

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL  
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN  
AUGUST 17, 2017  
NOON**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Blechinger, Linda  
Denson, Nancy  
Ferrelle, Dodd  
Houston, Lamar  
Lyon, Tommy  
Palmer, Bill  
Smith, Jeffery  
Rhodes, Lee  
Plott, Roy  
Shaw, Jim  
Workman, Stone  
Scarborough, John  
Padilla, Bob  
Ainslie, Andy  
Bentley, David  
Banes, Marcello  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Turner, Frank  
Daniell, John  
Harden, Amrey  
Pittard, Billy  
Berry, Rick  
Boggs, Ronnie  
Little, Kevin  
Chambers, Joyce  
Fordyce, Cary  
Ledford, Howard

**Members Absent:**

Graham, Pat  
Jennings, Tommy  
Guest, Larry  
Brock, Phil  
Crow, Tom  
Pennamon, Carl  
Dyer, David  
Blackmon, Jody  
Perriman, Fred  
Thompson, Greg  
O'Rourke, Tate  
Roberts, Roy

**Staff Present:**

Jim Dove, Executive Director  
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant  
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director  
Jim Moneyhun, Project Administrator  
Rima Sullivan, Youth Program Specialist  
Alicia Page, Comptroller

**Associate Members Present:**

Ouzts, Buddy  
Adams, Louise  
Seymour, Joel  
Crawford, Charlie

**Guests Present:**

Chuck Williams  
Nancy Bobbitt  
Steve Smith  
Matthew Pepper  
T.K. Adams  
Paul Chambers  
Christina Daniell  
George Chandler

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

Chairman Frank Turner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff, and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June meeting. **Such a motion was made by Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Commissioner Kevin Little. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Newton County:** Three Ring Studios held a Town Hall meeting recently with over 500 attendees. During this meeting, company President announced that he will offer scholarships for Newton County and Rockdale County students through Georgia State University. The Newton County School System will be participating in the new German Apprenticeship Program, which is the second system in Georgia, behind Coweta County, to have this program. A total of six students will begin this fall, and it is anticipated that this number will increase each year. U.S. Corrugated, a new manufacturing facility that makes boxes, will be hiring 175 employees. Covington Towne Center has selected a grading contractor for a 170 acre mixed use development. The Office of Economic Development won an award from the South Eastern Development Council (SEDC) for their Website. U.S. Congressman Jody Hice has partnered with Newton County and other regional counties to host a Job Fair on September 21<sup>st</sup>. It will be held at Georgia Piedmont Technical College.

**Oconee County:** Justin Kirouac was recently hired as the new County Administrator in Oconee County. The Tourism Product Development Team will be helping the County highlight certain areas to include in its marketing plans. The County will soon be working with DOT to develop a county-wide transportation plan. Commission Chairman John Daniell asked that everyone keep Mayor Charles Ivie and his family in their thoughts and prayers.

**Oglethorpe County:** Commissioner Pittard advised that the County's digest has increased by 7.1%; however, even though the digest has rebounded, there will be a millage increase for the first time in eight years. The County will have another T-SPLOST referendum on the ballot next year. Mr. Pittard expressed sympathy for the passing of former Sheriff Mike Smith. Mr. Smith served as Sheriff of Oglethorpe County from 2004 to 2016. He was a dedicated public servant that earned the respect and admiration of everyone who knew him. The County's application for a Solar Farm was turned down for the second time. The Wildwood Festival will be held on August 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> in Lexington, and a number of good bands will be performing.

**Walton County:** A Governor's Task Force suspended the Walton County Sheriff for 30 days as punishment for a violation in Florida. The millage rate was rolled back in the incorporated areas of the County. Chairman Kevin Little advised that Mr. Harry Knight recently passed away. He was a longtime Mayor of the City of Monroe, and served on the NEGRC Council for many years. Ribbon cutting for the new E-911 Center will be held on August 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **ELECTION OF PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES**

The Bylaws provide for private sector representation from each of the twelve counties in the region. Nominees are chosen by the leadership of those counties and

submitted to the Council for approval for a one year term. Nominees submitted were as follows:

Barrow	-	Tommy Jennings
Clarke	-	Lamar Houston
Elbert	-	Bill Palmer
Greene	-	Lee Rhodes
Jackson	-	Jim Shaw
Jasper	-	Dave Dyer
Madison	-	Bill Padilla
Morgan	-	David Bentley
Newton	-	Frank Turner
Oconee	-	Amrey Harden
Oglethorpe	-	Ronnie Boggs
Walton	-	Joyce Chambers

**A motion to accept these nominations was made by Commissioner Little and seconded by Commissioner Andy Ainslie. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Audit & Finance:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the financial statements for the one-month period ending July 31, 2017. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$7,303.71. Financial activity for the one-month period was approximately 8% of the FY2017 Budget projections overall. Michele Kelley, Assistant AAA Director, spoke to members regarding the approval of two purchase orders, one for Nursing Home Transitions Program (NHT) and one for Money Follows the Person (MFP). With each program, clients are allotted a maximum defined amount of funding for transitioning back into the community. These purchase orders will act as an umbrella Purchase Order (PO) as authorization for all clients transitioned within these programs to the extent that purchase amounts do not exceed the maximum individual benefit amounts. The PO for NHT will be in the amount of \$33,000, and the one for MFP will be in the amount of \$175,000. **A motion to accept this report as presented was made by Mr. Amrey Harden and seconded by Commissioner 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. GREENE COUNTY** – Assistance in developing an update to their Comprehensive Plan. No fees are required for the “Basic Plan”, and the fee for the required optional element will be quoted after further discussions with Greene County.
- 2. CITY OF WINTERVILLE** – Assistance in updating their Comprehensive Plan. A fee of \$7,500 is required for preparation of two additional planning elements.

- 3. CITY OF MONTICELLO** – Assistance in updating their Comprehensive Plan. A fee not to exceed \$4,000 is required for one additional plan element. The Plan update will be undertaken as a joint plan.

Based upon recommendation of the Executive Director, **a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY2018 Program of Work, effective August 17, 2017, was made by Commissioner Pittard and seconded by Mr. David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Planning and Government Services:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting to discuss several items of interest. Members reviewed the final draft of the Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS development represents as seven-month effort with input from a Committee appointed by each County Chairperson. The Committee finds the CEDS complete and recommends its adoption by resolution of the Council. **A motion to accept the recommendation of the PGS Committee and adopt the resolution was made by Commissioner Lyon and seconded by Mayor Linda Blechinger. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

There have been a couple of repairs undertaken at headquarters over the last month. A hot water tank burst in the Workforce Development building, causing some water damage. That project was covered by the NEGRC's insurance and has been completed. One of the panels which is part of the façade on the main building tumbled to the ground about a month ago. The panel is made of limestone and absorbs water over a period of time. The weight increased and the brackets holding the panel had also rusted and caused the panel to fall. This matter will hopefully be completed in the next week or so.

Executive Assistant Mott Beck and Executive Director Dove had the pleasure of facilitating a retreat for the Economic Development Council of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was very successful, and helped to determine a future direction for economic development efforts in the County. Council Member Jim Shaw is President of the Chamber of Commerce and has also been doing double duty as the Chief Economic Developer.

Executive Director Dove advised that three of the long-term members of the Council have stepped aside. Mr. Roy Gandy was a member of the Council since 1993 and was a highly regarded member of the Personnel Committee. Mr. Gandy is now in his late 80's and just felt it was time to retire from the Council. In addition, Mayor Ivie, who had planned to continue serving as Mayor of Watkinsville through the end of the year, announced he would be leaving office immediately for health reasons. He has served as Municipal Representative on the Council for the past 5 ½ years. Jesse Johnson, who served as Private Sector Representative from Oglethorpe County for the

past five years is leaving the Council to devote more time to his work. And, of course, he recently married which he has found to be very time consuming! Mr. Gandy, Mr. Ivie, and Mr. Johnson were strong supporters of the organization and regionalism in general, and will be missed.

It has been a long-standing practice of the organization to include non-voting members among the membership. These are, in some cases, former Chairs who wish to remain supportive of efforts; and in a couple of instances, persons that were members of the Board prior to changes in legislation and the transition that occurred in 2009. The following have expressed an interest in continuing as Associate Members:

Buddy Ouzts	-	Barrow County
Harold Horton	-	Athens-Clarke County
Joel Seymour	-	Elbert County
David Nunn	-	Morgan County
Louise Adams	-	Newton County
Flemmie Pitts	-	Newton County
Charles Crawford	-	Oglethorpe County

**A motion to accept these individuals as Associate Members was made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Commissioner Little. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM WRAP-UP**

At this time, Youth Program Specialist Rima Sullivan gave a wrap-up of the Summer Youth Program. This year's program ran for a five-week period from June 5<sup>th</sup> through July 8<sup>th</sup>. There were 99 participants that could work up to 30 hours per week, and their pay rate was \$7.25 per hour. Wages were paid by WIOA funds, and the students are covered under the Workforce Development Board's Worker's Comp Insurance Policy. Over 75% of the participants have never worked before, thus it was their first exposure to the workforce. The students have an opportunity to interview with worksite supervisors during their orientation session in each county. Worksites include non-profit agencies, local government, and some private sector businesses. There has been a greater emphasis on placing students in worksites that match up with their individual career interests. The Summer Work Program is monitored by The Workforce Development Youth Division and Interns from the UGA Masters of Social Work help with orientations, job placement, and monitoring of worksites and youth. There were no terminations this summer, nor any worker's compensation claims. Overall, the Program ran very smoothly and was a huge success.

### **DHR TRANSIT UPDATE**

The next item on the agenda was a report by Program Administrator Jim Moneyhun on DHR's Coordinated Transportation. For the past 17 years, the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) has contracted with the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission to coordinate transportation services in Region 5. The goal of the

coordinated transportation program is to provide quality and cost effective transportation to eligible consumers for vital services intended to enhance health, independence, and self-sufficiency. Coordinated Transportation serves DHS programs related to the Division of Aging Services, Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), and Child Support. The program also serves clients of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (which is responsible for all state-funded mental health, developmental disability and addictive disease programs) and the Georgia Department of Labor's Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. In Fiscal Year 2017, over 180,000 trips were provided in Northeast Georgia through our Coordinated Transportation contract. This program was funded by eight funding sources in 2017; however, many of our communities ran out of funding before the end of the year. We anticipate additional reductions in funding for FY18 which will result in reductions in service for our Counties. Some program funding, such as the New Freedom Funds (which were primarily used to transport clients to dialysis) have been eliminated altogether and trips associated with those clients have ceased. We do not yet know the extent of the cuts for FY18, as we are still waiting on funding allocation from a few of the funding sources. Last week, the NEGRC received the initial Coordinated Transportation contract for FY18 which obligated \$1,751,000 for this year. Unfortunately, at this time we do not have a definitive answer on the extent of budget cuts but anticipate receiving confirmation of additional funds in late August or early September. Besides monitoring the program and approving trips and funding requests, RC staff is also responsible for annual inspections of fleet vehicles and driver qualifications.

## **COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UPDATE AND SUMMARY**

Burke Walker, Director of the Planning and Government Services Division gave an update and summary of the CEDS document. The CEDS is essentially a guiding document for the NEGRC's Partnership Planning Grant with EDA. Since the last update, there's been greater emphasis by EDA placed on the CEDS and particularly its usability. In order to accomplish this, a new approach was used that sought expanded involvement. This was done through the CEDS Committee Chaired by Commissioner Lyon, NEGRC staff (especially Eva Kennedy), and many others. These participants enabled us to complete our CEDS on schedule and produce an attractive document. Its development started over eight months and concluded with over 350 public and private stakeholders. This level of involvement is vital to any good plan and provides an accurate representation of our region. The CEDS is a short document, (50+ pages) and includes useful region and county profiles. These demographic profiles are created from several sources of data and give a snapshot of our region and its counties. Action items included in the document range from strengthening regional public information & marketing to supporting local entrepreneurs, the formation of diverse partnerships for community development and to tackle local issues, and workforce development initiatives across all age groups. One new benefit of the CEDS is it can be used as the Economic Development component of your local comprehensive plan [required for Tier 1 Counties]. These plans, as you know, are required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to retain cities and counties Qualified Local

Government Status. NEGRC was required to develop the CEDS to remain eligible for EDA funds that support staff work and funding to communities in the region. The adopted CEDS will provide these benefits over the next five years. The adopted CEDS document and resolution will be submitted to EDA for approval. After approval, it will be available on the NEGRC website or copies may be distributed on request. Finally, staff will begin its implementation.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

At this time, Commissioner Little gave the Nominating Committee report. Members of the Committee in addition to Commissioner Little were Commissioner Pittard and Mr. Lamar Houston. Members met immediately following the Council meeting on May 18<sup>th</sup> to select a slate of officers. The vote was unanimous to recommend to the Council the following for a two-year term:

Chairman	-	Jerry Roseberry
Vice Chairman	-	Billy Pittard
Secretary	-	Bill Palmer

**A motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee and approve the aforementioned slate of officers for a two-year term was made by Commissioner Little and seconded by Mr. Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **TRANSITION OF OFFICERS**

At this time, Chairman Turner administered the Oath of Office to the new officers. Following the Oath, Chairman Turner expressed appreciation for being allowed to serve and thanked everyone for their dedication and service to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. He then turned the gavel over to Chairman Jerry Roseberry.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Roseberry thanked everyone for attending and expressed appreciation for allowing him to serve as Chairman of the Council. He advised that the next meeting will be held on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck  
Executive Assistant