



Date: September 16, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Location: Telephonic

Minutes

Members Present:

Louise Adams
Andy Ainslie
Linda Blechinger
Ronnie Boggs
Tom Crow
John Daniell
David Dyer
Dodd Ferrelle
Kelly Girtz
Doug Haynie
Todd Higdon
John Howard
Janet Jones
Terry Lawler
Byron Lombard
Bill Palmer
Fred Perriman
Billy Pittard
Joel Seymour
Jim Shaw
Solomon Smothers
Jennifer Stewart
Brad Tucker

Members Absent:

Marcello Banes
Phil Brock
Cary Fordyce
Jill Fortson
Pat Graham
Larry Guest
Bruce Henry
Harold Horton
Steve Horton
Jay Paul
Flemie Pitts
Bill Ritter
Roy Roberts
Shane Short
David Thompson
Frank Turner
Lee Vaughn

Guests Present:

Cheryl Smith, Ga Dept of Agriculture
Lauren Sanders, Hice GA-10

NEGRC Staff Present:

Amber Bailey
Julie Ball
Eva Kennedy
Sophia Primer
Burke Walker

Call to Order

Chairman Bill Palmer called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. He stated that the previous month's action items would be addressed this month due to the lack of a quorum at the Council meeting in August.

Chairman Palmer stated that minutes from both the June 17, 2021 and August 19, 2021 meetings had been distributed to the Council prior to this meeting. He informed the Council that no action was taken for the August 19, 2021 meeting due to the lack of a quorum and that if there were no questions or concerns he would entertain a motion to approve the June 17, 2021 minutes.



Commissioner Andy Ainslie motioned to approve the minutes and David Dyer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Palmer stated that in the interest of time because the meeting was being held virtually all County reports would be delayed until the next meeting.

Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Mayor Fred Perriman

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

July 2021 Financials

Committee members reviewed financial statements for the one month period ending July 31, 2021. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$12,328.71.

Mayor Perriman suggested the Council accept the July 2021 financial report in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.

Program of Work Committee – Mayor Dodd Ferrelle

Mayor Dodd Ferrelle said the Program-of-Work Committee met prior to today's Council meeting and reviewed three (3) technical requests from August. These include the following:

- Jasper County requested assistance in facilitating discussion for redistricting and related public input. The fee for this assistance will not exceed \$2,000.
- The Town of Buckhead requested assistance in preparing text amendment to the Town's zoning ordinance. The fee for this assistance will not exceed \$500.
- The City of Crawford requested assistance with the Firefly Trail related to planning, design, property research and related tasks. There is no fee for this assistance as it is provided through the Commission's Georgia Dept. of Transportation's (GDOT) Bike/Ped contact and local dues.

As reported last month, the Program-of-Work Committee met and reviewed five (5) technical-assistance requests from July.

Based on recommendations by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, Mayor Ferrelle recommend approving these eight (8) requests for inclusion FY2022 program-of-work in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.



Planning and Government Services – Commissioner Andy Ainslie

Commissioner Ainslie said that the Planning & Government Services Committee met prior to this meeting and reviewed NEGRC staff recommendation to add the submittal of a site plan as a required component of DRI applications.

Commissioner Ainslie suggested the Council approve the policy change in the form of a motion. The motions passed with Brad Tucker objecting.

Executive Director’s Report – Burke Walker

Executive Director Walker greeted the Council and stated that due to concerns over the rising number of Covid-19 cases in the region this meeting was being held virtually.

Annual Audit

Executive Director Walker said Rushton and Company recently completed their review of the FY21 budget and audit at the NEGRC offices. Rushton and Company will attend the November Council meeting to present their report.

GARC

Executive Director Walker informed the Council that due to the rising number of Covid-19 cases the Georgia Association of Regional Commission (GARC) made the decision to cancel its conference in November at St. Simon’s Island. The GARC’s Economic Development Conference is still scheduled for May 2022 and Executive Director Walker said the annual fall conference would be held next year.

At the GARC meeting Matthew Wilson (GDOT) gave a presentation regarding statewide and regional transit plans. Two Regional Commissions have the opportunity to undertake a Transit Development Plan (TDP) in coordination with GDOT’s consultant (AECOM). The application cycle will close October 14 with a “letter of interest” required and the awarded communities will be announced in November. The TDP information is live on GDOT’s website for those interested. The NEGRC has previously participated in transit planning and intends to apply to GDOT for this opportunity. Transit is an area interest within the region for several local governments for senior and health care, the general public and for workforce.

Also reported at the GARC meeting from Kyle Hood of DCA was the annual CDBG competition. The Department of Community Affairs’ (DCA) review is nearing completion. Announcements will be sent directly to applicants (chief-elected official) and announced publicly by Governor Kemp’s office. The NEGRC’s PGS staff prepared three CDBG applications and hope to receive a favorable review. Executive Director Walker informed the Council that it was not too early begin 2022 CDBG applications and if assistance was needed with a new grant application to contact Eva Kennedy (PGS Division Director).



Council News

Executive Director Walker informed the Council that there were still several vacancies on the Council, mostly due to resignations. Three are municipal (or Mayoral) vacancies. He stated that the NEGRC would make every effort to fill these vacancies in the upcoming weeks in accordance with the by-laws.

Executive Director Walker expressed his sincere appreciation to former Mayor Berry of Lexington for his service to the Commission and the Program-of-Work Committee of the years.

Headquarters

Executive Director Walker informed the Council that the NEGRC solicited bids from certified arborists to trim branches and remove all dead/diseased trees surrounding the staff parking lot.

DHS Resolution/Resolution

Executive Director Walker said Governor Kemp and the Georgia Department of Human Resources announced the appointment of a new Commissioner, Candace Broce. Commissioner Broce was a former longtime deputy to Governor Kemp and current interim director of Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS). Her predecessor, Gerlda Hines, left for an appointment to lead the State Accounting Office. The NEGRC's Aging Division works closely with DHS in providing and supporting services to the senior and disabled populations. The NEGRC looks forward to working with Commissioner Broce.

DHS Reassurance Telephonic Resolution-Aging

The NEGRC's Aging Division intends to provide continued service to senior citizens in coordination with the Georgia Department of Public Health (DHS). These services include telephone calls to clients referred by Adult Protective Services and used, as requested, by counties. The assistance will run through September 30, 2022. DHS requires the Council to approve a resolution that supports the NEGRC's contractual agreement. Executive Director Walker asked that the Council consider adoption of the DHS Reassurance Telephonic Resolution.

Mayor Linda Blechinger motioned to adopt the resolution and David Dyer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

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



Other Business

Chairman Palmer said that Committee assignments were distributed to the Council for review at last month's meeting. He said that if there were no changes he would entertain a motion to approve Committee assignments.

Brad Tucker motioned to accept the Committee assignments and Louise Adams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Chairman Palmer thanked everyone for their attendance and with no further business to come before the Council, he adjourned the meeting at 11:23 a.m.

Julie Ball, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

October 21, 2021

Date Approved