

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
AUGUST 20, 2015
NOON**

MINUTES

The August meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, August 20, 2015 at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn.

Members Present:

Blechinger, Linda
Eisenman, Emily
Houston, Lamar
Lyon, Tommy
Plott, Roy
Fenn, Josh
Trammell, Gene
Dyer, David
Dove, Anthony
Gandy, Roy
Ainslie, Andy
Perriman, Fred
Bentley, David
Ellis, Keith
Roseberry, Jerry
Turner, Frank
Davis, Melvin
Pittard, Billy
Johnson, Jesse
Little, Kevin
Chambers, Joyce
Fordyce, Cary
Roberts, Roy

Members Absent:

Graham, Pat
Bartlett, Wayne
Denson, Nancy
Guest, Larry
Palmer, Bill
Bullard, Ed
Duvall, Valerie
Crow, Tom
Blackmon, Jody
Ivie, Charles
Harden, Amrey
Boggs, Ronnie
Thompson, Greg
Brock, Phil

Associate Members Present:

Ouzts, Buddy
Horton, Harold
Seymour, Joel
Crawford, Charlie

Guests Present:

Lynne Riley
Kerry Herndon
Guy Herring
Barry Dunlap
Carol Williams
Cheryl Smith
Ray McKewen
Phil Pitts

Media Present:

Blake Giles, **Oconee Enterprise**

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Evans Brinson, Comptroller
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director
Rima Sullivan, Youth Program Specialist

WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Frank Turner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, staff and media. He asked for a motion to approve the June meeting minutes. Such a motion was made by Mayor Linda Blechinger and seconded by Commissioner Anthony Dove. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Newton County: A number of DOT projects are ongoing in the County. SPLOST funds will be used to renovate the Porter Auditorium. The Newton County All Stars represented Georgia at the Dixie Boy's World Series and won third place. The Team also received the Sportsmanship Award.

Oconee County: Phase II of the Watkinsville Streetscape is ongoing. The Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation (OCAF) will host the 13th Annual Perspectives: Georgia Pottery Invitational on August 28th – September 16th. This is one of the premier and largest pottery events in the region. The Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission celebrated its 25th Anniversary on August 7th. Public meetings are being held regarding an Overlay District for the Mars Hill Road widening project. Due to sales tax revenue from the Epps Bridge Centre, SPLOST revenues are up 10% - 12% over last year. Discussions are continuing regarding the closing of the front entrance to the Courthouse. The County welcomes two new employees; J.R. Charles is the Economic Development Director, and Wayne Haynie will assume the position of Utility Department Director. The County, along with assistance from the Regional Commission staff, will undertake an Employee Classification and Pay Study.

Oglethorpe County: The County will be getting a new development by the end of the year. Courthouse renovations are ongoing. The County will be road paving in Elbert County the week of August 24th, and will also be paving in Madison County soon. The County has been updating its Zoning Ordinance. The County has not had an increase in the millage rate; however, the school system increased the millage rate by 2 mils. The 3rd Annual Legends of Oglethorpe will be held on October 24th and 25th. This event is a living history weekend with talented actors bringing to life individuals who have been a part of Oglethorpe County.

Walton County: Commissioner Kevin Little was proud to report that the financial condition in Walton County is very sound. The millage rate for the County has not had an increase in several years. R-O-W acquisition for the Monroe Bypass has begun, and the Social Circle/Hwy 11 Bypass is open. On the economic development front, there are two prospects looking at the County, and the Angel Food facility is back on the market and could be used by a potential industry.

APPOINTMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR MEMBERS

The Bylaws provide for Private Sector representation on the Council from each of the twelve counties. Nominees are chosen by the leadership of each of the counties and submitted to the Council for approval for a one-year term. Nominations were submitted by all counties, and Chairman Turner presented the following nominees:

Barrow	-	Wayne Bartlett
Clarke	-	Lamar Houston
Elbert	-	Bill Palmer
Greene	-	Valerie Duvall
Jackson	-	Josh Fenn
Jasper	-	David Dyer
Madison	-	Roy Gandy
Morgan	-	David Bentley
Newton	-	Frank Turner
Oconee	-	Amrey Harden
Oglethorpe	-	Jesse Johnson
Walton	-	Joyce Chambers

A motion to accept the nominations as presented was made by Commissioner Billy Pittard and seconded by Commissioner Kevin Little. The motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: The Committee met prior to the Council and reviewed the Comparative Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the first month of the Fiscal Year. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$1,694, and financial activity for the month was approximately 1/12th of the FY2016 Budget. A motion to approve the financial report as presented was made by Commissioner Anthony Dove and seconded by Mr. David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously. On another matter, the auditing firm of Mauldin and Jenkins was at headquarters the week of August 10th conducting the Fiscal Year 2015 Audit. Their final report will be presented to the Council at the September meeting. At this time, a Resolution that updates banking information with the Georgia Department of Treasury Investments or the Georgia Fund 1 was presented. The Regional Commission has had an account with Georgia Fund 1 since 1997. A motion to adopt this resolution was made by Mayor Jerry Roseberry and seconded by Commissioner Gene Trammell. 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. CITY OF COMMERCE** – Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant Pre-Application – Building improvements in the downtown area. There are no fees for this assistance.
- 2. OCONEE COUNTY** – Assistance in developing an Employee Classification and Pay Study that includes a comparative analysis. The cost for this assistance will be provided for internally by the NEGRC.
- 3. CITY OF BOWMAN** – Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant Pre-Application – Stabilization of a downtown building for its potential rehabilitation as a new branch library. There are no fees for this assistance.

4. **BARROW COUNTY** – Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Pre-Application – Construction of an access road within the Industrial Park. There are no fees for this assistance.
5. **BARROW COUNTY** – Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Pre-Application – Mechatronic equipment to support instructional programs at Lanier Tech. If funded, the Mechatronics Lab would be the second in the state of Georgia. There are no fees for this assistance.
6. **CITY OF WINDER** – Local Food Local Places Grant Application to provide technical assistance at Winder-Barrow multi-use community center in the former Glenwood School. There are no fees for this assistance.
7. **CITY OF JEFFERSON** – Support for consultant services in re-branding City logos, signage, etc. There are no fees for this assistance.
8. **CITY OF MAXEYS** – Planning for the Firefly Trail within the City limits. There are no fees for this assistance.
9. **ELBERT COUNTY** – Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Pre-Application – Support for the development of a Master Plan by a qualified Consultant for Bobby Brown Park that will be operated and maintained by the County. There are no fees for this assistance.
10. **CITY OF COLBERT** – Provide assistance to the City in the procurement process of a qualified engineer to evaluate existing water infrastructure. Also assist in development of an ARC Pre-Application, if eligible, for water system improvements. There are no fees for this assistance.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY2016 Program of Work, effective August 20, 2015, was made by Commissioner Pittard and seconded by Mr. Cary Fordyce. The motion carried unanimously.

Planning & Government Services: The Committee met prior to the Council to review and discuss several items of interest. One item discussed was the upcoming Plan Implementation meetings. These are required meetings and are conducted by PGS staff and includes the Chief Elected Officials. Letter notifications regarding these meetings were recently sent to Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, and Walton Counties. These meetings are most effective when they are held jointly to include the municipalities. Any coordination assistance these respective Chairmen can provide would greatly help PGS staff in this effort.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove attended the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) Summer Board Meeting in Erie, Pennsylvania on August 10th – 11th. There was a facilitated meeting of that Board, and attendees were joined by Appalachian Region Commission (ARC) Co-Chair Earl Gohl and Executive Director Scott Hamilton. ARC has completed its first 50 years, and the organization is looking at next steps in the battle on poverty throughout the 13 state region.

Executive Assistant Mott Beck and Executive Director Dove are facilitating a retreat on August 21st for the Morgan County Board of Commissioners. They do this session annually, and have had a very enjoyable and informative time with the group. Several of the items contemplated at the retreats are now bearing fruit. They have tentatively scheduled a retreat with the Newton County Board of Commissioners on October 7th. Mr. Dove and Ms. Beck have worked very closely with Commissioners in that County during the past several years.

The firm of Mauldin & Jenkins has completed its field work for the Fiscal Year 2015 Audit. It is anticipated that the audit will be completed and presented to the Council in September.

The Regional Commission staff is disappointed to learn that Ms. Emily Eisenman will not be seeking re-election as Mayor of Winterville. Mayor Eisenman has done a fantastic job as Mayor and has served the Council well as a member and Chair of the Personnel Committee. She will be missed by the Council and Regional Commission staff.

Mr. Dove and Ms. Beck facilitated a 1 ½ day retreat for the Georgia Local Government Personnel Association (GLGPA) Board on August 18th and 19th at the Georgia Center. Four members of that Board are in the Northeast Georgia Region – Karen Fraser, Walton County; Susan Roberts, Oconee County; Tracey Clark, Newton County; and Sharron Robinson, Jasper County.

Mr. Dove was saddened to report that Mr. Cliff Brooks of Oglethorpe County passed away recently. He was instrumental in the early development of the Regional Commission.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM WRAP-UP

At this time, Youth Program Specialist Rima Sullivan gave a report on the recently completed Summer Youth Program. Youth that were enrolled for the In-School Youth Program participated in Job Readiness workshops in the spring to prepare for the Summer Work Experience. This year there were 138 students working in 95 different worksites in the 12-county area. There were fewer participants this summer, due in part to 25 youth securing employment on their own; which is the goal of the program. WIA wages and youth are covered under the Worker's Comp policy and are paid \$7.25 an hour. Participants can work a maximum of 30 hours per week for five weeks, and 98% of the participants successfully completed the program. Eight youth were hired at the end of the work experience, and several others stayed on the worksite as a volunteer. Case Managers worked closely with staff and youth to resolve any problems that might arise during the program.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE REPORT

The next item on the agenda was a PowerPoint presentation by Georgia Department of Revenue Commissioner Lynne Riley. The mission of the Department of Revenue is to administer the tax laws of the State of Georgia fairly and efficiently in order to promote public confidence and compliance, while providing excellent customer service. The Department was created in 1938 and is the principal tax-collecting agency for the State of Georgia. In addition to administering tax laws, the Department is responsible for enforcing laws and regulations pertaining to the control of alcoholic beverages and tobacco products in Georgia as well as motor vehicle tag and title administration. The Department is led by the Commissioner and has 964 employees within six divisions and a processing center. The Administrative Division provides administrative services for the Department. The Alcohol and Tobacco Division is involved in all aspects regarding alcohol and tobacco sales in the state, while the Compliance Division audits tax accounts, enforces compliance with the Public Revenue Code of Georgia, conducts taxpayer education seminars and assists in the collection of taxes. The Department's Local Government Services Division administers property tax laws and oversees much of the local county property tax assessment and collection process. The Processing Centers performs upfront processing for all tax returns received by mail and electronically filed. The Taxpayer Services Division manages taxpayer protests and hearings, administers income tax laws, and administers the Corporate Net Worth Tax. The main headquarters is located in Atlanta, eleven Regional Offices are located throughout Georgia.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on September 17th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant