
Date: October 17, 2019

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Athens Holiday Inn

Minutes

Members Present:

Adams, Louise
Ainslie, Andy
Bentley, David
Berry, Rick
Boggs, Ronnie
Chambers, Joyce
Dally, Hal
Daniell, John
Harden, Amrey
Haynie, Doug
Ferrelle, Dodd
Dyer, David
Horton, Harold
Fordyce, Cary
Houston, Lamar
Lawler, Terry
Ledford, Howard
Little, Kevin
Padilla, Bob
Palmer, Bill
Pennamon, Carl
Perriman, Fred
Pittard, Billy
Ritter, Bill
Roseberry, Jerry
Scarborough, John
Seymour, Joel
Shaw, Jim
Smith, Jeffrey
Turner, Frank
Usrey, Gary
Vaughn, Lee

Members Absent:

Banes, Marcello
Blackmon, Jody
Blechinger, Linda
Brock, Phil
Crawford, Charlie
Crow, Tom
Girtz, Kelly
Graham, Pat
Guest, Larry
O'Rourke, Tate
Pitts, Flemmie
Roberts, Roy
Shearon, Dave

Guests Present:

Blaize, Haydn
Chambers, Paul
Hall, Serra
Hughes, Bob
Krolikowski, Jack
Shoun, Brian
Young, Tim

Staff Present:

Ball, Julie
Kennedy, Eva
Primer, Sophia
Rayburn-Cofer, Carol
Vogt, Megan
Walker, Burke



Call to Order and Approval of September Meeting Minutes

Vice Chairman Palmer called the meeting to order at 12:34 p.m. He asked the Council to rise and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then welcomed members, guests, and staff and asked visitors to introduce themselves.

Vice Chairman Palmer said the September 19, 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 Amrey Harden and seconded by Mayor Rick Berry. The motion carried unanimously.

Items of Local Interest

Jackson County – Jim Shaw

Chairman Tom Crow could not attend today's meeting. Jim Shaw provided Jackson County's report in his absence.

Jackson County The Agricultural Center is under construction and should be finished by February. The Water and Sewer Authority has a 500,000 GPD expansion underway. A kickoff meeting for the Comprehensive Plan 2050 was held in September and other meetings will follow. Takeuchi broke ground recently on a new expansion of its U.S. headquarters. They are building a training facility.

Commerce. John Rooker Company has purchased 600 acres along I-85 and plans an industrial park. The SK Battery America plant is going vertical and will begin hiring soon, mostly engineers. 1818 Properties is redeveloping an old mill building downtown for a brewery, commercial space, and 19 loft apartments.

Jefferson is considering an amphitheater, as well as parking and sidewalk improvements to accommodate increased auto and foot-traffic in its downtown area.

Braselton:

Will soon hear three multi-family housing permit requests in 3 different counties.

Jasper County – David Dyer

David Dyer provided Jasper County's report for Chairman Carl Pennamon.

They received \$750,000 to finish servicing the debt on their new health department along with new renovations. In the last 2-3 years, Jasper County has received over a million dollars through various Community Development Block Grants. Mr. Dyer gave a special thanks to Mike Beatty. They are looking forward to working with Eva Kennedy of the NEGRC on the Urban Redevelopment Plan. They have a new pallet plant starting construction on December 1, 2019. The County Manager and Water Commissioners have



initiated a program and just completed research of Goolsby Road and saved about \$126,000. They have a new Downtown Development Authority that are doing a fantastic job. He thanked DCA for including Monticello as one of the first small communities in the rural opportunity zone. They are continuing meetings with Deanna Perry about Broadband. They hope they have a plan developed soon for fiber-based broadband throughout the downtown area and then reach out into the rural areas as well. Monticello has a brand new Mennonite restaurant on the square: Five Loaves next to the Vanilla Bean.

Madison County – Chairman John Scarborough

They've been busy wrapping up their 2020 budget (calendar year) as well as setting mileage for the tax season. It didn't roll back this year, however, it's the first year since he's been in office that they've been able to make an appreciable effort towards getting their fund balance back where it needs to be. One of the most important ventures he may deal with during his first year of duty is trying to get a SPLOST referendum passed there in November. With its passage, his county will be set on much firmer footing while they turn their focus toward economic development.

After two years of negotiating and subsequent construction, Georgia Renewable Power is online and operating at near full capacity. They are selling them a lot of water.

They are nearly set to break ground for Madison County's own Agriculture Center with the help of the Regional Commission, DCA, and ARC. They have some grants and determined effort. As one of the leading counties with respect to farm gate, it should be natural that Madison County would have an Ag Center.

After nearly a year now, Madison County has finally made its case with the State Property Commission and found favor in an appropriation permitting a new, state-of-the-art DFACS facility. They look forward to the addition of this nearly \$5 million facility as it will move us out of a tired, but proven 100-year facility.

Everyone complains about taxes. Many without children in the school system are always looking for relief from what they deem to be unfair to them. Like most counties, Madison gave 60 cents on the dollar to school systems. They bragged a couple of years ago when their graduation rate topped 90%--and rightly so. This past year, in Madison County, their High School graduation rate was just shy of 95%. That's really positive and Chairman Scarborough said he would conclude on that note.



Morgan County – Commissioner Andy Ainslie

Morgan County and the City of Madison will be doing a retreat tomorrow with Bob Hughes on Economic Development as they start making plans and look at what's going on in Morgan County.

He had a chance to go down and see a demonstration on the new voting machines. He reported that it went well. He's looking forward to the whole county getting involved in that real soon.

Morgan County has just entered into an Energy Performance Contract with Schneider Electric. They are looking at a number of things from the courthouse, the public safety complex, and the recreational facilities. They will be saving, over the next 20 years, a few million dollars just in energy savings. Schneider Electric is the company they chose.

They passed a TSPPOST last spring. They are pleased that the revenue is higher than what they had anticipated. They have contract with a company to come in and evaluate all their roads before they begin any of their work. They should start early spring with paving using some of their TSPLOST funding.

Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Amrey Harden

Members of the Audit & Finance Committee met before the Council meeting and members reviewed the financial statement for the 2-month period ending August 31, 2019 and copies are on everyone's table. They are pleased that revenues exceeded expenditures by over \$12,000.

Mr. Harden introduced Clay Pilgrim and Sam Latimore with Rushton and Company who reviewed the final FY19 Financial Audit for the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission with the committee. Mr. Pilgrim came forward to give the report of the Annual Audit for Fiscal Year 2019 to the Council.

A motion was made by Amrey Harden that the NEGRC Council accept the audit report and the final FY19 Financial Audit Report of the NEGRC. The motion was seconded by Cary Fordyce. The motion carried unanimously.



Program of Work – Mayor Dodd Ferrelle

Mayor Ferrelle asked for a minute to remember a long standing citizen of Winterville, Miss Leita Pittard Cobb that passed away from cancer.

The Program-of-Work Committee met earlier today and reviewed seven (7) technical-assistance requests for the month. These requests for the Regional Commission's staff assistance include the following:

- The Town of Buckhead requested assistance in developing a 2020 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. The application will seek CDBG funding for water-infrastructure improvements. The fee for this assistance is \$2,000.
- The Firefly Trail, Inc. requests assistance with strategic planning and facilitation that includes twice-annual review and three-year update of their existing strategic plan and participation in Board of Directors' meetings and providing meeting space. The fee for this assistance will not exceed \$4,000.
- Madison County requested assistance in grant administration for a One Georgia grant, awarded for the development of the Madison County Agricultural Education Center. The fee for this assistance will not exceed 5% of the grant's award.
- Oconee County requested assistance in developing a 2020 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. The application is a re-application and will seek CDBG funding for building expansion to the existing Senior Center. The fee for this assistance is \$1,500.
- The City of Oxford requested assistance in developing a 2020 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. The application will seek CDBG funding for water-infrastructure improvements within a residential neighborhood. The fee for this assistance is \$2,000.
- Jasper County requests assistance in updating their Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan in coordination with Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The fee for this assistance will-not-exceed \$16,000.
- The City of Winder requested assistance in developing a grant pre-application to the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program to construct a multi-use trail from City property to Ft. Yargo State Park. The fee for this assistance is \$1,000.

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 October 17, 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 discussed news from around the Region this morning, including the following:

The PGS Division has drafted an amendment to the Northeast Georgia Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan or "RHST Plan Phase 2." Phase 2 is intended to add additional detail to the framework for region-wide rural transit planning that is laid out in the current RHST Plan. Phase 2 also organizes short and long-term goals into an action plan. The draft amendment is available for review on the PGS Division's News page and will be considered for recommendation for Council adoption by the PGS Committee at our November meeting. No action by the Council was required today.

Executive Director's Report – Burke Walker

GARC Annual Meeting

Final preparations are being made for the 21st Annual Conference of the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions on November 6-8. The conference is held at the King & Prince on St. Simons Islands and attended by Regional Commission Councilmembers, policy members, and staff. This year's agenda looks to have many informative speakers with Commissioner Nunn of DCA, Commissioner Crittenden of DHS, and numerous breakout sessions on Workforce, Finance, GIS, and Planning. On Wednesday afternoon at the conference, Executive Director Walker will attend a meeting of the GARC Board of Directors along with Lamar Houston whom serves as this Council's GARC Policy member. Also our Council will be well represented with Chairman Pittard, Kevin Little, John Daniell, and Dodd Ferrelle.

USDA-RD Prosperity Summit

Several weeks ago Executive Director Walker was contacted by Mike Beatty, whom many of you know and recall as the former Georgia legislator, DCA Commissioner and now Director of the Office of Partnership and Public Engagement at USDA in Washington, DC under, former Georgia Governor and now Secretary of Agriculture Purdue. Mike is involved in developing "Centers of Community Prosperity" on a national level and wanted to host a "Community Prosperity Summit" in our region in Elberton. Plans are set to hold this multi-regional Summit on November 18th from 9am-4pm at the Athens Technical College's Elberton Campus. USDA is giving priority to 6 of northeast Georgia's rural communities including Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Madison and Oglethorpe Counties. Executive Director Walker met with Chairman Vaughn last week, as host county, about the Summit and been in contact with the other respective chairs about the meeting. This is a new and good opportunity for any groups, organizations and community leaders to engage with USDA to help communities "foster hope and opportunity, wealth creation and asset building." From Executive Director Walker's meeting with Mike, USDA's goal is to have 20 communities represented at the conference with various federal



representatives on hand to engage with community representatives. There is an electronic invite available for registration that's posted on our website.

Complete Counts Meeting

Everyone has by now heard a good bit about the Decennial Census previously with LUCA and, most recently, "Complete Count Committees." Last week, Eva's staff hosted a regional meeting that was very well attended and included presentations by U.S. Census representative, NEGRC staff and Rusty Haygood, Deputy Commission of DCA. A strong and accurate count for northeast Georgia is very important for our region for legislative representation, federal funding, and data and planning purposes. Georgia has taken a very proactive approach by joining the U.S. Census, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and the Regional Commission to help communities prepare and complete the census as we near the April 2020 completion. Please contact our office if we can provide any assistance.

2019 House Rural Development Council Meeting

As Executive Director Walker previously mentioned, the House Rural Development Council is conducting meetings in five locations across Georgia. The fourth meeting is scheduled for November 12, 13, and 14 in Eatonton. While an agenda is not yet available, Executive Director Walker understands health care will be the topic under consideration for the Eatonton meeting. It's also the closest meeting to our region for those interested.

Jackson Leadership

Last week Executive Director Walker was invited to speak to the Jackson County Chamber's Leadership Jackson Growth Day. It was a good opportunity to meet the next generation of leaders and provide information about the Regional Commission and regional planning.

Oxford Strategic Planning/SWOT Analysis

Also last week, Mayor Roseberry asked Executive Director Walker to help facilitate a portion of the City's retreat and to provide a SWOT analysis and review and discussion of the City's work program. They met at the Center in Covington and he included John Devine of Eva's staff whom, for those of you who have worked with John, brings an inviting spirit to these types of planning sessions.

It was a good and productive afternoon and they enjoyed the opportunity to assist and support the City and its Mayor and Councilmembers.

Presentation

Chairman Pittard provided an introduction of Haydn Blaize who manages the Floodplain Unit at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Following the introduction, Mr. Blaize provided a presentation and presented visual slides of Georgia's floodplain management in our region and the state.



Other Business

Chairman Pittard reported that an appreciation letter to Senator Isakson was drafted, reviewed and will be signed by the Executive Director and Council Officers at today's meeting.

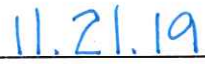
Chairman Pittard reminded members that the next Council meeting would be held on November 21, 2019, and pointed out it will be the last meeting of the year.

Adjournment

With there being no further business to come before the Council, Chairman Pittard adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.



Julie Ball, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission



Date Approved