackmon, Jody
Turner, Frank
Pittard, Billy
Johnson, Jesse
Thompson, Greg
Chambers, Joyce

Associate Members Present:

Ouzts, Buddy
Seymour, Joel
Pitts, Flemmie

Guests Present:

Bob Schwartz
Gail Lyon
Keith Ellis
Steve Smith
Paul Chambers
Daniella Perry
LeTunya Goodwin
Cheryl Smith
Emily Eisenman
Andrew Seiver

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Carol R. Cofer, Workforce Development Director
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services
Peggy Jenkins, Area Agency on Aging
Alicia Page, Comptroller
Eva Kennedy, Project Specialist

Media Present:

Kelcey Caulder, **Oconee Enterprise**

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Vice Chairman Jerry Roseberry. He welcomed members, guests, media, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 2016 meeting. **Such a motion was made by**

Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Commissioner Kevin Little. The motion carried unanimously.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

At this time, Executive Director Dove introduced new members to the Council.

In Greene County, Ed Bullard did not seek re-election for Chairman, and Mr. Gary Usry was elected to that post. However, due to time constraints, Chairman Usry asked Commissioner Jeffery Smith to serve in his place. He has served on the Green County Commission for two years, he is familiar with the Regional Commission, and will do a great job.

Jasper County Commission Chairman Gene Trammell passed away due to complications related to Angiosarcoma. He was a very dedicated member of the Council and will be greatly missed. Commissioner Carl Pennamon, long-time member of the Board of Commissioners, was elected Chairman and will represent Jasper County on the Council. He served on the Council previously and will represent the County very well.

John Scarborough is the new Chairman in Madison County, replacing Anthony Dove who chose not to run again. Commissioner Scarborough had a distinguished career in the military, as did his father. He is respected throughout the County, and Council members and Regional Commission staff look forward to working with him.

Commissioner Ellen Warren who represented Morgan County on the Council was not returned to office. The person who served prior to Ellen, Andy Ainslie, will represent the County once again. He is a retired educator and does a fine job serving the County and the region, and Council members and staff have worked closely with him through the years.

Former Newton County Chairman Keith Ellis did not offer for re-election, and was succeeded by Marcello Banes. Chairman Banes will serve Newton County well. He is Associate Pastor of a Newton County church, and he recently proposed marriage to a lovely young lady at his first Commission meeting! She said YES.

Former Oconee County Chairman Melvin Davis chose to retire after serving in that position for 16 years. Longtime Commissioner John Daniell offered for the position and was elected. He knows the ins and outs of Oconee County like the “back of his hand” and will not miss a beat serving in the County and on the Council.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: Members met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the financial statements for the six-month period ending December 31, 2016. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$22,207.26. Financial activity for the period

was approximately half of the FY2017 Budget projections. **A motion to approve the report as presented was made by Mr. Harden and seconded by Commissioner John Scarborough. The motion carried unanimously.**

Program of Work: The Program of Work Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review the following technical assistance requests for the month:

1. **TOWN OF BRASELTON** – Assistance in facilitating a strategic planning session for members of their Downtown Development Authority and Mainstreet program. There is no fee for this assistance.
2. **CITY OF PORTERDALE** – Assistance in administering a Recreational Trail Grant from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources pending an award announcement.
3. **CITY OF CARLTON** – Assistance in updating their zoning map using Geographical Information Systems (GIS). The fee for this assistance will not exceed \$200.
4. **CITY OF WINDER & WINDER HOUSING AUTHORITY** – Assistance in preparing a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application and a USDA Rural Business Development Grant. The fee for this assistance total \$3,000.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director and the Committee, **a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY2017 Program of Work, effective January 19, 2017, was made by Mayor Dodd Ferrelle and seconded by Mr. David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

Planning & Government Services: The PGS Committee met prior to the Council meeting and discussed several items of mutual interest. Members reviewed the 2016 Annual Report on 32 requested projects and were updated on their status. These projects served 22 jurisdictions during the year. They also learned of the upcoming schedule for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update. The kickoff meeting will be held on February 22nd at 10:00 a.m. at Athens-Technical College. No action was required.

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Barrow County: There will be a SPLOST referendum on the ballot in November. A Citizens' Committee will review potential projects, and a series of four to five public meetings will be held. A Wage and Salary Survey was implemented in October. The County was experiencing considerable wage related turnover which was driving up overtime costs, and a salary adjustment is working to retain employees and fill vacancies. The County is working with CVIOG to implement its first Merit Based Performance Management System. This is a major change to the "one size fits all" salary adjustment in the County.

Moving forward employees will be eligible for COLA, and merit increases will be provided based on individual employee performance. The County did not have a property tax increase last year due to solid growth in its tax digest. There is a lot of increase in Economic Development activities.

Clarke County: Creature Comforts Brewing Company will get \$475,000 from an Athens-Clarke County government economic development fund to help equip a second Athens brewery, to be located in the Southern Mill mixed-use project off North Chase Street. The existing Creature Comforts brewery and tasting room on West Hancock Avenue will remain in operation. Ryan Hope was appointed as Municipal Court Judge & Administrative Hearing Officer. He previously served as the Chief Assistant Solicitor of Athens-Clarke County. Parking on the Whit Davis Road side of Southeast Clarke Park is included in a recent revision of the park's Master Plan. This future parking eventually would be located where the original WOW Playground is currently located once the playground is deconstructed. Envision Athens is a community-wide effort to develop a common vision for the future of the Athens-Clarke County community to guide community and economic development for the next 20 years, and a series of interactive workshops are planned during the week of January 30th to invite the community to come together to focus on the future. Everyone is invited to visit in Winterville and see the beautiful mural that was painted on an existing building by Winterville Elementary School children, assisted by Ms. Dodd Ferrelle.

Elbert County: The Historic Samuel Elliott Hotel will be opening soon; however, the restaurant has been completed and has been open since the middle of December. Bobby Brown Park is doing extremely well, and campsites continue to stay full. The County will be holding its annual Planning Retreat at the Park on February 17th. Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck will be facilitating the session.

Greene County: The Glen, an assisted living facility, is being constructed near Reynolds Plantation on Lake Oconee. A runway expansion is underway at the airport. For the 8th year in a row, the County received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers' Association. The County was revenue neutral for the 16th year in a row. The County is reviewing its Code of Ordinances in order to determine if there is a need for revisions.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove expressed appreciation for the kindness shown during his Mother's passing. All of the thoughts and prayers and other thoughtful gestures meant so much to him and his family.

The Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) Board of Directors held its Winter Board Meeting on January 16th and 17th in Greenville, South Carolina.

Executive Director Dove, Immediate Past President of the DDAA Board, was in attendance. The DDAA represents the 73 Regional Planning Districts in the 13-state Appalachian Region, which extends from New York to Mississippi. The Board includes a representative from each of the 13 states; those states having an officer on the Board have an additional member. In addition to hearing administrative reports, presentations were made regarding activities of the Training Committee, the Federal POWER Initiative, the DDAA 2020 Strategic Plan Implementation, and other pertinent matters.

Executive Director Dove advised that an Orientation for Council members and newly elected officials will be held at the Regional Commission on February 9th at 10:00 a.m. Attendees will hear reports of activities and services available from the Planning & Government Services, Workforce Development, Aging, Fiscal, and Administration Divisions.

Executive Director Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck are busy facilitating retreats for local governments in the region. The annual retreat for the City of Oxford was held in the fall, and sessions are scheduled for the Cities of Bowman, Jefferson, Madison, Elberton, Braselton, and Elbert County.

Comptroller Evans Brinson will be retiring at the end of January, and a resolution commending him for his service to the Council and Regional Commission since 1992 was presented by Executive Director Dove. **A motion to adopt the resolution was made by Mayor Nancy Denson and seconded by Mr. Harden. The motion carried unanimously.**

DIVISION UPDATES

Planning & Government Services (PGS): The PGS division delivers regional level programs from five state and federal agencies, and offers staff resources for activities or specialized needs not locally available including land use planning, economic development, historic preservation, public administration, transportation, and environmental issues. Services offered under the planning element are comprehensive plan development and updates, Developments of Regional Impact, zoning ordinance updates, zoning map updates and reproductions using GIS, and strategic planning and facilitation. Staff will work with local governments to determine if a project is eligible to receive grants funds, assist with the application process, and provide grant administration if the grant is awarded. Other planning services include bike & pedestrian, recreational trails, and transit.

Workforce Development: The federal workforce development funds are provided through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Funds are allocated to the state based on a federal formula, and are allocated in the state using this same formula to the 19 workforce areas in Georgia. The 12-county Northeast Georgia Region is a workforce area, and it receives about \$4.2 million in funds annually and serves approximately 1,200 persons in training each

year and a total of approximately 1,600 persons annually when including those persons in follow-up services. The local area had 234 employers that served as worksites that hired persons who received WIOA funded training assistance. The law requires that there be a local Workforce Development Board with majority membership being from the private sector business. WIOA is a private/public partnership and has involvement of the local elected officials in the region. Melvin Davis, former Oconee County Commission Chair, had served as the Chair of the WIA/WIOA Local Elected Officials Board, until his retirement in December 2016. Kevin Little, Walton County Commission Chair, was elected to serve as Chair of the Local Elected Officials Board, effective January 1, 2017.

Aging: Area Agencies on Aging came into existence with the passage of the Older Americans Act of 1965. This act states that each State shall have a unit on Aging (DHR-Division of Aging Services) and that each region within the state will have an Area Agency on Aging (AAA). The State of Georgia has 12 such agencies, with ten located in Regional Commissions, and two that are independent agencies. The Department of Human Resources Division of Aging Services is the governing agency that contracts with Regional Commissions and disperses program funds. The mission of the AAA is to promote dignity, safety, independence, and accessibility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. It is each agency's goal to keep seniors out of nursing homes. A variety of services are offered that helps to accomplish this goal including congregate meals, home delivered meals, transportation, friendly visiting, telephone reassurance, outreach, Title V senior employment, Long-Term Care Ombudsman, mobile day care, homemaker services, respite, legal assistance, and community care. Other resources available through the AAA are Aging and Disability Resource Connection, Money Follows the Person, and Nursing Home Transition.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on February 16th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant