



Date: September 17, 2020

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Location: Telephonic

Minutes

Members Present:

Andy Ainslie
Linda Blechinger
Ronnie Boggs
Joyce Chambers
Tom Crow
John Daniell
Dodd Ferrelle
Cary Fordyce
Kelly Girtz
Pat Graham
Gail Harrell
Amrey Harden
Doug Haynie
Bruce Henry
Janet Jones
Howard Ledford
Kevin Little
Bob Padilla
Bill Palmer
Billy Pittard
Bill Ritter
Roy Roberts
John Scarborough
Joel Seymour
Frank Turner

Members Absent:

Louise Adams
Marcello Banes
David Bentley
Rick Berry
Jody Blackmon
Phil Brock
Charlie Crawford
David Dyer
Larry Guest
Harold Horton
Steve Horton
John Howard
Terry Lawler
Tate O'Rourke
Flemie Pitts
Jim Shaw
Jeffrey Smith
Lee Vaughn

Guests Present:

Beth Eavenson, GA DCA
Kristen Miller, GA DED
Davis Warnell, Sen. Loeffler

Employees Present

Amber Bailey
Julie Ball
Alicia Page
Burke Walker

Call to Order and Approval of August Meeting Minutes

Chairman Pittard called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the September Council meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission and said as with our August meeting, we continue to meet telephonically due to the emergency conditions posed by COVID-19. He then asked everyone to please rise and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.



Chairman Pittard asked Julie Ball to take roll call. A regular meeting quorum was established; however a 2/3 member meeting quorum was not established. Chairman Pittard then welcomed members, guests, and staff and asked visitors to introduce themselves. Chairman Pittard said the August 20, 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 Mayor Linda Blechinger and seconded by Chairman Kevin Little. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Pittard said at our meetings we hear items of local interest from several counties. Because today's meeting was telephonic and in the interest of time, area reports will not be presented. He did ask if any members had any special items of interest or news they wished to share. Chairman Bruce Henry mentioned the loss of Carl Penniman, District 1 Commissioner for Jasper County Board of Commissioners, who passed September 6, 2020. Mayor Linda Blechinger reported on the Rowen Research Park, a 200 acre piece of property that is expecting to create 18,000 jobs. Gwinnett and Barrow Counties are working closely on planning of this project. Chairman Pittard reported Oglethorpe County is proposing to provide stimulus with their rainy day fund by having zero millage rate this year.

Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Amrey Harden

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

July 2020 Financials

Committee members reviewed the financial statements for the one-month period ending July 31, 2020. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$28,850.

Amrey Harden made a motion that the Council accept the report as presented. The motion was seconded by Joel Seymour. The motion carried unanimously.

Program-of-Work – Mayor Dodd Ferrelle

Mayor Ferrelle said the Program-of-Work Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed four (4) technical-assistance requests received since our last meeting. These requests, for the Regional Commission's Planning & Government Services staff, include the following:

- **City of Elberton** requested assistance in updating their comprehensive plan. The update will include two additional elements, as required. The fee for this assistance is \$3,000.
- **Firefly Trail:** The non-profit organization Firefly Trail, Inc. requested assistance with a three-year update to their strategic plan and support for monthly meetings. The fee for this assistance is not-to-exceed \$4,000.



Based on a recommendation by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, the Committee recommends approving these requests for inclusion in the FY2021 program-of-work effective September 17, 2020. A motion was made by Mayor Dodd Ferrelle and seconded by Chairman Kevin Little. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director's Report – Burke Walker

Staff

Executive Director Walker stated that NEGRC staff, except those Sheltering-in-Place through the Governor's Executive Order, have all returned to the office on regular schedules. He mentioned that the NEGRC offices are still closed for public meetings but are open by appointment and will be hosting limited meetings. He noted the UOBWA and its committee's will be holding meetings in the NEGRC office and Atrium meeting room.

GARC Nominating Committee

Executive Director Walker was asked to chair the GARC's Nominating Committee to select officers for a two-year term beginning next year. Other members included: Suzanne Angell, SWGRC, Commissioner Terrell Hudson, Dooley Co and Mayor Sam Norton of Dahlonega. These individuals met and confirmed candidates for the President, Vice President and Secretary to be presented at their meeting in November.

CDBG Announcement

Executive Director Walker discussed the annual Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) announcements that are made by DCA. The 2020 awards were announced earlier in September with three (3) awards going to the Northeast Georgia region. PGS staff successfully prepared the Oconee County application for expansion to their senior center and received the highest grant amount. This was the second successful application the NEGRC prepared for the senior center. Executive Director Burke Walker congratulated Chairman Daniell and Oconee County. PGS Director Eva Kennedy and her staff will assist in the project's administration. Executive Director Walker also congratulated the Cities of Social Circle and Monroe.

Executive Director Walker mentioned that DCA informed the Regional Commissions of extensions to some reporting requirements, due to COVID-19. A list was also provided of local governments that are delinquent in prior reports for Government Management Indicators (GOMI) Surveys and Report of Local Governments Finance (RLGF). The NEGRC will reach out to these local governments to remind them of the reports and to avoid ineligibility for DCA and/or state grant and loan funding. Executive Director Walker suggested that everyone make an effort to check their report status to ensure compliance.



Map-21

Executive Director Walker discussed the Map-21 program, which was named after the federal legislation that created it. Map-21, a statewide inventory of road information, was coordinated with GDOT and GARC. Executive Director Walker stated that he met with Paul Tanner in August 2020 and that Mr. Tanner has done a great job working with Regional Commissions and building relationships across the state. Mr. Tanner informed Executive Director Walker that Georgia was a leader across the nations on Map-21. Phase I, which concludes at the end of 2020, used GIS mapping to collect road information and was a five-year effort. He stated that the NEGRC staff had completed the inventory for our region and was able to work closely with local governments successfully. Phase II will begin in 2021 with two pilot counties (Liberty and Coffee). Executive Director Walker mentioned that Phase II's learning curve would not be as steep as Phase I and that completion would take about three (3) years. Georgia's Map-21 program will be renamed to "ReVamp" in the next phase. PGS Director Eva Kennedy also met with Paul Tanner and will be coordinating with our local governments to complete Phase II.

Census 2020

Executive Director Walker reminded members that the state's entering into the last two weeks of the decennial Census 2020. He mentioned that the NEGRC had recently received communication from Mr. Rusty Haygood at DCA stating that about 19% of Georgia households still needed to be counted. Census workers would be out performing door-to-door surveys and counting. Executive Director Walker stated that the Census Committee was strongly encouraging continued public information regarding survey completion. He also mentioned that NEGRC staff would be available to help with any questions or to provide Census promotional materials.

NEGRC Bylaws

Executive Director Walker began by noting that any bylaw amendments require a 2/3 quorum that is not present at today's meeting; no action can be taken. He, however, would like review the proposed amendment today for information purposes only. The NEGRC's bylaws were last amended in 2009, when Regional Development Centers were reconstituted as Regional Commissions. As members are aware, several NEGRC Council meetings were canceled in 2020 due to Covid-19. This action revealed the need for increased power of the Executive Committee. Currently, the Executive Committee is not empowered to take action on needed items between Council meetings. Executive Director Walker spoke to Chairman Pittard, the current Executive Committee members, and the NEGRC attorney regarding an amendment to expand the Executive Committee's powers. A proposed amendment was circulated prior to today's meeting for the Council's review.

Executive Director Walker then read the Proposed Amended Bylaw:

Section 5.02. Executive Committee.

This committee shall consist of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary of the Council as well as the Chairperson of the Audit and Finance Committee and the Chairperson of the Program of Work Committee. The Executive Committee shall review and act on matters needing attention during the intervals between Council meetings. Any action by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Council must be approved by at least



three (3) members of the Executive Committee. Any action approved by the Executive Committee shall be presented to the Council for ratification at the next meeting of the Council following said action.

The Executive Committee would be enlarged to five members. The Executive Committee would be able to take action on items needing attention between Council meetings and these items would be ratified by the Council at its next meeting.

Executive Director Walker then summarized the proposed amendment by saying the Executive Committee would be enlarged to five members. The Executive committee would be able to take action on items needing attention between Council meetings and these items would be ratified by the council at its next meeting.

Executive Director Walker stated that he did not foresee this need to be a regular occurrence but it would be a safeguard to ensure that programmatic requirements (e.g., contracts, resolutions, and reports) could be enacted upon so NEGRC services would not be disrupted. Executive Director Walker said to Chairman Pittard that he would be glad to answer any questions regarding this change and otherwise the Council can consider action on this item at its next meeting.

Chairman Pittard asked Julie Ball to take roll call again to establish a 2/3 quorum however a 2/3 member meeting quorum was not established.

Other Business

Chairman Pittard had no other business for today's meeting. He asked if any attendees have any additional items to come before the council and there was no further business

Adjournment

With there being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Pittard at 11:33 a.m.

Julie Ball, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

November 19, 2020

Date Approved