

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
MARCH 17, 2016
NOON**

MINUTES

Members Present:

Graham, Pat
Ferrelle, Dodd
Houston, Lamar
Palmer, Bill
Bullard, Ed
Crow, Tom
Plott, Roy
Shaw, Jim
Trammell, Gene
Workman, Stone
Dyer, Dave
Dove, Anthony
Warren, Ellen
Bentley, David
Ellis, Keith
Roseberry, Jerry
Turner, Frank
Davis, Melvin
Ivie, Charles
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Berry, Rick
Johnson, Jesse
Little, Kevin
Chambers, Joyce
Fordyce, Cary

Members Absent:

Blechinger, Linda
Bartlett, Wayne
Denson, Nancy
Lyon, Tommy
Guest, Larry
Brock, Phil
Duvall, Valerie
Blackmon, Jody
Gandy, Roy
Perriman, Fred
Thompson, Greg
Roberts, Roy

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Evans Brinson, Comptroller
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director
Kenny Gilbert, GIS Manager
Michelle Kelley, AAA Assistant Director
Carol Cofer, Workforce Development Director

Associate Members Present:

Ouzts, Buddy
Seymour, Joel
Crawford, Charlie

Guests Present:

Susan Miller
J.R. Charles
Cheryl Smith
Ron Bowie
George Chandler
Jon Hershel
Becky Taylor

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Frank Turner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February meeting. **Such a motion was made by Commissioner Gene Trammell and seconded by Mr. Dave Dyer. The motion carried unanimously.**

ITEMS OF LOCAL IINTEREST

Newton County: Due to heavy rains in late December and early January and subsequent flooding, Newton County applied for and was declared a Presidential Disaster County. They will receive \$3 million from FEMA for flood damage including washed out roads, bridges, culverts, and damage to the landfill. The County just completed and approved its Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Four vacant Commission seats are to be filled in the next election. The downtown area is experiencing a lot of activity, which is good for the City. Due to a stronger economy, there are new restaurants and bars; as well as retail stores.

Oconee County: The City of Watkinsville is utilizing SPLOST funds to install a sewer line to the industrial park. Watkinsville and OCAF have entered into an agreement to establish locations for art to be displayed in the City and various locations throughout the County. Watkinsville is working toward completion of Woods Park, which is located on 5.8 acres within the City limits. It has been learned that an upscale restaurant is "coming to town" soon. Oconee County has been ranked the second healthiest County in the state. The BOC approved a \$4.2 million bond for construction of Parkway Boulevard behind Kohl's/Lowe's/Walmart, which would allow for development on a tract of property that is between 50 and 75 acres. Counties are being urged to check business licenses with the Department of Revenue to determine where their sales tax and SPLOST monies are being sent. The County is in the process of refunding a \$10 million Bond that was issued for its share of the Hard Labor Creek Reservoir, which will save the County \$1 million. The County recently hosted an appreciation banquet for the volunteers (fire, rescue, and first responders) that work so diligently, without compensation, for the safety of the citizens.

Oglethorpe County: Oglethorpe County, along with Greene and Morgan, has been designated as a disaster county and will be receiving assistance from FEMA. There have been a lot of property sales recently, and assessment values will be increasing. Almost all candidates in the County have opposition. The paving partnership between Oglethorpe, Madison, and Elbert Counties was very beneficial and resulted in a cost savings to all parties. It is anticipated that this arrangement will continue this year.

Walton County: Walton County has also refinanced the Bonds for the Hard Labor Creek Reservoir and will save \$20 million over the next 20 years. On the economic development front, the old Angel Food facility was sold to a bag company out of Connecticut that will result in 75 new jobs. A food processing company is looking at a 40 acre tract in the industrial park, and another food processing company is interested in a 30 acre tract on Highway 11. Twentieth Century Fox is filming a movie, "Hidden Figures", in Monroe and Walton County.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: The Audit & Finance Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the financial statements for the eight-month period ending February 29, 2016. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$5,428. Financial activity for the period was approximately 2/3rds of the annual 2016 Budget projections. **A motion to accept the report as presented was made by Mr. Harden and seconded by Mr. David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

Program of Work: The Program of Work Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review the technical assistance requests for the month. They are as follows:

1. **ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY** – Assistance in preparing an Economic Impact Study for the Oconee River Greenways Commission. The fee for this assistance will not exceed \$1,000.
2. **CITY OF WINTERVILLE** – Assistance in developing a Safe-Routes-To-School Program. No fee is required, as this assistance is supported through the Division's GDOT Planning Contract.
3. **CITY OF JEFFERSON** – Assistance in the administration of a funded USDA-Rural Development Grant. The fee for this assistance is \$2,000.
4. **CITY OF COVINGTON** – Assistance in developing a 2016 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. This application is seeking funding for drainage improvements for the Covington Housing Authority. The fee for this assistance is \$2,000 that will be invoiced following the grant's successful submission to DCA.

Based on a recommendation from the Executive Director and the Program of Work Committee, **a motion to approve the Program of Work items for inclusion in the FY2016 Program of Work, effective March 17, 2016, was made by Commissioner Pittard and seconded by Mr. Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

Planning & Government Services – The PGS Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review two items requiring the Council's action. The first item was the Regional Plan's Work Program for review by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), which requires a Resolution. After DCA review and approval, the Council will be asked to adopt the Resolution. Secondly, the PGS Committee reviewed the FY17 Rural Transit Contract and its related Work Program. Again, a Resolution Authorizing Filing of an Application with the Georgia Department of Transportation for a Grant under Title 49 U.S.C., Section 5304 is required. **A motion to approve both Resolutions was made by Mayor Jerry Roseberry and seconded by Commissioner Billy Pittard. The motion carried unanimously.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck have facilitated two more planning retreats since the last Council meeting. They had a great session at Bobby Brown Park for the Elbert County Board of Commissioners. Some of the items of discussion included road projects, senior citizens center, transit program, emergency medical services, and items pertaining to Lake Russell and Lake Strom Thurmond. Later on, they facilitated a planning session for the Elberton Mayor and Council. This was held at Richard B. Russell State Park. The primary focus of the session was an in-depth report from each major city department. On Friday, March 18th, they will facilitate the annual retreat for the Braselton Mayor and Council, and on Wednesday, March 30th, they will facilitate a planning session for the Newton County Board of Commissioners. They also have sessions scheduled in April for the City of Monticello and the Jasper County Board of Commissioners.

In April, Mr. Dove will be going to Washington to attend the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Legislative Conference. Planning & Government Services Director Burke Walker will be attending the first of those, and remaining in Washington to attend the Economic Development Administration conference which is held on a fairly infrequent basis.

As mentioned at last month's meeting, the annual staff performance evaluations are in progress and nearing completion. Mr. Dove has already reviewed the evaluations for staff in the Administrative, Fiscal, Planning & Government Services, and Aging Divisions, along with those Department Heads. He will discuss the evaluations for Workforce Development staff once they are submitted by the Friday, March 18th deadline.

Oconee County Chairman Davis, Comptroller Evans Brinson, and Mr. Dove will be meeting next week with Personnel on the state level responsible for Coordinated Transportation. There are some issues that have been raised regarding a provider in the area that they are seeking resolution for.

On the 24th, Mr. Dove will attend and make a brief presentation at the Council meeting of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in Pearson. That Regional Commission includes the former South Georgia and Southeast Georgia Regional Commissions. On the 31st, he will do likewise at the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission. That meeting will be held in Lavonia.

REPORT ON SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM

At this time, Workforce Development Director Carol Cofer gave a report on the upcoming Summer Youth Program. The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission's Workforce Development Division is soliciting requests from agencies wishing to serve as worksites for the 2016 Summer Youth Work component. Tentative plans are that

youth will be available to work between June 6th and July 9th. Worksite informational packets will be mailed the week of April 16th and are due on May 7th. There will not be additional funds available to operate a large stand-alone summer youth work experience activity this summer, but plans are to provide this activity to those youth already enrolled in the WIOA year round in-school youth program. Approximately 100 youth throughout the 12 counties will be served with the available funds. Youth may work in a variety of jobs depending upon the needs of individual worksites. The work proposed should be of a nature that would be beneficial to the youth, exposing them to various work and job skills. Youth will be paid through federal funds and will be covered under the Workforce Development Board's workmen's compensation insurance. Participants receive an hourly wage and can work up to 30 hours per week. Anyone interested in serving as a worksite should contact the Workforce Division.

UPDATE ON STATEWIDE GEOSPATIAL EFFORTS

Susan Miller, State Geospatial Information Officer, gave a PowerPoint presentation describing her roles and responsibilities and the importance of geospatial data. As GIO, Ms. Miller will enhance the use and application of geospatial data in public policy and decision making to improve the overall safety and economic prosperity of the state and its citizens. Geospatial data includes such things as elevation, soil type, parcel boundaries, flood plains, streams, roads, and administrative boundaries. Ms. Miller will coordinate and partner with Regional Commissions, local governments, state and federal agencies, universities, the private sector, and related entities. This level of facilitation will provide better access to higher quality GIS data at a lower cost, and lead to more well planned and resourced communities, which are better equipped to attract and expand industry, enhance public safety, and protect the property of Georgia's citizens.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on April 21st.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant