

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
MAY MEETING / ANNUAL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
MAY 17, 2012
NOON**

MINUTES

The May Meeting/Annual Meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, May 17th at noon at the Athens Holiday Inn. Chairman Jim Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Yearwood, Danny
Graham, Ernie
Denson, Nancy
Eisenman, Emily
Lyon, Tommy
Palmer, Bill
Sanders, Bud
Finch, Charles
Bicknell, Hunter
Joiner, Jim
Short, Shane
Nalls, Billy
Dove, Anthony
Gandy, Roy
Brooks, Stenette
Morgan, Kathy
Roseberry, Jerry
Davis, Melvin
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Roberts, Roy

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Carol R. Cofer, Workforce Development Director
Evans Brinson, Comptroller

Members Absent:

Bridges, Robert
Houston, Lamar
Guest, Larry
Wright, Glenn
Cox, Alan
Thurman, Larry
Blackmon, Jody
Ainslie, Andy
Perriman, Fred
Turner, Frank
Ivie, Charles
Boggs, Ronnie
Yeany, Russ
Little, Kevin
Thompson, Greg
Knight, Harry
Lee, Kay
Lewis, Vince

Associate Members Present:

Ouzts, Buddy
Seymour, Joel
Crawford, Charlie

Guests Present:

Tate O'Rourke
Marsay Simpson
Chuck Williams
Michael Lamar
Nancy Seymour
Mary Aillene Coggins
Sarah Williams
Mary Horton
Steven Horton
Taylor Horton
Ronnie Johnston
Stacey Cotton
Ronnie Cowan

Media Present:

Leanne Akin, The Paper
Michael Prochaska, The Morgan
Citizen

WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF APRIL MEETING MINUTES

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove advised that a pipe fitting in the restroom of the original headquarters building had burst during the weekend and flooded that facility. Servpro has been working diligently throughout the week to dry the carpet and assess damages. The Council will be kept abreast of the situation.

In recent weeks, Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck facilitated four planning retreats. On April 24th, they facilitated a session for the Barrow Economic Development Council. The group heard economic development professionals discuss current and future trends, and participated in an exercise to determine strengths and challenges prior to a goal setting session. Later that week, they managed an intensive two-day session for the Georgia Local Government Personnel Association Board of Directors at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education. Two of the Board members are employees of Northeast Georgia governments. There were a number of agenda items discussed at the retreat, which culminated in several short-term goals being identified. On May 3rd, Dove and Beck facilitated the annual meeting of the Board of the Social Circle Better Hometown Program. After hearing several enlightening presentations, the Board listed a number of issues to be utilized in developing a future program of work. Finally, on May 14th, a session was facilitated for a group convened by the Madison-Morgan Chamber of Commerce. Attendees included elected officials from the County, City, and School Board, along with members of various authorities and private developers. After a discussion focusing on current and future economic development trends, they prioritized short-term goals and action items.

Executive Director Dove, Mr. Lamar Houston, and Planning and Government Services Director Burke Walker attended the annual economic development meeting of the Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) at Brasstown Valley on May 6th – 8th. There were a lot of good presentations, including those by DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty, Donnie Thomas from USDA, Phil Paradise from the Economic Development Administration, Todd Long from GDOT, and Doug Callaway from the Georgia Alliance. Former Governor Zell Miller was presented a plaque for his public service.

Executive Director Dove attended the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) Annual Meeting in Savannah April 28th – 30th. Commissioner Kevin Little was sworn in as Second Vice President, and has served on the Board of Managers since 2008. Chairman Melvin Davis is Immediate Past President. Chairman Lyon serves on the Board of Managers representing the 5th District.

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Jackson County: The County completed FY11 with a balanced budget and without using reserves. There was not an increase in the millage rate; however, the digest decreased by 5%. Bed, Bath, and Beyond and Carter's recently held Job Fairs, and each industry will create 250 new jobs. One supplier for Caterpillar has contacted the County regarding the possibility of locating there. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held recently for the Zion Church/Highway 124 relocation project in Braselton.

Jasper County: Mr. Billy Nalls expressed his appreciation to the Regional Commission and staff for their many efforts on behalf of Jasper County. He asked that all elected officials be patient and kind, and work together for the good of their community and the region.

Madison County: Installation of a water line from Franklin County down Highway 129 is ongoing. A turning lane is being constructed at the school. The project is a coordinated effort of the GDOT, BOE, City of Comer, and BOC. The City of Danielsville has applied for a grant to improve landscaping in the downtown area. Land acquisition is underway along Highway 72 in anticipation of the 4-laning project included in T-SPLOST. A ribbon cutting ceremony was recently held for the Hampton House Retirement Center. Watson Mill will continue to be designated a State Park.

Morgan County: Mr. Michael Lamar expressed his appreciation to Executive Director Dove for the successful retreat held recently for the Madison-Morgan Chamber of Commerce. He reported that the County will reap major benefits due to Baxter Pharmaceuticals locating in the Stanton Springs Industrial Park. Several road and bridge projects are ongoing in the County, and the new library will be opening in early June. The Green Teens at the Morgan County Middle School have won two national awards with their energy efficient webpage.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the financial statements for the ten-month period ending on April 30, 2012. A review of account balances indicates that the Regional Commission is in good financial condition. Cash and near cash assets exceed total liabilities, excluding the capital lease debt, by \$680,000. Revenues exceed expenses by \$3,928. Financial activity for the ten-month period was approximately 10/12ths of the annual 2012 budget. A motion to approve the financial statement as presented was made by Mr. Amrey Harden and seconded by Commissioner Kathy Morgan. The motion carried unanimously. Members reviewed the Revised FY2012 Budget and the FY2013 Proposed Budget. After this review, it was the consensus of Committee members to forward the Budgets to Council members prior to the June meeting. On another matter, the Committee held a called meeting on May 9th to consider whether to accept an offer from the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) to serve as contractor for the Coordinated Transportation Program for FY2013. After considering the details of the offer, the

Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Council accept the offer from DHS to serve as contractor and that the Elbert County Transit and the Greene County Transit operated by Advantage Behavioral Health System and T&T Transportation be approved as subcontractors. Ms. Beck read a resolution that would formalize this arrangement with DHS, and a motion to adopt said resolution was made by Mr. Harden and seconded by Commissioner Bud Sanders. The motion carried unanimously.

ANNUAL REPORT OF STAFF ACTIVITIES

Executive Director Dove gave an in depth report on staff activities for Fiscal Year 2012 and highlighted accomplishments of each division. He also advised that staff continues to facilitate administrative efforts relative to the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority, and he and Ms. Beck continue to facilitate retreats/planning sessions for local governments and related organizations throughout the region. A total of 65 such sessions have been conducted to date. He advised that he and Ms. Beck continue to facilitate efforts of the Regional Roundtable and the T-SPLOST initiative. A copy of the Staff Activities Report is on file at Regional Commission Headquarters.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

The next item on the agenda was presentation of awards that are given annually by the Regional Commission. Mr. Frank Coggins, Jr. of Elberton was named recipient of the Robert L. and Betty Williford Distinguished Northeast Georgian Award. Mr. Coggins is a former Chairman of the Board of Coggins Granite and is a member and past President of the Elberton Granite Association. He is widely known for many philanthropic efforts, and is a major benefactor of Athens Technical College. He is also recognized for assisting his local community through the years with economic development efforts and construction of government related facilities. Mr. Coggins is a graduate of the University of Georgia and the Emory University Advanced Management Program.

The Local Government Administrator of the Year was awarded to Covington City Manager Steve Horton. Mr. Horton began his career with the City in 1978 and held various other positions prior to being named City Manager in December 2005. He received a Bachelor's Degree from Mercer University; and after assisting in the recruitment of Troy University to Covington; he received his Master of Business Administration Degree from that institution. He and his wife, Mary, reside in Covington and have one son and two grandchildren.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on June 21st.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant