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Date: February 20, 2020

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Athens Holiday Inn

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## Minutes

### **Members Present:**

Andy Ainslie  
Marcello Banes  
David Bentley  
Ronnie Boggs  
Tom Crow  
David Dyer  
Dodd Ferrelle  
Kelly Girtz  
Pat Graham  
Amrey Harden  
Doug Haynie  
Bruce Henry  
Steve Horton  
John Howard  
Janet Jones  
Terry Lawler  
Howard Ledford  
Kevin Little  
Bill Palmer  
Fred Perriman  
Billy Pittard  
Bill Ritter  
Joel Seymour

### **Members Absent:**

Louise Adams  
Rick Berry  
Jody Blackmon  
Linda Blechinger  
Phil Brock  
Joyce Chambers  
Charlie Crawford  
John Daniell  
Cary Fordyce  
Larry Guest  
Gail Harrell  
Harold Horton  
Tate O'Rourke  
Bob Padilla  
Flemie Pitts  
Roy Roberts  
John Scarborough  
Jim Shaw  
Jeffrey Smith  
Frank Turner  
Lee Vaughn

### **Guests Present:**

Ron Bridgeman  
Paul Chambers  
Bob Hughes  
Don Jernigan  
Nathan Moore  
Carl Pennamon  
Andy Pippin  
Andrew Seaver  
Lee Shearer  
Cheryl Smith  
Kyle Tschepikow  
Davis Warnell  
Carol Williams

### **Employees Present**

Julie Ball  
Traveria Harper  
Eva Kennedy  
Alicia Page  
Burke Walker

### **Call to Order and Approval of January Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Pittard called the meeting to order at 12:30 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.



Chairman Pittard said the January 16, 2020 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 Chairman Kevin Little and seconded by David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.

## **Items of Local Interest**

### **Jasper – Chairman Bruce Henry**

Qualifying for County elections is March 2 through March 6. Jasper County will have the followings elections: 3 Board of Commissioners' seats, 2 Board of Education seats, Clerk of Courts, Tax Commissioner, Magistrate Judge, Probate Judge, Sheriff, Surveyor, and Coroner. They received their new voting machines. They had to make about \$20,000 in Electrical and Security upgrades. They will be receiving around \$13,000 in reimbursements from the Help America Vote Act Grant (HAVA).

They've had 13 new building permits in January and 11 in February. They have a new gated community with 114 sites. They hope to break ground on their 4800 Sq. Ft Public Works Shop by the end of Spring.

They had the Traveling Smithsonian (Crossroads Change in Rural America) in Monticello from Dec 7th thru Jan 11<sup>th</sup>. They had about 1800 visitors come by and almost 50% were from outside of the county. There was also a FaceBook Live presentation that had over 1000 views. They also had 124 hours of volunteer time.

Chairman Henry invited everyone to visit Recon Jasper, a series of trails for hiking, horseback riding, kayaking and swimming holes. You can get more information at reconjasper.com. Their Chamber of Commerce has a self-guided walking tour of historical sites. It is an app for your phone.

### **Morgan County – Commissioner Andie Ainslie**

#### **City of Madison**

They are focusing on a gateway coming in off of Highway 83 into the city. They have \$2 million for stormwater infrastructure. They have an architect who is also working in that area to try to redesign and place some of the existing buildings across the road from where they are.

With the utility efficiency, upgrades, and extension projects, the City has Water meters for entire system now converted and they can be monitored at main office. Leaks will be detected quickly and customers informed to save water and money. Water treatment plants are now using SCADA software allowing monitoring of all functions remotely including on smart phones. They have the utility mapping project well underway. Water,



gas, and sewer will be mapped through GPS in into a geographic information system available to all the crews.

In their housing they've worked very hard to try and develop some workforce housing. They will have Parallel Housing and WODA working with the DDA whom received approval and Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and HOME funding for Canaan Crossing – the highest scoring rural project in Georgia this year. Starting in Summer 2020, the development will add 60 townhouses for workforce housing.

Love's Travel Stop & Country Store with a Hardies restaurant has already broke ground and should be open in the fall. R&B Café has been replaced and is now open for business. Bard Manufacturing has finished Phase I expansion and will be starting Phase II later this year. They are redesigning Arby's and it will be open again soon. Madison received a 40-acre industrial property gift.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Audit & Finance – Amrey Harden**

Harden said members of the Audit & Finance Committee met this morning and he reported on the following:

#### **December 2019 Financials**

Committee members reviewed the financial statements for the six-month period ending December 31, 2019. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$88,845.98. Financial activity for the six-month period should be at approximately 50% of our remaining FY2020 Budget projections overall.

Amrey Hardin made a motion that the Council accept the financial report dated December 31, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mayor Kelly Girtz. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **Other Business**

Mrs. Page presented a purchase order to the committee for Gen-Tec, Inc. in the amount of \$6,800. The purpose of this purchase order is to reconfigure the heating and air unit on the mobile welding trailer. During the reconfiguration of the generator on the mobile welding trailer during the summer of 2019, it was determined that the heating and air conditioner would also need to be reconfigured since the generator and the heating and air unit are currently stored in the same compartment. The reconfiguration will separate the two.



### **Program of Work – Mayor Dodd Ferrelle**

The Program-of-Work Committee met earlier today and reviewed five (5) technical-assistance requests for the month. These requests, for the Regional Commission's Planning & Government Services staff, include the following:

- The City of Porterdale requested assistance in developing an update to their comprehensive plan that is due in February 2021. This assistance includes facilitation of required public hearings, assistance with additional public input sessions, development of the plan document (including a Land Use element), and creation of associated maps and graphics. The fee for this assistance is \$3,000.
- Morgan County requested assistance in developing a re-application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for an Assistance for Firefighters Grant (AFG). The fee for this assistance is \$1,000.
- The City of Winder requested assistance in developing a “complete streets” and trail plan. This assistance will include planning & design, community outreach, mapping and related tasks. The fee for this assistance is \$1,000.
- The City of Watkinsville requested assistance in facilitation of a strategic-planning retreat. This assistance costs are provided through administrative contracts and local dues; no fee is required.
- The City of Winterville requested assistance in developing a “Story Map” using GIS software to create an online portal to access the City's public projects and their related information. The fee for this assistance is \$2,500 for the initial development and site launch and \$590 per year for subsequent monthly maintenance and cloud hosting.

Based on a recommendation by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, the Committee recommended approving these requests for inclusion in the FY2020 program-of-work effective February 20, 2020. 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 community and economic development activities from around the region this morning.

During the meeting, the PGS Committee also performed an annual review of the Northeast Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy's Action Plan. The review included discussion of accomplishments, active projects, and needs and goals for the next year. The NEGRC maintains the CEDS as part of its duties as an Economic Development District, through the U.S. Economic Development Administration. The CEDS is available on the NEGRC's webpage. The PGS Division can also provide further information.

No items required action from the Council.



## **Executive Director's Report – Burke Walker**

### **Staff Introduction**

Director Walker introduced Travera Harper--or Tra as she's called. Tra has been with the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging Department for 3 years. She worked as a Case Management Intern in the Aging Department while working on her Master's Degree in Social Work at the University of Georgia. Once she graduated, Tra was hired as a Full-time Options Counselor. Her job as an Options Counselor is to help older adults and individuals with disabilities make informed, long-term care decisions that support their needs, preferences, and values while improving their quality of life. She routinely is out in the region visiting clients and assisting the elderly.

### **Personnel Policy Update**

Director Walker stated that as he settled in to his new position and looked for ways to improve efficiencies and operations within our office, one effort that deserves attention is our current Employee Personnel Policies. For context, our manual has not seen major revisions in at least 25 – 30 years. The intent is to bring it up to current standards and make it a more understandable and instructional tool for staff as well as fulfilling compliance with our state and federal partner agencies. Director Walker has been in discussions with Chairman Little, whom Chairs the Personnel Committee, and our tentative timeline is to circulate to the Personnel Committee a draft document for their review later this month. Prior to next month's Council meeting, our goal is for the Personnel Committee, under Chairman Little's guidance, to convene to consider action of the updated Personnel Policies. This update also coincides with development of our FY2021 budget's indirect cost plan. We, again, are aiming for next month to complete a draft making it ready for the Council's consideration. If approved, these policies will make clear for the staff this Council's requirements for our conduct and internal functions.

### **Facilitations**

In the past, the NEGRC has assisted many of our local governments with "retreats" or facilitated meetings of the council's leadership over the years. The NEGRC intends to continue this assistance as it's an excellent way for us to engage with leadership and assist in their planning and goal-setting efforts. The NEGRC typically provides these at no cost or fee. One way we are approaching these currently and as we transition is to involve other staff that have expertise in specific areas. For example, when these facilitations involve strategic planning, our planning staff are well suited to this task in bringing your comprehensive plan's work program into the discussion. Others that are geared towards goal setting and discussion of agenda topics among city or county leadership will be provided by Director Walker and Eva Kennedy where regional trends and programmatic opportunities can be integrated. The NEGRC looks for your input and want to be in a position to address your specific needs. For many of you, these have been a valued service of the Regional Commission. The NEGRC looks forward to continuing this assistance and accommodating ongoing request as our schedules permit.



### **DDAA Conference**

Next month from March 15-18, Director Walker and Eva Kennedy will travel to attend the Development Districts Association of Appalachia (DDAA) annual conference in Washington. This conference is held jointly with the National Association of Development Districts (NADO). The DDAA membership supports the 13-state Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) program of which four of our Northeast Georgia counties participate. This year's agenda looks very informative and each year at the conference two (2) recognition awards are presented. Last month, I participated on a conference call with two of my counterparts with ARC counties to discuss potential nominees from Georgia. It will come as no surprise that we unanimously recommended Jim Dove that was subsequently offered to ARC-Washington. While it's not publicly known, I'm pleased to share some inside news that Jim will receive the John D. Wisman award at the conference. That award honors exemplary service and leadership in Appalachia and demonstrated a commitment to the ideals of state and federal cooperation.

### **Newly Elected Officials Institute**

On March 4 from 4-6pm Director Walker will be at the UGA's Georgia Center for Georgia Municipal Association's (GMA) Newly Elected Officials Institute and providing an informational booth on behalf of the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions. It's always a good opportunity for the Regional Commissions and he looks forward to seeing our cities elected officials as well as others from across the state.

### **AAA Area Plan**

Since 1974, Northeast Georgia has provided an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to the region that was authorized by the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965. As most of you are aware, the AAA is housed at the NEGRC Headquarters with its staff providing a range of aging services and financial support. One requirement of the OAA is for each AAA to develop an Area Plan which, in turn, Georgia's Division of Aging Services requires annual updates to the plan for continuance of our services. This year's update for State Fiscal Year 2021 was reviewed and approved on February 5, 2020 by the Aging Services Advisory Council. The next step in this process is this Council's authorization by resolution and accompanying documents. Director Walker offered to read the resolution that was previously distributed to the council and answer any questions. Director Walker requested the Council to consider adopting this resolution and submitting the related documents. Chairman Billy Pittard made a motion to accept the resolution. The motion was seconded by Chairman Kevin Little. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Staff Evaluations**

Next week Director Walker will instruct the three Division Directors to begin their annual performance appraisals of their staff. These will be completed by the end of March for use in developing next year's budget. He will also meet individually with each Director to review their individual staff appraisals. He will in turn prepare appraisals of the Divisions Directors and Administration staff. Then in April, the Personnel Committee will convene to conduct his annual performance review. This timeline will line-up with Alicia's budget preparations.



### **Presentation**

Chairman Pittard provided an introduction to Dr. Kyle Tschepikow whom is the Special Assistant to UGA's President and Director for Strategy and Innovation. Dr. Tschepikow gave a presentation about development of an innovation district at UGA and in Athens. Dr. Tschepikow answered questions following his presentation from attendees.

### **Other Business**

There was no Other Business.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Pittard reminded everyone of our next meeting March 19, 2020 to be held in the restaurant at the Holiday Inn. With there being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

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Julie Ball, Executive Assistant  
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

06.18.20

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Date Approved