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Date: May 20, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Location: Telephonic

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## Minutes

### **Members Present:**

Louise Adams  
Andy Ainslie  
Linda Blechinger  
Ronnie Boggs  
Tom Crow  
John Daniell  
David Dyer  
Dodd Ferrelle  
Cary Fordyce  
Kelly Girtz  
Doug Haynie  
Bruce Henry  
Todd Higdon  
John Howard  
Janet Jones  
Howard Ledford  
Bob Padilla  
Bill Palmer  
Fred Perriman  
Billy Pittard  
Bill Ritter  
Roy Roberts  
Joel Seymour  
Jim Shaw  
Shane Short  
Brad Tucker  
Frank Turner

### **Members Absent:**

Marcello Banes  
David Bentley  
Rick Berry  
Jody Blackmon  
Phil Brock  
Pat Graham  
Larry Guest  
Gail Harrell  
Harold Horton  
Steve Horton  
Terry Lawler  
Tate O'Rourke  
Jay Paul  
Flemie Pitts  
Jeffrey Smith  
Solomon Smothers  
David Thompson  
Lee Vaughn

### **Guests Present:**

Beth Eavenson- GA DCA  
Mark Elliott- Jody Hice, GA-10  
Greg Ziesenhene- Jody Hice, GA-10  
Nancy Stangle

### **Staff Present:**

Amber Bailey  
Julie Ball  
Carol Cofer  
Eve Kennedy  
Alicia Page  
Sophia Primer  
Burke Walker

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Billy Pittard called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. Chairman Pittard welcomed everyone to the May meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. He then asked Julie Ball to take a roll call for those not already identified on the call. Chairman Pittard asked that any guests present announce themselves. Chairman Pittard said the April 15, 2021 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 Cary Fordyce and seconded by Bill Palmer. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Pittard stated that three of the Council's Committees met prior to this morning's Council meeting and asked the Committee Chairpersons to present their reports.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Audit & Finance – Dr. Howard Ledford**

Dr. Ledford said members of the Audit & Finance Committee met prior to today's Council meeting and he reported on the following:

#### **FY21 Revised Budget**

There was overall increase from the originally adopted FY21 budget of 14%.

- Division of Aging saw an overall increase of \$2,577,095
- Division of Planning and Government Services saw an increase of \$177,719
- Division of Workforce Development saw an overall decrease of \$882,429

There was an overall increase in revenues for the revised FY21 budget of \$1,783,865 from the originally adopted FY21 budget.

#### **FY22 Proposed Budget**

- This budget is being presented as a balanced budget and therefore the revenues equal the expenditures.
- The overall Revenues and Expenditures for the proposed FY22 budget are projected to come in at \$13,406,212.
- There is an overall decrease of about 10.53% from the revised fiscal year 2021 budget due to a reduction in pandemic related funding.
- The amount necessary to match the different grants that the Regional Commission has is projected to be \$370,686.
- Considering the amount of federal and state dollars to be received, the leveraging effect of local funds is significant. For every \$1 dollar paid in dues the region will receive \$20.07 in federal and state funding.
- To comply with the Department of Audit recommendations, dues are calculated using the most recent region population figures. This results in an increase of \$11,011 in dues for the fiscal year 2022.

Dr. Ledford made a recommendation to carry the proposed revised FY21 budget and the proposed FY22 budget as presented to the full Council for adoption during our June 2021 meeting.



### **Resolution**

Dr. Ledford said that in order to prepare for Alicia Page's departure the Audit and Finance Committee has reviewed a Resolution to remove Ms. Page as a Trustee from the NEGRC Georgia Fund 1 investment account and to add Sophia Primer as a Trustee.

A motion was made by Dr. Ledford to adopt the Georgia Fund 1 Resolution to Authorize Investment as presented. Mayor Linda Blechinger seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business Dr. Ledford concluded his report.

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

#### **Technical Assistance Requests**

Mayor Ferrelle said the Program-of-Work Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed six (6) technical-assistance requests for the month. He reviewed details of the requests from City of Union Point, City of Ila, City of Jefferson, City of Monroe, City of Comer, and City of Winder. Based on a recommendation by Executive Director Walker, followed by the Committee's review, Mayor Dodd Ferrelle recommended approving these six (6) requests for inclusion in the FY2021 program-of-work effective, May 20, 2021.

A motion was made by Mayor Ferrelle and was seconded by Ronnie Boggs. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **FY21 Program of Work Activities**

The POW Committee also received a report from Director Walker on the FY21 Program-of-Work activities for the year. The year's annual work program was amended to include all the monthly, technical-assistance requests for the year. The Committee also used the annual standards for measurement in reviewing the year's activities. Based on the Committee's review, the amended Program of Work activities for the year and standard for measurement were recommended for approval.

A motion was made by Mayor Ferrelle and was seconded by Mayor Linda Blechinger. The motion passed unanimously. With no further business Mayor Ferrelle concluded his report.

### **Planning and Government Services – Commissioner Andy Ainslie**

Commissioner Ainslie said the Planning & Government Services Committee met prior to the Council meeting and discussed community and economic development news from around the region.



During the meeting, the Committee reviewed the draft regional Economic Resilience and Recovery Plan that's being created to respond to the effects of COVID-19. A full draft of the plan will be available for the Council's review and consideration of adoption in June. Commissioner Andy Ainslie concluded his report.

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

Executive Director Walker greeted the Council and stated that there were no action items this month.

### **Councilmember Orientation**

Executive Director Walker stated that a new Councilmember orientation was held at NEGRC headquarters on May 12th. New members were provided detailed information about the Council's responsibility and programs provided by the NEGRC. Executive Director Walker and the NEGRC Divisions' Directors shared information regarding services and operations and provided a packet of materials. Executive Director Walker said he plans to hold a similar orientation next year and make it available to all Councilmembers and other interested parties.

### **Private Sector Appointees**

Executive Director Walker described the Council's composition, which is prescribed by state law and includes the appointment of a private-sector (or "non-public") representative from each of twelve counties. This appointment renews each fiscal year. Executive Director Walker stated that each chairman would receive a request to re-appoint or appoint their private-sector representative. The appointments are effective July 1 through June 30 each fiscal year.

### **Annual NEGRC Dues**

Executive Director Walker stated that the NEGRC's annual dues have been calculated and used in planning the FY22 proposed budget. Invoices will be sent out to member governments in early June. Executive Director Walker explained that the invoiced amounts are based on the latest population estimates, according to state law, and as Dr. Ledford previously described in his Audit & Finance Committee report. The annual dues allow the NEGRC to match state and federal grants for programmatic activities during the year.

### **Southeast Regional Directors' Institute (SERDI)**

Executive Director Walker informed the Council that he had recently participated in both a new Executive Directors' training and an annual conference of the Southeastern Region Directors' Institute (SERDI). SERDI is membered by 139 Regional Commission Executive Directors from 12 states in the southeast. Northeast Georgia is a new member to this group and the organization is a resource for the region.



### **Staff News**

Executive Director Walker mentioned the resignation of NEGRC Comptroller, Alicia Page. He thanked her for her five years of service as a financial officer, her work with the NEGRC's Audit & Finance Committee, and the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority. He noted the position is advertised in several job-posting sites to attract good candidates.

### **GARC Policy Meeting**

Executive Director Walker stated that in April the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) met virtually and that he and Commissioner Andy Ainslie attended. Commissioner Ainslie attended at the GARC policy representative. One of the main topics covered was the annual conference. The decision was made to hold the conference on November 3-5, 2021 at the King & Prince on St. Simons Island. Several NEGRC staff and Councilmembers will be in attendance.

### **CDBG COVID Amendment**

Executive Director Walker announced that the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) had proposed an amendment to its Program Year 2019 Plan to include additional funding for CDBG activities. Executive Director Walker spoke to Rusty Haygood of DCA regarding this change. A public hearing was held on May 24, 2021 to receive public comment. The amendment would propose a use of CARES Act funding to support construction and rehabilitation of public facilities (health departments). It may also include capital expenses for food banks/pantries or access to rural health care. The three rounds total more than \$82 million for the CDBG Cares Act funding. Executive Director Walker stated that anyone interested in more information should contact the NEGRC.

### **Annual Work Program and Performance Standards**

Executive Director Walker discussed the FY21 activities, which were reviewed and approved during Mayor Dodd Ferrelle's POW Committee report. No further action was required at this meeting but the Council will need to consider the FY22 proposed Program-of-Work for adoption at the June meeting. The document will be prepared internally and will be circulated before the June 2021 meeting and reviewed in detail with the POW Committee prior to the June meeting. Adoption of this program-of-work follows the Council's consideration for approval of the annual budget that supports the work items. Both of these actions are required of the Regional Commission, as prescribed in state law.

Executive Director Walker asked if the Council had any questions. There were none and he concluded his report.



### **Awards**

Executive Director Walker presented the Administrator of the Year Award to Mayor Dodd Ferrelle. Chairman John Daniell presented the Robert L. & Betty Williford Distinguished Northeast Georgian Award to Dr. Steve Wrigley. Chairman Daniell also presented Dr. Howard Ledford with a plaque and thanked Dr. Ledford for his many years of service to the NEGRC.

### **Other Business**

In other business, Chairman Pittard said the next Council meeting would be held on June 17, 2021 at noon at Trumps' Ballroom in Athens.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Pittard thanked everyone for their attendance and with no further business to come before the Council, he adjourned the meeting at 11:29 a.m.

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Julie Ball, Executive Assistant  
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

June 17, 2021

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Date Approved