

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
HILTON GARDEN INN  
FEBRUARY 15, 2018  
NOON**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Graham, Pat  
Blechinger, Linda  
Lyon, Tommy  
Palmer, Bill  
Smith, Jeffery  
Haynie, Doug  
Shaw, Jim  
Pennamon, Carl  
Dyer, Dave  
Workman, Stone  
Scarborough, John  
Padilla, Bob  
Ainslie, Andy  
Perriman, Fred  
Banes, Marcello  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Daniell, John  
Harden, Amrey  
Pittard, Billy  
Boggs, Ronnie  
Little, Kevin  
Dally, Hal  
Chambers, Joyce  
Ledford, Howard

**Members Present:**

Jennings, Tommy  
Denson, Nancy  
Ferrelle, Dodd  
Houston, Lamar  
Guest, Larry  
Brock, Phil  
Rhodes, Lee  
Crow, Tom  
Blackmon, Jody  
Bentley, David  
Turner, Frank  
Berry, Rick  
Fordyce, Cary  
O'Rouke, Tate  
Roberts, Roy

**Staff Present:**

Jim Dove, Executive Director  
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant  
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services  
Alicia Page, Comptroller

**Associate Members Present:**

Horton, Harold  
Seymour, Joel

**Guests Present:**

George Chandler  
Leta Talbird  
Diane Baggett  
Carol Williams  
Gail Lyon  
Wendy Bond  
Spencer Hogg  
Andrew Seaver  
Don Jernigan  
Paul Chambers  
Nancy Bobbitt  
Cheryl Smith

**CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Jerry Roseberry called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff and asked for a motion to approve minutes of the January meeting. **Such a motion was made by Commissioner Kevin Little and seconded by Commissioner Billy Pittard. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Jackson County:** The County has nine million sq. ft. of spec distribution space planned or under construction. Three million sq. ft. have been completed and are available. There has been pushback in some areas of the County against further construction of distribution space. The County is in the process of making plans to build an agriculture facility. The City of Hoschtton will annex property for construction of a 1000+ residence subdivision. A new parking deck is under construction in the Town of Braselton, and is slated to open in 2019. The new West Jackson High School is anticipated to be complete for the 2019-2020 school year. The City of Jefferson has approved construction of 700 new homes. The City of Commerce is working on a municipal pretreatment facility to better serve industry.

**Jasper County:** Jasper County Chairman Carl Pennamon gave an update on the Joint Development Authority of Jasper, Morgan, Newton, and Walton Counties (JDA), and asked that the other three Chairmen join him at the podium. He also asked that Shane Short, Bob Hughes, and David Dyer, the marketing team for the JDA, join them. The Authority was organized 20 years ago, and bylaws were developed to determine how it would operate, how the expense would be shared, and revenue distributed. Based on population, Jasper County would receive 10%, Morgan County 15%, Newton County 37.5 % and Walton County 37.5%. In 2012, Baxter, now known as Shire, built at the site and has invested \$2 billion in the Park. This year, Shire will be producing and selling products. The Authority recently validated taxable revenue bonds, not to exceed \$42 billion, for a data center that will be locating in Stanton Springs. Additional information is forthcoming.

**Madison County:** Chairman John Scarborough thanked Regional Commission staff for all they have done to assist Madison County. There has been some development in the County. The Commission has replaced four out of five members of the Industrial Development Authority, and made a change in the Authority's leadership. The school system in the county has been a success story and made the County proud. The 4-laning of Highway 72 is nearing completion; and in anticipation of Map-21, the County will be replacing its 911 system.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Audit & Finance:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting, and members reviewed financial statements for the six-month period ending December 31, 2018. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$32,903.94. Financial activity for the six-month period should be at approximately 50% of the FY2018 Budget projections overall. **A motion to accept the report as presented was made by Mr. Amrey Harden and seconded by Commissioner Marcello Banes. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Program of Work:** The Program of Work Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review the following technical assistance request for the month:

1. **WINDER HOUSING AUTHORITY** – Assistance in developing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a landscape architecture firm to develop a Landscape Master Plan for the Wimberly Center. There is no fee for this assistance as it is provided under the NEGRC's ARC Administrative Grant and local dues.

Based upon recommendation of the Executive Director, **a motion to approve the technical assistance request for the month for inclusion in the FY2018 Program of Work, effective February 15, 2018, was made by Commissioner Pittard and seconded by Commissioner Pennamon. The motion carried unanimously.** Members were also advised that the following projects have been completed:

1. **CITY OF OXFORD** – Comprehensive Plan Update
2. **OGLETHORPE COUNTY** – Oglethorpe County Recreation Trails Program
3. **CITY OF ARCADE** – Park Master Plan
4. **CITY OF COMMERCE** – Rural Zone Designation

**Planning & Government Services:** The PGS Committee met prior to the Council meeting to discuss several items of interest. The draft of the Regional Plan Update is complete, and the comment period has ended. The Committee finds the Plan ready to submit to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for their review, and **a motion authorizing submission of the Plan to DCA for review was made by Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Mayor Linda Blechinger. The motion carried unanimously.** After review by DCA, the Council will consider the Plan's adoption at an upcoming meeting. In addition, the Regionally Important Resources (RIR) document recently adopted by the Council is ready for submission to DCA with the draft Regional Plan. The RIR requires a "transmitting resolution" by the Council. **A motion to adopt said resolution and submit to DCA was made by Mr. Lyon and seconded by Mr. Bill Palmer. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Since last month, Executive Director Jim Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck have facilitated retreats for the Cities of Madison and Winterville, and both were very productive. They will be carrying out a similar exercise on February 16<sup>th</sup> for the Elbert County Board of Commissioners, which is done on an annual basis. In addition, they will facilitate the annual planning retreat for the City of Jefferson on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the City of Elberton's session will be held on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Dove and Ms. Beck are in the midst of facilitating 10 retreats during this portion of the year.

Evaluations on each member of the NEGRC staff are completed on an annual basis, and the Commission is always applauded by State Auditors regarding this measure. The process has begun for this Fiscal Year, and should be completed by the end of March. It is a very useful exercise for both supervisors and staff.

A Statewide Transit Workshop will be held in Macon on Tuesday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. This workshop is invitation-only, and Executive Director Dove was requested to attend by State House of Representatives Transportation Chair Tanner of Dawsonville. It is an effort to gain input and ideas on a subject that is drawing considerable attention in the legislature and by officials on a statewide basis. Executive Director Dove will report to the Council on outcomes associated with that meeting.

The speaker at the Council meeting in March is Rick Jeffares, former State Senator from the 17<sup>th</sup> District which includes portions of Newton, Henry, and Rockdale counties. He resigned from the Senate in December and is now a candidate for Lt. Governor. Mr. Jeffares is a friend of Chairman Roseberry who invited him to speak at the meeting.

Council Member Lamar Houston recently had knee replacement surgery and was absent at the meeting. However, he and Executive Director Dove traveled to Macon on February 1<sup>st</sup> to attend the quarterly meeting of Policy Officials and Executive Directors of the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions. In regard to travel issues, it is felt by some Legislators that all Regional Commissions should be required to adhere to the State Travel Policy, and that legislation to that effect may be introduced. That is certainly not an issue for the NEGRC, as we adopted the State Travel Policy almost a decade ago. NEGRC is the only Regional Commission to adopt the Policy.

## **PLANNING & GOVERNMENT SERVICES (PGS) DIVISION UPDATE**

At this time, Planning & Government Services (PGS) Director Burke Walker gave a report on activities of the PGS Division. Comprehensive planning is a central responsibility of the Planning & Government Services Division (PGS). Staff is busy updating plans in various stages: some are in-progress, some have been completed, and some are getting ready to start. The Cities of Covington, Oxford, and Madison have been approved, Newton and Oconee Counties and the City of Pendergrass are in progress and nearing completion, the Cities of Auburn and Winterville and Jasper County plans are underway, and staff will begin Greene County's plan soon. The Division is devoting three planners and two support staff to plan development. Rural Zone Designation is a new program that was implemented last year by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to incentivize rural communities (downtowns) for business development. Communities of less than 15,000 are eligible. The program provides three kinds of credits including job tax credits; investment credit; and rehabilitation credit. The City of Commerce in our region received designation, and PGS staff assisted in the application's development. Economic Adjustment Assistance grant funds from a special disaster allocation are expected to be offered by Congress in the

coming weeks. If a government experienced damage or has identified a need as a result of the recent natural disasters, there may be funding available; and all NEGRC counties are eligible. The Census Bureau's annual Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) period has begun and will run until March 1<sup>st</sup>. This yearly process allows local jurisdictions to notify the Census Bureau of any annexations/boundary changes that occurred during the previous year.

### **REPORT ON ABM BUILDING SOLUTIONS**

At this time, Curtis Brown, Senior Account Executive with ABM Building Solutions, gave a report on ways his company can help local governments. Many local governments across the country face a multitude of challenges, including tight budgets and a heightened demand for services. These challenges often increase the need for exploring alternatives that can provide affordable and sustainable solutions. ABM understands these challenges and offers cities, towns, and municipalities solutions for nearly all facility needs. Mr. Brown's main focus was on AMB's Bundled Energy Solutions (BES) Program. This program enables governmental entities to complete critical infrastructure upgrades through a reallocation of current and future operating budgets, with no increase on taxpayer burden or decrease in services that are provided. ABM's team implemented this program in Newton County, and was able to fund a program that resulted in the County saving over \$700,000 a year. This money, in turn, was used in rebuilding the County's infrastructure. The solution to replace or upgrade as much of the County's aging infrastructure as possible, without incurring upfront costs, was achieved through ABM's energy performance program.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at the Athens Holiday Inn.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck  
Executive Assistant