

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
FEBRUARY 16, 2012
NOON**

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, February 16th at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn. Chairman Jim Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Yearwood, Danny
Bridges, Robert
Denson, Nancy
Eisenman, Emily
Houston, Lamar
Lyon, Tommy
Palmer, Bill
Bicknell, Hunter
Joiner, Jim
Short, Shane
Hill, Charles
Nalls, Billy
Dove, Anthony
Blackmon, Jody
Gandy, Roy
Ainslie, Andrew
Brooks, Stenette
Morgan, Kathy
Roseberry Jerry
Turner, Frank
Davis, Melvin
Ivie, Charles
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Boggs, Ronnie
Yeany, Russ
Little, Kevin
Knight, Harry
Lewis, Vince

Members Absent:

Graham, Ernie
Guest, Larry
Sanders, Bud
Wright, Glenn
Thurman, Larry
Perriman, Fred
Thompson, Greg
Lee, Kay
Roberts, Roy

Guests Present:

Jim Hussey
Tate O'Rourke
Courtney Bernardi
Shonda Peterman
Thad McWhorter
John Ward

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Evans Brinson, Comptroller
Peggy Jenkins, AAA Director
Amy Tucker, Case Manager
Burke Walker, Planning & Gov't. Services Director

Associates Present:

Horton, Harold
Seymour, Joel
Crawford, Charlie

Media Present:

Michael Prochaska
The Morgan Citizen

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Jim Joiner welcomed members, guests, media, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January meeting. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Commissioner Kevin Little. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Jackson: Kevin Poe has been hired as the new County Manager. Road projects in the County nearing completion are S.R. 124 near Gum Springs Elementary School and Zion Church Road in Braselton. These projects were important from a safety and economic development perspective. During the last three months, the County has exceeded all expectations regarding economic development. Of those announced, Bed, Bath, & Beyond will generate 900 jobs, Toyota (Commerce) 35 jobs, Kubota 200 jobs, and Toyota (Valentine Farms) 320 jobs.

Jasper: A SPLOST referendum will be on the ballot in November. The Chamber of Commerce recently held its annual meeting. The County received a Certificate of Excellence for the annual audit report. Thirty-five representatives of the County attended a one-day economic development meeting/training. The County recently began an update to its Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Madison: The County and municipalities have completed the Local Option Sales Tax (LOST) negotiations. Commissioner Anthony Dove commended Comer Mayor Jody Blackmon for his leadership in this initiative. The \$2 million library project is nearing completion, and the dedication will be held at the end of March. The County received notice that they would be receiving a \$25,000 grant.

Morgan: A SPLOST referendum will be on the ballot on March 6th. This will bring in \$26 million over the next six years to pay the debt service for the jail and roads and bridges. A special election will be held on July 31st to fill a vacant Commission seat in District 5. Local legislation for redistricting has been introduced by Representative Doug Holt. The \$3 million library project is scheduled for completion in April. The County and the City of Madison are partnering to construct a tornado shelter with funds from FEMA and GEMA. Expansion of existing industry is being planned, which will mean additional jobs for the community.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: The Committee met prior to the Council to review the financial statements for the seven-month period ending January 31, 2012. The account balances reflect the strong financial condition of the Regional Commission, with cash and near cash assets exceeding total liabilities, excluding the capital lease debt, by \$718,000. Revenues exceed expenses by \$1,220. Financial activity for the seven-month period was approximately 7/12ths of the annual 2012 Budget. A motion to approve the financial report as presented was made by Mr. Turner and seconded by Commissioner Dove. The motion carried unanimously. Mr.

Turner commended Comptroller Evans Brinson for doing an excellent job in regard to the Regional Commission's finances.

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. **GREENE COUNTY** – Update to the County's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan. The fee for this service will be paid for by a Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) grant.
2. **CITY OF ILA** – Update to the City's Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinances.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for inclusion in the FY2012 Program of Work, effective February 16, 2012, was made by Mr. Lamar Houston and seconded by Commissioner Billy Pittard, The motion carried unanimously.

The following project has been completed and closed:

1. **CITY OF SOCIAL CIRCLE** – Redistricting Map Project by GIS Division.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove advised that he and Executive Assistant Mott Beck continue to be very busy facilitating planning retreats for our local governments and associated organizations. The City of Social Circle planning session was held on a Friday and Saturday morning in late January. On February 10th, a session was held for the Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton, and Bowman, and the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation was held on February 11th. The dialogue for each retreat was outstanding and so was the attendance. The Town of Bogart will hold its retreat at NEGRC headquarters on February 20th, and the City of Jefferson's session will be held in Jefferson on February 22nd.

Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck assisted RTR Executive Committee Chairman Hunter Bicknell in sending a memorandum to each County Commission Chair and Mayor regarding the upcoming Regional Sales Tax Referendum. Specifically, Chairman Bicknell reiterated the importance of local governments moving quickly to develop a priority list of projects that might be addressed with the discretionary money from a successful referendum. The list should be forwarded to either Executive Director Dove or Ms. Beck no later than Monday, March 5th. The list should be very helpful in marketing efforts and for informational purposes when talking with constituents.

Evaluations for each NEGRC employee will be conducted over the next month. These are completed on an annual basis. The Personnel Committee will conduct the annual evaluation of the Executive Director in April.

This year's very successful orientation for new Council members and newly elected officials was held on January 26th, and approximately 25 persons were in attendance. Attendees heard presentations from Executive Director Dove and each Department Head and had the opportunity to discuss potential local projects and

activities. This orientation is held annually and is most helpful to those entering public office or being seated on the council.

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission was designated the Area Agency on Aging in 1974; and since that time, has planned, developed and coordinated a comprehensive system of services for older citizens in the Northeast Georgia region. At this time, Executive Director Dove presented a resolution stating that the NEGRC wished to continue that designation. A motion to adopt the resolution was made by Mr. Turner and seconded by Mr. Roy Gandy. The motion carried unanimously.

At this time, Executive Director Dove asked Planning and Government Services Director Burke Walker to give a brief presentation regarding Geospatial Services. The Regional Commission and NOAA would enter into a contract that would create a structure where participating local governments could purchase, at their own expense, geospatial services (imagery). Based on collective participation, there would be a potential costs reduction for these services, and the Regional Commission would facilitate and administer participation involvement of the local governments. In order to gauge interest for this initiative, a meeting will be held at headquarters on Tuesday, February 28th at 1:30 p.m.

UGA SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The next item on the agenda was a presentation by Paul Kreagar and Carolyn McDonald on the UGA Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and the services offered by that department. The SBDC Network is a partnership program between the University of Georgia, the U.S. Small Business Administration, and other colleges and universities from around the state, working together to provide consulting, training, and applied research to Georgia's entrepreneurs. The experienced business consultants offer confidential consulting services to companies seeking operational and strategic planning advice. Expertise is available to help clients develop and update business plans, identify funding sources, develop record keeping systems and financial records, conduct specialized research, create marketing strategies, and conduct operational and financial diagnostic assessments. Businesses working with the Georgia SBDC Network make a big impact on the local economy.

NEGRC AREA AGENCY ON AGING CARE TRANSITIONS PROGRAM

At this time, Case Manager Amy Tucker gave a report on the AAA Care Transitions Program. Care Transitions is an evidenced based model developed by Dr. Eric Coleman, Professor of Medicine at the University of Colorado at Denver. It is designed to assist with avoidable hospital readmissions. According to a June 2007 report, avoidable hospital readmissions cost the Center for Medicare and Medicaid services an estimated \$12 billion annually. Starting in October 2012, all hospitals will be penalized for a readmission that occurs within 30 days for the same diagnosis. The Area Agency on Aging is partnering with the Georgia Medical Care Foundation's Quality

Improvement Organization in recognizing that the most effective intervention are changes in care processes at the community level. This allows us to partner with two local hospitals in our region for implementation of our Care Transitions program, Newton Medical Center and Walton Regional Medical Center. Each week our Case Manager completes site visits at the local hospitals to obtain referrals and then follows up with the patients for a home visit and a series of follow up phone calls. We complete a Patient Activation Assessment with each patient to determine their level of understanding of their condition and risk for readmission. Since the implementation of the program in December 2010, we have almost doubled the number of referrals and hospital/home visits as well, since we have had a reduction in hospital readmissions. We look forward to future partnering with additional hospitals as our program continues to develop.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on March 15th.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant