

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN  
APRIL 18, 2013  
NOON**

**MINUTES**

The regular monthly meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, April 18, 2013 at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn. Chairman Jim Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Blechinger, Linda  
Denson, Nancy  
Eisenman, Emily  
Houston, Lamar  
Lyon, Tommy  
Bullard, Ed  
Crow, Tom  
Joiner, Jim  
Dove, Anthony  
Gandy, Roy  
Ainslie, Andy  
Perriman, Fred  
Brooks, Stenette  
Ellis, Keith  
Davis, Melvin  
Harden, Amrey  
Pittard, Billy  
Boggs, Ronnie  
Johnson, Jesse  
Little, Kevin  
Knight, Harry  
Roberts, Roy

**Members Absent:**

Graham, Pat  
Graham, Ernie  
Guest, Larry  
Palmer, Bill  
Wright, Glenn  
Finch, Charles  
Pennamon, Carl  
Thurman, Larry  
Nalls, Billy  
Blackmon, Jody  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Turner, Frank  
Ivie, Charles  
Thompson, Greg  
Lee, Kay  
Lewis Vince

**Associate Members Present:**

Ouzts, Buddy  
Horton, Harold  
Adams, Louise  
Pitts, Flemmie  
Crawford, Charlie

**Guests Present:**

Terry Mathews  
Frank Ginn  
Chuck Williams  
Tate O'Rourke  
Barton Lowrey  
Cheryl Smith  
Marsay Simpson  
Bob Thomas  
Allison Wright

**Staff Present:**

Jim Dove, Executive Director  
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant  
Carol R. Cofer, Workforce Development Director  
Evans Brinson, Comptroller  
Anne Hansen, AAA Gateway/ADRC Supervisor  
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services

## **CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MARCH MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the March meeting minutes. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Kevin Little and seconded by Dr. Stenette Brooks. The motion carried unanimously.

## **ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Barrow County:** A Lanier Tech campus will be locating in Barrow County along S.R. 316. Jock Connell, the new County Manager, is doing a fine job and is currently in the process of hiring new department heads. The City of Winder's streetscape project is progressing very well, and the City of Auburn is pursuing a reservoir project in an old quarry pit.

**Clarke County:** Dedication ceremonies were recently held for the newly renovated Athens Regional Library. The Police precinct building on Baxter Street has been named the Moon Killian Building in honor of the first two African American Police Officers in Athens-Clarke County. Bryan Moore has been named the new Economic Development Department Director, and Blane Williams has been hired as the Assistant Manager, replacing Bob Snipes. A pedestrian bridge was recently dedicated at Sandy Creek Park. Jack Crowley is designing a Master Plan for the downtown. Mayor Denson recently attended dinner at the Governor's Mansion as part of the Red Carpet Tour that visited Athens.

**Elbert County:** The airport runway extension is complete. Bids for LMIG projects have been let, and the County is acquiring quotes for a new bush hog. Elbert County is working with Madison County on extension of water lines throughout the area. A Keep America Beautiful Program Committee has been appointed and will work on a \$500,000 grant application that will be used to refurbish rundown houses in blighted areas. Beth Evanson has been named to replace Anna Grant Jones as Director of the Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton, and Bowman.

**Greene County:** The new St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital is slated for completion by the end of 2013 or early 2014. The new hospital is a 75,000 sq. ft. critical care facility that will include the latest in medical, surgical and diagnostic technology. The County recently completed its audit, and Chairman Bullard reported that Greene County's financial management situation is solvent. The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Southland Jubilee will be held in Greensboro on April 20<sup>th</sup>. The event is expected to attract approximately 8,000 residents and visitors to downtown.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Audit & Finance:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the financial statements for the nine-month period ending March 31, 2013. A review of the account balances indicates the sound financial condition of the Regional Commission with cash and near-cash assets exceeding total liabilities, excluding the capital lease obligation, by \$715,000. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$14,781. Financial activity for the nine month period was approximately 3/4ths of the FY2013 Budget. A motion to approve the financial report as presented was made by Mr. Amrey Harden and seconded by Commissioner Anthony Dove. 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 COVINGTON** – Preparation of a Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund Application – The City is seeking funds to assist in the reconstruction of a burned restaurant on the town square known as the Mystic Grill.
2. **CITY OF PORTERDALE** – Assistance in developing design guidelines for the City's locally designated historic properties. The guidelines will be used by the City's Historic Preservation Commission, property owners, and others to help guide exterior treatments and changes in conformance with the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY2013 Program of Work, effective April 18, 2013, was made by Commissioner Billy Pittard and seconded by Mr. Roy Gandy. The motion carried unanimously.

**Planning & Government Services:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and discussed several items of interest. Members reviewed an updated Regional Work Program for the previously adopted Regional Plan 2035. The Committee found the Work Program to be complete and recommended that the Council approve a resolution for transmittal of the Regional Plan's Work Program to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Mr. Gandy. The motion carried unanimously. Following DCA's review and comment, the Regional Work Program will be presented to the Council for consideration in August.

**Human Services:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting to discuss the status of the Coordinated Transportation Contract for July 1, 2013. Commissioner Melvin Davis and Director Dove briefed members on the latest activities, and it was agreed that Director Dove would provide an overview of the developments as part of his report later in the meeting. The Committee also received a briefing on the 2013 WIA Summer Youth Program.

**Personnel:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting to conduct the annual evaluation of the Executive Director. A draft of the evaluation will be forwarded to members for review and comment prior to the June meeting.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director Dove thanked Commissioner Davis, the Human Services Committee, Comptroller Brinson, and Peggy Hackett of the Department of Human Services for their hard work on the Coordinated Transportation contract for Fiscal Year 2014. Prior to the meeting, T&T Transportation forwarded an e-mail stating that the firm would not be providing transportation services for the next Fiscal Year. Executive Director Dove advised that staff will continue to address this issue and that there will be no interruption of services to anyone needing transportation in the region.

Executive Director Dove will be attending the ACCG Annual Meeting in Savannah on April 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, and advised that Executive Assistant Mott Beck will attend the GMA Annual Meeting in June. He and Ms. Beck are responsible for setting up and scheduling persons to staff the GARC exhibit.

Staff has completed the response to the Georgia Office of Workforce Development regarding their audit of the Division late last year. Former GOWD Director Tricia Pridemore commented that the "findings" were the lowest number of any entity in the state. After the response was finalized, GOWD reduced the number from three to two, as one of the findings was dismissed. Executive Director Dove expressed appreciation to Workforce Development Director Carol Cofer and staff, as well as the Workforce Investment Board, for their continued stellar efforts.

Since the March meeting, Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck facilitated a retreat for the Elberton Mayor and Council. It was an excellent session, and a number of goals and objectives were identified. This is the fourth session for the City of Elberton; and it, just as Elbert County, has made tremendous progress. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck will facilitate a half-day planning retreat for the Economic Development Committee of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce.

On May 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, Executive Director Dove, Burke Walker, and Nina Kelly will attend the annual Economic Development Conference of the GARC at Brasstown Valley. Each Regional Commission sends three delegates to the conference, and a number of excellent speakers and programs are provided.

Evaluations for each Department Head have been completed, and all other staff evaluations will be conducted by the end of April. Evaluations are conducted yearly on each employee.

## **REPORT ON THE 2013 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

At this time, Terry Mathews, of Mathews & Maxwell, gave a report on the 2013 Legislative Session. The Senate introduced approximately 700 pieces of legislation, and the House had roughly 300. Legislation that was not passed or defeated will continue over to next year's session. The most important issue addressed by Legislators each year is to pass the budget, which is the only item mandated by the State Constitution. The FY14 Budget is \$19.9 billion and is \$578 million more than the FY13 Amended Budget. The Budget is based on a 4.6% increased revenue projection over last year. Approximately 51% of the budget goes to education, and 21% is earmarked for healthcare. The "rainy day fund" is up to approximately \$378 million and is important to maintain Georgia's AAA bond rating. With state and federal funds, the budget is up to \$37.1 billion. As a testament to the work of legislators and state leaders, spending from 1994 to 2014 has remained constant at \$2,000 per capita. Mr. Mathews gave a few highlights of several other pieces of legislation and entertained questions.

## **UPDATE ON CURRENT EVENTS RELATED TO THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING**

The next item on the agenda was a report by AAA Program Manager Anne Hansen on current events related to the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). The AAA is starting a new program to help reduce avoidable re-hospitalizations for Medicare patients. Staff will be working with four area hospitals – Athens Regional Medical Center, Barrow Regional Medical Center, Clearview Regional Medical Center in Walton County, and Newton Medical Center. The AAA Aging and Disability Resource Center staff will be seeing patients in the hospitals and following up with them after they have been discharged. The program will provide coaches to make sure the patient understands medicines, discharge plans, follow up with doctors, and their diagnosis. To assist with decreasing hospital re-admissions, the AAA will provide up to 14 home delivered meals and four transportation trips. This program is funded by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. It is a part of the Affordable Care Act and will be available to the 12-County Northeast Georgia region at no cost. This is a two-year program; and if successful, there is an option to expand for three additional years.

## **AWARDS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Each year in May, the Regional Commission Council gives two awards, the Distinguished Northeast Georgian and the Local Government Administrator of the Year. Chairman Joiner appointed the follow members to serve on the Awards Committee: Amrey Harden, Lamar Houston, and Buddy Ouzts. Mr. Harden will serve as Committee Chairman.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting will be held on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck  
Executive Assistant