

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS
APRIL 19, 2012
NOON**

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, April 19th at Noon at the Holiday Inn Express. Chairman Jim Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Yearwood, Danny
Denson, Nancy
Houston, Lamar
Sanders, Bud
Finch, Charles
Bicknell, Hunter
Joiner, Jim
Short, Shane
Cox, Alan
Dove, Anthony
Gandy, Roy
Ainslie, Andy
Brooks, Stenette
Morgan, Kathy
Roseberry, Jerry
Turner, Frank
Davis, Melvin
Ivie, Charles
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Boggs, Ronnie
Knight, Harry
Lee, Kay
Roberts, Roy

Members Absent:

Bridges, Robert
Graham, Ernie
Eisenman, Emily
Lyon, Tommy
Guest, Larry
Palmer, Bill
Wright, Glenn
Thurman, Larry
Nalls, Billy
Blackmon, Jody
Perriman, Fred
Yeane, Russ
Little, Kevin
Thompson, Greg
Lewis, Vince

Associates Present:

Ouzts, Buddy
Horton, Harold
Postell, Larry
Adams, Louise
Pitts, Flemmie
Jackson, Julian

Media Present:

Blake Giles, **Oconee Enterprise**

Guests Present:

Chuck Williams
T.K. Adams
Timothy Adams
Sherry Jackson
Marsay Simpson
Kimberly Locklin
Peggy Hackett
Russell Brooks

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Evans Brinson, Comptroller
Carol R. Cofer, Workforce Development Director
Burke Walker, Planning & Gov't. Services Director
Peggy Jenkins, AAA Director
Michael Dock, Information & Referral Specialist

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MARCH MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Jim Joiner welcomed members, guests, media, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March meeting. Such a motion was made by Mr. Lamar Houston and seconded by Dr. Stenette Brooks. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Barrow County: This year, the County has a balanced budget, with a \$2 million surplus. On April 24th, the County will select a contractor for renovations to the Historic Courthouse, Courthouse Annex, and the new Health Department. These projects are fully funded.

Clarke County: Planning for a downtown Wal-Mart is ongoing, and dedication of the SPLÖST funded Diversion Center will be held on May 11th. Athens-Clarke and Oconee Counties are working diligently to finalize the intergovernmental agreement for the Caterpillar project, as well as development of an Overlay District for the site. Athens-Clarke County received an award from Georgia Trend for a "Teens in Action" program that allows for teenagers to work on projects with non-profits and participate in the community. The Police Strategic Response Team recently won the championship for SWAT competition in Virginia. Athens-Clarke County has been designated as a "Film Ready Community". Forbes recently named Athens as the Best Small City in the Nation for economic development.

Elbert County: Mr. Bob Thomas, representing Commissioner Tommy Lyon, applauded the Northeast Georgia region for being a tremendous asset, with elected officials working together for the good of its citizens. Elbert County received a \$250,000 Safety Improvement Grant for striping and safety signage on 91 miles of roads. Work on the airport runway extension is 40% complete, and the County has completed its portion of the Go Fish Mega Ramp on Lake Russell. The first zoning ordinance for Elbert County will be presented to the Commissioners on July 1st. The City of Elberton recently purchased the Sam Elliott Hotel, and they will ask the Regional Commission to help determine the best use of the facility. The City has also completed the fiber optic cable to Richard B. Russell Start Park, and Regional Commission staff is assisting the City with an Urban Renewal Plan.

Greene County: Several months ago, St. Joseph's Hospital completed sale of the hospital to St. Mary's, and the facility is now called Good Samaritan Hospital. Recently, Good Samaritan purchased 24 acres of property on Hwy. 44 and has plans to build a new hospital at the site. The County received notice from the Justice Department that its redistricting plan has been rejected. Everyone qualifying for the next election will do so utilizing the 2000 districts.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: The Committee met prior to the Council to review the financial statements for the month ending March 31, 2012. A review of 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 \$699,000. Revenues exceed expenses by \$1,395. Financial activity for the nine-month period was approximately 3/4ths of the annual FY2012 Budget. A motion to approve the financial report as presented was made by Mr. Frank Turner and seconded by Commissioner Billy Pittard. 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 MONTICELLO** – Transportation Enhancement Grant Administration – Rehabilitation of the Monticello High School to be used as a travel museum.
2. **CITY OF PORTERDALE** – Transportation Enhancement Grant Administration – Phase II of rehabilitation of the depot.
3. **CITY OF MONTICELLO** – Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Employment Incentive Program (EIP) Application – Seeking funds to construct a rail spur inside the industrial park.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for inclusion in the FY2012 Program of Work, effective April 19, 2012, was made by Mr. Lamar Houston and seconded by Commissioner Pittard. The motion passed unanimously.

Planning & Government Services: The Committee met prior to the Council to discuss several items regarding regional planning. The primary item is the development of the Regional Plan 2035. The Plan was sent to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review in January and was approved for adoption by the Council. At this time, a resolution to adopt the Regional Plan 2035 was presented, and a motion to approve the resolution was made by Mayor Jerry Roseberry and seconded by Mr. Amrey Harden. The motion carried unanimously. The Regional Plan 2035 is available on the RC website.

Personnel: The Personnel Committee met prior to the Council meeting to conduct the yearly evaluation of the Executive Director. A draft of the evaluation will be distributed to the Council prior to the June meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Staff evaluations have been completed and discussed with employees by the appropriate Department Heads. The evaluations have been made part of their permanent personnel file.

Director Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck have been involved in two meetings recently regarding the Regional Transportation Tax. The first was a meeting with Todd Long and Russell McMurry of GDOT at headquarters. There were more than 50 persons in attendance. Mr. Long and Mr. McMurry provided an overview of ongoing efforts from the GDOT perspective, including next steps of which project delivery is certainly important. They also discussed future roles of the regional commissions and answered questions and addressed comments. Director Dove and Ms. Beck also attended a meeting on April 18th in Monroe with Chamber and Economic Development Authority executives throughout the region. Doug Callaway and Tim Davis of the Georgia Transportation Alliance made a presentation on the marketing effort to take place. It was discussed that such an effort would be tailored for each of the 11 regions outside of Metro Atlanta.

Director Dove advised that the Council will return next month to the regular meeting location at the main Holiday Inn. At that meeting, annual awards will be presented, including the Distinguished Northeast Georgian and the Local Government Administrator of the Year. The Awards Committee will meet following the Council to consider nominees for the awards.

Director Dove and Ms. Beck facilitated a retreat in Newton County at the end of March and feel like a great deal was accomplished. They are facilitating a planning retreat for the Barrow County Economic Development Council on April 24th, and a session for the Georgia Local Government Personnel Association on April 26th and 27th. In addition, they will facilitate a session for the Social Circle Better Hometown Program on May 3rd, and a session for the Madison-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce is scheduled for May 14th.

Director Dove will be attending the ACCG Annual Conference in Savannah on April 28th through April 30th. He will be in charge of setting up the exhibit for the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions.

LAUNCH OF THE GEORGIA GROWN PROGRAM

At this time, Jack Spruill with the Georgia Department of Agriculture gave a presentation regarding the Georgia Grown Program. This is a new program designed to accomplish three major goals: 1) assist producers, processors and brands in identifying profitable new markets for their products within Georgia and around the world, 2) help consumers, restaurant owners, and other buyers find and purchase agricultural products, agritourism resources, and other agribusinesses, and 3) ensure our state's agriculture industry and its related economies thrive by creating jobs and economic opportunities for all Georgians. The Georgia Grown brand is the official brand for Georgia's products and services. Only Georgia Grown members have the right to use or display the Georgia Grown logo on product packaging, signage, marketing materials or advertising and sales promotion tools. Georgia Grown is the state's calling card and is destined to be the brand with the greatest demand among consumers, retailers, and

restaurant owners. Members receive a number of benefits and competitive advantages such as direct access to a vast network of professional, financial and business resources, discounts on processing rates, professionally designed advertising and marketing materials, and the knowledge that membership supports Georgia agriculture and the economies of towns and businesses across the state.

MONEY FOLLOWS THE PERSON PROGRAM

The next item on the agenda was a report by Information & Referral Specialist Michael Dock and Attorney Sherry Jackson on the Money Follows the Person Program (MFP). This program is a grant designed to help individuals who reside in nursing facilities and intermediate care facilities (ICF) and have developmental disabilities return to their homes and communities. It is a rebalancing initiative that is made possible by grants from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The Georgia Department of Community Health implemented the program on September 1, 2008; and in 2011, Area Agencies on Aging across the State became active members of this initiative. Counselors will meet with individuals and discuss various service options, living arrangements, and community supports that will make the transition successful. A transition coordinator is the person that will provide oversight of the client's transition, as well as assist with home safety modifications. Through partnerships with various state and local agencies, the goal is to transition 1,558 individuals from institutional settings to the community by the end of the grant period. Continued efforts of everyone involved will help to make MFP even more successful in the future.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on May 17th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant