



Date: August 15, 2019

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Athens Holiday Inn

Minutes

Members Present:

Ainslie, Andy
Banes, Marcello
Bentley, David
Blechinger, Linda
Boggs, Ronnie
Dally, Hal
Daniell, John
Ferrelle, Dodd
Harden, Amrey
Haynie, Doug
Horton, Harold
Houston, Lamar
Ledford, Howard
Padilla, Bob
Palmer, Bill
Pittard, Billy
Roseberry, Jerry
Seymour, Joel
Turner, Frank

Members Absent:

Adams, Louise
Berry, Rick
Blackmon, Jody
Brock, Phil
Chambers, Joyce
Crawford, Charlie
Crow, Tom
Dyer, David
Fordyce, Cary
Girtz, Kelly
Graham, Pat
Guest, Larry
Little, Kevin
O'Rourke, Tate
Pennamon, Carl
Perriman, Fred
Pitts, Flemie
Roberts, Roy
Scarborough, John
Shaw, Jim
Shearon, Dave
Smith, Jeffrey
Vaughn, Lee

Guests Present:

Eavenson, Beth
Jernigan, Don
Seaver, Andrew
Thompson, Linda
Williams, Carol

Staff Present:

Ball, Julie, Executive Assistant
Kennedy, Eva, Planner
Lewis, Toshia, Quality Assurance Specialist
Page, Alicia, Comptroller
Walker, Burke, Executive Director

Call to Order and Approval of June Meeting Minutes

Chairman Pittard called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff and asked them to rise and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Pittard said the June 20, 2019 minutes were distributed prior to today's meeting. Unless there were corrections or changes, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made by Mayor Linda Blechinger and seconded by Dr. Howard Ledford. The motion carried unanimously.



Items of Local Interest

Newton County - Chairman Marcello Banes

The Covington Airport is back open after a runway expansion of 6,000 feet in length and 100 feet in width. It is now rated a Class C airport. A Nisshinbo Automotive expansion is on the way with a \$100 million investment that will create 100 jobs. They received \$200,000 in state grants. A spur-line connection for U.S. Corrugated to CSX was completed. The \$1.4 million line was supported from a \$750,000 grant from DCA. The project will be completed by the end of the year. Stanton Springs began expansion for Shire Parkway with full utilities that will open up an additional 600 acres and will be completed by the end of the year. Georgia PTC has partnered with Rockwell Automation to bring the Rockwell Academy classes to the Newton County Campus. Newton County is the only county in the State of Georgia offering this program. The Connect Newton program recently completed its second year. The Job Fair will be held on October 4, 2019. This year is the third year and it has become a regional job fair with partners throughout Rockdale, Walton, Morgan, and Greene Counties. Newton County has been working with the Governor's office to stop a gas leak.

Oconee County – Chairman John Daniell

The courthouse expansion is moving along really well. A building site has been picked out for the new government complex. The county's first round-about is under construction. Phase 2 of Mars Hill Road has been taken off the shelf by DOT. Economic Development has partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to work on a strategic plan. They should have a strategy put together by the end of the year to figure out how to diversify the tax base.

Oglethorpe County – Chairman Billy Pittard

Oglethorpe was designated as the state's first "Broadband Ready" community. A Burger King is coming in which is the first legitimate franchise restaurant in Oglethorpe County. A 30-megawatt solar project on 380 acres at the Clarke/Oglethorpe county line was just approved. There's a new Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) doctor facility being built in Lexington. An Ace Hardware is coming to Crawford. An RFQ is being issued for a fixed-base wireless company that will provide coverage to 90% of the county with broadband at the cost of about \$3.5 million. The project is going to be done in phases starting with \$350,000 that will generate revenue for reinvestment in the community. The county completed tax evaluations and appraisals went up 13%. Millage rates have been kept flat and the rates during the economy's downturn resulted in a reduction of 14% so the 13% increase is just getting back up to the pre-downturn rates.



Walton County – Mayor Hal Dally

Mayor Dally said Chairman Little could not attend today's meeting and asked him to provide Walton County's report in his absence. There is a lot of synergy going on with Newton County and Fulton County Parks. Walton County and the cities have completed SDS negotiations without any attorneys. Walton is also working with all the cities on a transportation plan for the county. The plan was completed and given to DOT. They liked the process and the projects and they will continue to meet regularly. They frontloaded transportation projects off the SPLOST list to show their people what they can do with transportation. Social Circle is redoing its stoplights. Loganville is getting a bypass. The City and County are working well together and held their millage rates where they were. Loganville's went up because they are in a high-growth area.

Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Amrey Harden

Members of the Audit & Finance Committee met before the Council meeting and members reviewed the following:

May 2019 Financials

Committee members reviewed the financial statements for the eleven-month period ending May 31, 2019. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$39,497.98. Financial activity for the eleven-month period should be at approximately 8% of our remaining FY2019 budget projections overall.

June 2019 Financials

Committee members reviewed the financial statements for the twelve-month period ending June 30, 2019. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$180,340.91. These are Pre-Audit numbers and are subject to change during our fiscal, year-end audit. Financial activity for the twelve-month period should be at approximately zero percent of our remaining FY2019 Budget projections overall.

Two purchase orders were considered: 1) for Nursing Home Transitions Program (NHT); and 2) 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 for authorization for all clients transitioned within these programs. The funding amounts will not exceed the maximum individual-benefit amounts. The purchase order for NHT will be in the amount of \$51,000 and the purchase order for MFP will be for the amount of \$437,325.

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission previously adopted the Georgia Municipal Employees Benefit System ("GMEBS") Defined benefit Retirement Plan, which comprises



the Master Plan Document, Adoption Agreement and General Addendum. GMEBS recently restated the Master Plan and received a favorable determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service. Due to this favorable determination and to ensure continued tax-favored treatment for GMEBS member plans, the IRS requires that all GMEBS member employers adopt the restated Master Plan Documents.

The resolution is 39 pages long and can be reviewed by anyone after the meeting.

A motion was made to adopt the plan documents by Frank Turner and seconded by Chairman Marcello Banes. The motion carried unanimously.

Program of Work – Mayor Dodd Ferrelle

Before giving his report, Mayor Ferrelle asked if it suits Chairman Pittard and Executive Director Walker, he'd like to provide an announcement. Mayor Ferrelle announced that the Fox Theatre Institute will host its annual Revival Concert on September 13, 2019 at the Fox Theatre in Atlanta. Several prominent bands including Drive-By Truckers, Drivin N Cryin and his own band, Dodd and the Councilmen, will be performing. The City of Winterville received two grants for \$100,000 from the Fox Theatre Institute. Their annual fundraiser supports the grant program; benefitting all communities. He asked members to please share this information and consider attending this event next month.

Mayor Ferrelle said members of the Program-of-Work Committee met before the today's Council meeting and reviewed the following technical-assistance requests for the month:

- The City of Hull requested assistance in developing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for procuring an architectural firm that will design and develop a construction budget for a tornado 'safe room' at Hull's City Hall. There is no fee for this assistance as its costs are supported through Appalachian Regional Commission funding (ARC) and local dues.
- A second request from The City of Hull requests assistance in preparing a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan pre-application. This loan would help to fund the tornado 'safe room' at Hull's City Hall as previously mentioned. There is no fee for this assistance as its costs are supported through Appalachian Regional Commission funding (ARC) and local dues.
- The City of Jefferson requests assistance in developing a grant application to the Fox Theatre Institute (FTI) to help fund the development of a preservation plan and/or historic structure report for the historic Roosevelt Theater in Jefferson. There is no fee for this assistance as its costs are supported through Appalachian Regional Commission funding (ARC) and local dues.



- Madison County requests assistance in developing an Appalachian Regional Commission grant application (and pre-application) for the construction of the Madison County Agricultural Center's preliminary-designed buildings and related structures. There is no fee for this assistance as its costs are supported through Appalachian Regional Commission funding (ARC) and local dues.

Based on a recommendation by the Executive Director and the Committee's review, the Committee recommends approving these requests for inclusion in the FY2020 program-of-work effective August 15, 2019. A motion was made by Mayor Dodd Ferrelle and seconded by David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.

Planning & Government Services – Commissioner Andy Ainslie

The Planning & Government Services Committee met and discussed economic development and other news from around the region this morning.

One item of interest is the new Federal Opportunity Zone Development Opportunity Map, created and maintained by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. This tool is intended to help promote development proposals within Federal OZs to potential investors. Additional information about this map and how to submit proposals can be found on DCA's website or through the Regional Commission's PGS news page.

The PGS Committee has one item that requires Council action today: DCA recently approved the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan Implementation Program Annual Report. The PGS Committee recommends the adoption of the Annual Report by the Council today. I can read the resolution, if necessary.

A motion was made by Commissioner Andy Ainslie and seconded by Mayor Hal Dally. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director's Report – Burke Walker

Executive Director Walker thanked the Chairman and said he appreciated the Council's confidence that's afforded him the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director. It's been a busy six weeks since assuming his new role and during the transition. We've made good progress in not only moving offices and making efficiencies internally but also filling several vacancies on staff. Matthew Mentor is our new Administrative Support Specialist, and John McBrayer is the GIS Specialist with responsibilities related to GIS mapping, Map-21, and Census. In June, July, and August, he held Division directors' meetings which proved productive and informative. These will continue each month as a way to coordinate internally and between our programmatic divisions. He sees our organization continuing to excel in its programs, services, and assistance as it has in the past. We have a strong track record and reputation and every effort will be made to continue at this level of performance while positioning our organization for the future. A primary objective



within the organization is to look at internal efficiencies and cost-savings measures to improve our operations. Executive Director Walker said in substitute of a staff report, a member from a program division would attend the Council meetings. He then introduced Toshia Lewis, NEGRC Quality Assurance Specialist, asked her to stand, and invited members to speak with her regarding the NEGRC Aging Services after today's meeting.

Executive Director Walker said he'd had the opportunity to get out and meet with several of our Council members and Officers and looked forward to meeting with others in the upcoming months. He met with Chairman Pittard several times to coordinate in meeting planning and performing various administrative tasks. He greatly appreciates the Chairman's leadership and time as Council Chairman over the next two years. Also, a note of thanks to Mayor Roseberry, former Council Chairman, for his service as a mayoral appointee and as someone whom never failed to promote the Regional Commission.

Executive Director Walker serves as the "Contract Administrator" for the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority that serves Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Jackson and Oconee Counties. Julie Ball also provides administrative support for the Authority's many functions and daily operations at the Bear Creek Reservoir. Walker and Ball's first meeting of the Authority membership was held at the end of last month. Last week too, Chairperson Graham, whom serves as the Authority's Chairperson, toured the Bear Creek Reservoir along with Authority member Amrey Harden. Brad Lanning of Jacobs Engineering whom operates the Reservoir and treatment facility, literally showed every feature, building and operating equipment. It was a good opportunity to see not only how this critical facility functions but appreciate its impact in the region that started as an idea in the early 1990s.

Earlier this month, Executive Director Walker attended the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's (GARC) meeting in Macon with the other Executive Directors. The meeting was well attended and part of our discussion included the upcoming annual conference scheduled for November 6-8, 2019 at St. Simons Island. The agenda was discussed with prospective speakers from various state agencies and governmental entities. This group, and their respective Council policy members, will meet again on Wednesday, November 6th at 4pm at the annual conference to include Lamar Houston, Vice Chair of GARC whom serves as our Commission's GARC Policy Committee member. Lisa Cribb, President of GARC also assigned committees and placed Executive Director Walker on the Workforce and Community and Economic Development Committees. The GARC's public-relations consultant, Terry Matthews and Scott Maxwell, provided information on several legislative items including the upcoming meeting of the House Rural Development Council that will be held next week in Jasper, Georgia on August 20-21, 2019. This Committee, chaired by Representatives Rick Jasperse (District 11) and Sam Watson (District 172), is identifying issues affecting rural Georgia with the upcoming meeting focusing on education. Executive Director Walker said he will continue to report back on any updates regarding this Committee's activities as they meet four other times across the state from September 10 through December 18, 2019. The GARC meeting included a presentation from Kyle



Hood of DCA whom reported this year's CDBG applications (statewide competition) are awaiting the Governor's review and final approval; an announcement is expected very soon. Executive Director Walker was pleased to report there were three CDBG applications submitted from the Northeast Georgia region and all three prepared by NEGRC staff.

Each year, as our bylaws require, the Council appoints/reappoints its Private Sector members that serve a one-year term during the state-fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Appointments for this year were requested last month and those individuals recommended by each county to serve on the Council are as follows:

Barrow: Bill Ritter
Clarke: Lamar Houston
Elbert: Bill Palmer
Greene: Terry Lawler
Jasper: David Dyer
Jackson: Jim Shaw
Madison: Bob Padilla
Morgan: Dave Bentley
Newton: Frank Turner
Oconee: Amrey Harden
Oglethorpe: Ronnie Boggs
Walton: Joyce Chambers

Executive Director Walker said if it meets Chairman Pittard's approval, it would be appropriate to entertain a motion to seat these named individuals to serve a one-year term effective today, August 15, 2019. A motion was made by Mayor Linda Blechinger and seconded by Mayor Hal Dally. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director Walker noted the Council roster will be updated with these private-sector members and distributed with our next meeting announcement.



Presentation

Chairman Pittard provided an introduction of Linda Thompson, Executive Director of the Georgia Commission on Service and Volunteerism's (GCSV) AmeriCorps Program. Following the introduction, Ms. Thompson provided a presentation and presented visual slides of the program, its opportunities, and benefits to communities to Northeast Georgia and the state.

Other Business

Chairman Pittard reminded members that the next Council meeting will be held on September 19, 2019 and encouraged all members to attend.

Adjournment

With there being no further business to come before the Council, Chairman Pittard adjourned the meeting at 1:23 p.m.

Julie Ball, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

09.19.19

Date Approved