

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
JANUARY 17, 2019
NOON**

MINUTES

Members Present:

Blechinger, Linda
Girtz, Kelly
Ferrelle, Dodd
Houston, Lamar
Vaughn, Lee
Palmer, Bill
Smith, Jeffery
Haynie, Doug
Shaw, Jim
Pennamon, Carl
Dyer, Dave
Scarborough, John
Padilla, Bob
Ainslie, Andy
Perriman, Fred
Bentley, David
Banes, Marcello
Roseberry, Jerry
Daniell, John
Shearon, Dave
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Berry, Rick
Boggs, Ronnie
Little, Kevin
Dally, Hal
Chambers, Joyce
Fordyce, Cary
Ledford, Howard

Members Absent:

Graham, Pat
Jennings, Tommy
Guest, Larry
Brock, Phil
Crow, Tom
Blackmon, Jody
Turner, Frank
O'Rourke, Tate
Roberts, Roy

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director
Carol Cofer, Workforce Development Director
Michele Kelley, Area Agency on Aging Assistant Director
Alicia Page, Comptroller

Associate Members Present:

Seymour, Joel

Guests Present:

Tommy Lyon
Gail Lyon
Andy Pippin
Don Jernigan
Preston Miller
Paul Chambers
Frank Foster

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 2018 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 the minutes of the November 2018 meeting. **Such a motion was made by Mr. David Bentley, seconded by Walton County Commission Chairman Kevin Little, and carried unanimously.**

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Barrow County: The local economy is strong, and sales tax and building permit activity are steadily increasing. The County has been issued a construction contract to begin the 32-acre Victor Lord Park expansion. A special election will be held March 19th to fill the seat vacated by Commissioner Wehunt who resigned in November due to health issues. The County and municipalities continue efforts to resolve SDS issues. GDOT continues work on Highway 316. Lisa Maloof has been hired as the Barrow County Economic Developer. Auburn Station is currently underway as a mixed-use development. The planning process for building Auburn's new Municipal Complex has begun; and, additionally, the City is working with an independent developer to create housing around the new municipal center. The renovation of the Auburn Center (the old Perry Rainey Institute's dormitory) is almost complete. This is a 1902 building that the City was able to save and now have for community use.

Clarke County: Athens-Clarke County has hired a new Police Chief, and will be announcing a new Economic Development Director soon. A number of the T-SPOST projects that were included in the referendum passed a year ago are now bearing fruit. At its next meeting, the Commission will be discussing ten of the bike-ped projects included in the T-SPLOST. Mayor Kelly Girtz indicated that Athens-Clarke County would be interested in partnering with neighboring communities in this endeavor. Discussions are ongoing among various parties regarding linkages in the judicial system which may result in costs savings.

Elbert County: Commission Chairman Lee Vaughn expressed appreciation to former Chairman Tommy Lyon for leaving the County in such good order, with a very sound financial position. The County just signed an IGA with the two municipalities to pursue the March 19 T-PLOST referendum.

Greene County: The County is evaluating and planning for the transition of the Recreation Department and Airport to be under the County's control. For the tenth year in a row, the Greene County Board of Commissioners Finance and Administration Office has received a rare, gold star from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for its 2016 Audit. Greene County Chairman Gary Usry and newly-elected Commissioner Dee Lindsey recently attended a meeting of the Firefly Trail Local Action Committee-Southern Initiative. The Liberty Connector is now open and is the last leg of the east-west

connectivity project identified in GDOT's transportation study for Greene County. Chairman Usry and Economic Development Director Sam Young attended the ManufactuREADY graduation, noting that there were 10 graduates. The Athens Tech program is a very beneficial program for unemployed adults.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: Members of the Audit & Finance Committee met prior to the Council meeting. Committee members reviewed the financial statements for the four-month period ending October 31, 2018. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$28,462.89. Financial activity for the four-month period was approximately 66% of the remaining FY2019 Budget projections overall. Since the Council did not meet in December, Committee members also reviewed the financial statements for the five-month period ending November 30, 2018. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$32,875.06. Financial activity for the five-month period was approximately 58% of the remaining FY2019 Budget projections overall. **A motion to accept the report as presented was made by Mr. Amrey Harden and seconded by Mayor Linda Blechinger. The motion carried unanimously.**

Program of Work: The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the following technical assistance requests for the month.

1. **CITY OF HOSCHTON:** Assistance in developing a 2019 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for wastewater improvements. The fee for this assistance is \$2,000.
2. **CITY OF PORTERDALE:** Assistance in administering a USDA grant and loan for infrastructure improvements. The fee for this assistance will not exceed 5% of the grant award or \$54,000.
3. **OCONEE COUNTY:** Assistance in developing a Safe Routes to School plan for the Malcom Bridge area. There is no fee for this initial project, and any fees for subsequent plans will be quoted at a later date.

Based upon recommendation of the Executive Director and the Committee, **a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY19 Program of Work, effective January 17, 2019, was made by Oglethorpe Chairman Billy Pittard and seconded by Mr. Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

Planning & Government Services: The Planning & Government Services Committee met prior to the Council meeting and discussed several items of interest. One of these was review of the PGS Division's requested projects in 2018 and their status. There were 21 total projects undertaken in 2018 with 10 completed and 11 still in progress. These projects covered both program areas of community & economic development and planning. They also provided direct

assistance to 21 communities in Northeast Georgia. No action was required by the Council.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove introduced two new members to the Council. Athens-Clarke County Mayor Kelly Girtz was seated along with Elbert County Commission Chairman Lee Vaughn. Both assumed their current office earlier in the month. Mayor Girtz previously served on the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County representing District 9 and succeeded Nancy Denson, who served the maximum two terms as provided for in the local Charter. Chairman Vaughn previously served one term on the Elbert County Board of Commissioners, and succeeded Tommy Lyon who retired from public service.

The Commission decided last year to move forward with updating the website, especially so it would be more receptive to users with mobile devices. The Commission contracted with J House to work on the design under the direction of Susan Boatwright who has contracted with us on workforce development and other issues. J House has met with key staff over a period of time to gain input. Executive Assistant Mott Beck and Mr. Dove met with Ms. Boatwright recently, and it seems that everything is on track, and slated to be completed by May.

Mr. Dove and Ms. Beck have been contacted by several local governments to facilitate retreats and planning sessions. Those include Madison, Walton County, Jefferson, Elbert County, and Braselton. The Council will be getting reports on successes resulting from those sessions as they occur.

The Commission has been closely monitoring matters related to the federal government partial shutdown. The State Division of Aging Services indicated it has enough funding to continue efforts at least through the end of January. One effect it has on the Commission is drawdowns from agencies such as the Economic Development Administration. It's not that they do not have funds, but there is a separate entity that is utilized to drawdown funds. However, those staff have been furloughed.

STAFF REPORTS

Planning & Government Services: As reported by PGS Division Director Burke Walker, that unit includes eight staff. Considerable staff time in 2018 was devoted to completion of local comprehensive plans. "Basic plans" are undertaken for local governments with no fees attached. As we approach the 2020 Census, staff is emphasizing that local governments prioritize the annual Boundary and Annexation Survey to ensure the Census Bureau has up-to-date information. Staff is heavily involved in the Map-21 Program in coordination with GDOT to map and update road and traffic data. We are working hard in relation to bicycle and pedestrian planning – Safe Routes to School, Complete Streets, Bike Friendly Driver Training, and trails systems planning. We are quite involved

with grants preparation and administration, especially those associated with the Appalachian Regional Commission and Economic Development Administration. Specialized workshops and training are offered, and we facilitate efforts of the Northeast Georgia Regional Solid Waste Management Authority and the Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia. A “hot topic” for 2019 is Broadband and the efforts to eliminate pockets of underserved areas.

Division of Aging: The Aging Division, known as the Area Agency on Aging, has been a part of our organization since 1974. Michele Kelley, Division Assistant Director, reported that its responsibilities include developing an Annual Area Plan; planning, program development, coordination, and advocacy; developing a comprehensive coordinated service delivery system; and assuring the availability of an adequate supply of high level services. Home delivered meals and transportation are among our priority services. This Division is home to Aging and Disability Resource Connection, which helps individuals remain in their homes and communities. We also help provide Home and Community Based Services that support and assist individuals aged 60 and over by promoting good health, self-sufficiency, and independence. We also provide Medicaid Waiver Services by screening for programs that assist individuals who are elderly and/or functionally impaired. Anyone searching for services may start by calling (706) 583-2546.

Workforce Development: At this time, Workforce Development Director Carol Cofer provided the Council with an overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) activities for Program Year 2017 (services provided to clients July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018). She provided the Council with the Year in Review document with an overview of funds spent, number served by county, as well as performance measures that were met and exceeded. She pointed out that Council Members Ronnie Boggs and Howard Ledford also serve on the Workforce Development Board, and noted that Kevin Little serves as the current Chief Local Elected Official for the region on behalf of the Local Elected Officials Board. Ms. Cofer gave an overview of the Workforce Development Division staff. She provided an overview of the short-term ManufactuREADY program providing short-term non-credit training through the Economic Development Divisions at two of the area’s technical colleges. She indicated that the welding and industrial mechanics occupational skills training trailers were being prepared for service, with a tentative date of March 2019. Further information will follow. She also reminded the Council that the Mayors, Commission Chairs and other persons in the region will be receiving a summer youth worksite request packet in April.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Roseberry asked for a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel. **The motion was made by Chairman Pittard and seconded by Mr. Bill Palmer. The motion carried unanimously.**

A motion to move back into Open Session was made by Chairman Pittard and seconded by Mr. Palmer. The motion carried unanimously.

No action was taken as a result of Executive Session.

The next meeting will be held on February 21st.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant