



Date: April 19, 2023

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Trumps Catering

Minutes

Members Present:

Marcello Banes
Ronnie Boggs
Michael Coile
John Daniell
David Dyer
Dodd Ferrelle
Kelly Girtz
Daniel Graves
Doug Haynie
Todd Higdon
John Howard
Dee Lindsey
Byron Lombard
Blake McCormack
Wendell McNeal
Bill Palmer
Jay Paul
Fred Perriman
Billy Pittard
Joel Seymour
Jim Shaw
Amy Stone
Brad Tucker

Members Absent:

Louise Adams
Linda Blechinger
Phil Brock
Tom Crow
Cary Fordyce
Pat Graham
Steve Horton
Don Jernigan
Janet Jones
Terry Lawler
Jill Parham
Flemie Pitts
Bill Ritter
Roy Roberts
Shane Short
Craig Snow
David Thompson
Frank Turner
Lee Vaughn

Guests Present:

Wendy Bond, Winterville
Marty Clark, Jackson County
Beth Eavenson, DCA
Luke Hetland, Lt. Governor
Martha Revelo, Senator Warnock
Carol Williams, Workforce Dev. Board
Greg Ziesenhene, U.S. Rep. Mike Collins' Office

Staff Present:

Amber Bailey
Julie Ball
Mark Beatty
Carol Cofer
Peggy Jenkins
Sophia Primer
Burke Walker

Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Palmer called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed attendees to the Council meeting and asked everyone to rise and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance. He then asked any guests or visitors to introduce themselves. Chairperson Palmer said the March 16, 2023 minutes were distributed prior to today's meeting. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes. A motion was made by Brad Tucker and seconded by Billy Pittard. The motion carried unanimously.



Items of Local Interest

Chairperson Bill Palmer announced that today, four counties would report on items of local interest. These include Jackson, Jasper, Madison, and Morgan Counties. He invited the County Representatives to provide their reports.

Jackson County – Commissioner Marty Clark

- The estimated population based on GIS calculations and housing permits is nearing 90,000.
- There are over 47 million square feet of industrial buildings.
- SPLOST 7 passed with an estimated \$126 Million in revenue.
- Groundbreaking on a new Administration building will be held on May 1.
- The Senior Center will undergo a \$2 Million expansion.
- Tanner Park will open in June with trails, fields, and a dog park.
- A \$1.5 million expansion of the animal control building will begin this year.
- Last year, 1,500 building permits were issued. So far this year, 6,623 housing permits have been issued.

Jasper County- David Dyer

- There will be a groundbreaking for a new food bank and a new facility for the sheriff's office. The jail will also undergo some renovations.
- Voters approved continuing SPLOST for road improvements.
- A new Mayor, DeAshley Thurman, was recently elected and inaugurated in Monticello.
- A new commercial bakery, as well as a dress shop and restaurant, have opened.
- PermaTherm has doubled the size of its facility.
- Profile Products is now in operation 24/7.
- A new office park has been built to house executive offices and warehouse space.
- Jasper County is struggling with labor pool shortages. They have begun work to improve communication issues through a local radio station to spread awareness of the Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Program.

Madison County – Chairman Todd Higdon

- Three out of three grant applications have moved on requesting funding for almost \$7 million. These funds will be used for a new AG center, a Senior Center, and a water line expansion project. Mark Beatty, NEGRRC's PGS Director, was thanked for his assistance.
- The County is exploring ways to provide incentives to those seeking careers as EMS staff and with the Sheriff's office. Affordable housing is an issue that would affect these workers and needs to be addressed.

Morgan County – Commissioner Blake McCormack

- TSW has been contracted to design a new Recreation Department. Construction should begin in July 2023.
- A public hearing was held to discuss I20 Exit 103, which will allow access to the Rivian Plant.



- Ace Hardware held a ribbon cutting for its new location on Highway 441.
- Central EMC and Charter are installing new fiber-optic cable.
- TSPLOST was approved and will be used to pave 13 miles of road.

Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Mayor Fred Perriman

Mayor Perriman took a moment to tell the Council that life is precious and don't take it for granted. He said one Audit & Finance Committee item required Council action today.

The Committee reviewed the February 2023 financial statements for the 8th month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in-excess of expenditures by \$236,010.27. The expenditures are on-track with the adopted budget, with 33% remaining to spend.

As presented, Mayor Perriman made motions to accept the February 2023 financial reports. The motions passed unanimously.

Program of Work Committee – Mayor Dodd Ferrelle

Mayor Ferrelle said the Program-of-Work Committee met prior to today's Council meeting to review one (1) technical-assistance request for the month.

The City of Loganville requested assistance in staff facilitating a strategic-planning session of their Downtown Development Authority. There is no fee for this assistance.

Based on a recommendation by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, the Committee recommends approving this technical-assistance request for inclusion in the FY2023 program-of-work effective April 19, 2023, in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.

Planning and Government Services – Mayor John Howard

Mayor Howard also thanked Mark Beatty for his help and outstanding job. He said the Planning & Government Services Committee met this morning and discussed activities occurring around the region.

Recent project milestones include:

1. The groundbreaking of the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia expansion project serves six NEGRC counties.
2. The award of \$600,000 to the Winder Housing Authority for affordable housing construction.
3. The award of two Historic Preservation Fund grants to the City of Winterville and the City of Union Point.



These items do not require Council action at this time.

Executive Director's Report – Burke Walker

Executive Director Burke Walker greeted the Council and thanked everyone for their attendance.

News

Executive Director Walker welcomed Commissioner Dee Lindsey of District 3 in Greene County to the NEGRC Council. He thanked Byron Lombard for his assistance in making the appointment.

Southern Crescent Regional Commission

Executive Director Walker discussed SCRC, a partnership program modeled in many ways after the Appalachian Regional Commission. It will receive Federal funding in FY24 that also establishes a grant program to address persistent poverty. Clarke County is designated as a "distressed" county, while Walton, Newton, Jasper, Greene, and Oglethorpe are designated "transitional" counties. Georgia's allocation increased to \$7.5 million from \$2.5 million after Florida chose not to participate. Projects must address six strategic goals: critical infrastructure, health services, workforce capacity, and affordable housing.

ARC visit to NEGRC

Executive Director Walker announced that staff from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in Washington D.C. will visit the office next week and meet with Planning & Government Services staff and himself. Karen Fabiano from ARC oversees the Local Development Districts (LDDs) or Regional Commissions' activities and is interested in learning more about projects and needs in the area. On Tuesday, Georgia's ARC staff will hold a strategic-planning session for staff in Gainesville to discuss ARC priorities for Georgia as well as programmatic activities.

ACCG/GARC Booth

Executive Director Walker will attend the annual Association of County Commissioners (ACCG) conference and staff the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) booth at the Buyer's Mart. He invited Councilmembers and staff to stop by.

GARC Economic Development Conference

Executive Director Walker mentioned that on May 7-9, the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions will host its annual Economic Development Conference. Mr. Bill Palmer (GARC Board Policy Representative), Mark Beatty, and Executive Director Walker will attend the 3-day conference at Lake Lanier Islands. This year's conference includes many informative sessions and two evening speakers. Senator Steve Gooch and Commission Nunn of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will speak.



AAA Dementia Care Specialist

Executive Director Walker reported that Katrina Ogbe had filled the newly created Dementia Care Specialist position. The legislature created this position two sessions ago with funding from the Department of Aging Services (DAS). Ms. Ogbe and other staff will be attending Dementia Care training and certifications to provide counseling to caregivers and seniors in our region.

There were no questions or comments, so Executive Director Walker concluded his report.

Other Business

Greg Ziesenhene of U.S. Representative Mike Collin's office and Martha Revelo of Senator Raphael Warnock's office (who arrived after guest's introductions) stood and introduced themselves to the group.

Adjournment

Chairperson Palmer thanked everyone for their attendance, and with no further business to come before the Council, he adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Julie Ball, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

May 18, 2023

Date Approved