



Date: October 15, 2020

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Location: Telephonic

Minutes

Members Present:

Andy Ainslie
John Daniell
Dodd Ferrelle
Cary Fordyce
Kelly Girtz
Amrey Harden
Doug Haynie
Bruce Henry
Janet Jones
Howard Ledford
Bob Padilla
Bill Palmer
Fred Perriman
Billy Pittard
Roy Roberts
John Scarborough
Joel Seymour
Jim Shaw
Frank Turner

Members Absent:

Louise Adams
Marcello Banes
David Bentley
Rick Berry
Jody Blackmon
Phil Brock
Joyce Chambers
Tom Crow
David Dyer
Pat Graham
Larry Guest
Gail Harrell
Harold Horton
Steve Horton
John Howard
Terry Lawler
Kevin Little
Tate O'Rouke
Flemie Pitts
Bill Ritter
Jeffrey Smith
Solomon Smothers
Lee Vaughn

Guests Present:

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

Staff Present

Amber Bailey
Julie Ball
Alicia Page
Burke Walker

Call to Order

Chairman Pittard called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the October Council meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. He said, as with our September meeting, the Council is meeting telephonically due to the extension of the Governor's State of Emergency. Chairman Pittard asked Julie Ball to take roll call. A regular meeting quorum was not established. Chairman Pittard said the meeting would continue without any actions taken and for informational purposes only. He then asked everyone to please rise and join him in



the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Pittard said that the Council would not be able to take action on previous meeting's minutes and these will be considered at the next-scheduled meeting.

Chairman Pittard said at our meetings we hear items of local interest from several counties and because today's meeting was telephonic and in the interest of time, area reports would not be presented. He did ask if any members had any special items-of-interest or news they wished to share. Chairman Bruce Henry thanked Director Walker and his staff for the tribute to Commissioner Carl Pennamon on the cover of this month's Update newsletter. Mayor Kelly Girtz mentioned he had recently been notified they would not receive any more CARES Act funding and that the funds would be delivered to the Georgia Department of Labor.

Chairman Pittard asked any guests or visitors to introduce themselves and thanked them for joining the meeting.

Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Amrey Harden

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

Committee members reviewed the financial statements for the one-month period ending August 31, 2020. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$32,678.17. Amrey Harden also reported that Workforce Investment Group received a USDOL grant of almost \$619,000 as a result of the COVID-19. Our area was only 1 of 2 in the entire state to receive these grants. He thanked Carol Cofer and her staff. He also mentioned our audit presentation had been postponed due to waiting on a final compliance supplement that's delayed due to COVID-19. The Audit & Finance Committee expect the audit presentation to occur at the Council's November 19, 2020 meeting.

Amrey Harden concluded his report with no motion. Chairman Pittard thanked Mr. Harden and the Audit & Finance Committee and said action will be taken at our meeting next month.

Program-of-Work – Mayor Dodd Ferrelle

Mayor Ferrelle said the Program-of-Work Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed six (6) technical-assistance requests received since our last meeting. These requests, for the Regional Commission's Planning & Government Services staff, include the following:



- Greene County, the City of Woodville, and the City of Maxeys all requested assistance in applying for a Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant to fund construction (approximately 7-8 miles) of portions of the Firefly Trail. These projects will be submitted as a single GOSP pre-application. The total fee for the combined assistance is \$1,000.
- The City of Nicholson requested assistance in updating their comprehensive plan. The update will include at least one (1) additional element, as required. The fee for this assistance is not-to-exceed \$3,000.
- Elbert County requested assistance in updating their comprehensive plan. The update will include at least one (1) additional element. The fee for this assistance is \$4,500.
- Jasper County requested assistance in preparing a CDBG application involving construction of a new facility for the local Food Bank. The fee for this assistance is \$2,000.

Mayor Ferrelle concluded his report without a motion. Chairman Pittard thanked Mayor Ferrell and the Program of Work Committee and said the action will be taken at our meeting next month.

Executive Director's Report – Burke Walker

WIOA “Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities’ Grant

Executive Director Walker made mention, and as noted in Mr. Harden’s report, that the Workforce Division, under the direction of Carol Cofer, was recently awarded a \$600,000 grant to provide short-term certification training to the four Appalachian Region Commission (ARC) counties (Barrow, Elbert, Jackson and Madison). The project was made possible by the collaboration of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Appalachian Regional Commission. The “WorkSource” Program was one of two organizations statewide who went through a competitive process to receive this funding. Executive Director Walker stated that the Program begins in January 2021 and will last three years, serving approximately 378 persons. Ronnie Boggs and Howard Ledford both sit on the Workforce Board and learned of the news earlier in the week. Executive Director Walker wanted everyone to be aware that Director Carol Cofer and her staff would be preparing to roll-out new training opportunities over the following months.

Firefly Trail Dedication

Executive Director Walker mentioned that he would attend the dedication of the Firefly Trail provided by ACC and Mayor Girtz, which would be hosted by Mayor Ferrelle in Winterville at the historic depot on Friday, October 15th. The NEGRC office has been involved with the Firefly trail since its inception with facilitating visioning and planning in coordination GDOT’s Bike & Pedestrian planning program. Executive Director Walker said that the Bike & Pedestrian program is available to all our member local governments and that PGS Director Eva Kennedy and her staff



are available to offer guidance on development of bicycle and pedestrian trails. Executive Director Walker reiterated Mayor Ferrelle's report that the NEGRC would be assisting three jurisdictions in developing a joint-grant application for extension of the Firefly Trail.

Staff News

Executive Director Walker announced that the NEGRC would welcome a new staff member, Agnes Kakaire, to the AAA staff as an Options Counselor in late October. Agnes will replace Marianne Silman who will retire in November after 23 years of service to the NEGRC. Executive Director Walker stated that this position provides consultation to elderly clients for referral and eligible services and assistance. Marianne is a registered nurse and Agnes has the same qualifications which will enhance the level of services provided. Executive Director Walker informed the Council that Agnes will start in October to begin orientation and transition training with Marianne, who is the consummate professional with much valued service to the NEGRC.

Executive Director Walker also updated the Council on PGS Director Eva Kennedy's progress on filling the Resilience Coordinator position. Final candidate interviews were completed in October for this position which was created through funding from the Economic Development Administration. This position will assist in economic-recovery efforts and help boost economic resiliency over a two-year period.

Roof

Executive Director Walker discussed the NEGRC headquarters' roof repairs (previously approved by the Council). He stated that they would be completed on Saturday, October 16th with the final installation of metal flashing. Ben Carter, architect with Carter Watkins Associates was helpful in assessing and specifying the best materials and application. Executive Director Walker was noted that Bone Dry Roofing Company was very good to work with and adjusted their schedule to avoid working during business hours; limiting disruptions to NEGRC staff. He also noted that the NEGRC building should be in good shape and secured as the winter months' approach.

GARC Meeting

Executive Director Walker discussed the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's (GARC) annual meeting which will be held 'virtually' on November 5, 2020. He mentioned that the meeting is typically at St. Simons Island but was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Executive Director Walker shared with the Council that Commissioner Ainslie would participate in the meeting as the NEGRC's policy member and that the Association arranged for Jim Galloway, a 40-year AJC journalist and host of "Political Insider" blog, to speak at the virtual meeting.

Chairman Pittard's Request

Executive Director Walker reminded the Council that Council Chairman Billy Pittard will leave office at the end of 2020, after choosing not to seek a 4th consecutive term. Chairman Pittard leaves six months of an unexpired two-year term as NEGRC Council Chairman. Executive Director Walker stated that he presented this information to Mr. Bill Palmer and Mayor Linda Blechinger,



as members of the NEGRC Executive Committee, in early October and they explored the possibility of filling a vacant Councilmember seat (appointed by Speaker of the House) with Chairman Pittard. Executive Director Walker drafted a letter that was sent to Speaker Ralston requesting that Chairman Pittard's appointment go into effect January 1, 2021. Terry Matthews, the GARC's public-relations consultant, communicated with Speaker Ralston's office and the request was received. An official appointment is expected to follow. Executive Director Walker hoped Chairman Pittard would accept the possible appointment (and postpone his retirement) that would allow him to fulfill his term as NEGRC Council Chairman.


Executive Director Walker announced that there was no action required by the Council at this time. With no questions or comments, Executive Director Walker concluded his report.

Other Business

Chairman Pittard had no other business for today's meeting. He asked if any attendees had additional items to come before the Council. None were made; no further business. Chairman Pittard reminded the Council of their next meeting November 19, 2020 and thanked them all for their attendance at today's meeting.

Adjournment

With there being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned by Chairman Pittard at 11:25 a.m.



Julie Ball, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

November 19, 2020

Date Approved