



Date: May 18, 2023

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Trumps Catering

Minutes

Members Present:

Michael Coile
Dodd Ferrelle
Cary Fordyce
Kelly Girtz
Pat Graham
Daniel Graves
Doug Haynie
Todd Higdon
John Howard
Don Jernigan
Janet Jones
Terry Lawler
Dee Lindsey
Byron Lombard
Blake McCormack
Wendell McNeal
Bill Palmer
Jay Paul
Fred Perriman
Jim Shaw
Brad Tucker

Members Absent:

Louise Adams
Marcello Banes
Linda Blechinger
Ronnie Boggs
Phil Brock
Tom Crow
John Daniell
David Dyer
Steve Horton
Jill Parham
Billy Pittard
Flemie Pitts
Bill Ritter
Roy Roberts
Joel Seymour
Shane Short
Craig Snow
Amy Stone
David Thompson
Lee Vaughn

Guests Present:

Beth Eavenson, DCA
Sheila Jones, Jasper County
Kevin Mason, Rep. Collins GA-10
Andy Pippin, Goodwyn/Mills/Cawood
Kevin Poe, Jackson County
Logan Propes, Monroe
Nancy Stangle
Carol Williams, Workforce Development Board
Beverly Young, Bogart

Staff Present:

Amber Bailey
Julie Ball
Mark Beatty
Carol Cofer
Lydia Joffrey
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 May 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 April 19, 2023 minutes were distributed prior to today's meeting. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes unless there were corrections or changes. A motion was made by Mayor John Howard and seconded by Cary Fordyce. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson Palmer mentioned that Reports on "Items of Local Interest" would be deferred to the June meeting to allow time for the annual awards presentations.



Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Mayor Fred Perriman

Mayor Perriman said the Audit & Finance Committee members met earlier today and reviewed several items. One item requires Council action today. A second item presents draft budgets that will require action at next month's meeting.

The first item was the review of the March 2023 financial statements for the 9th month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in excess of expenditures by \$397,598.74. The expenditures fall in line with the adopted budget, with 24% remaining to spend. Mayor Perriman made motions to accept the March 2023 financial report. The motions passed unanimously.

Second, we also reviewed the FY23 Revised and FY24 Proposed budgets and their recommended funding. Copies of these budgets are available on the tables for members' review.

In reviewing the FY23 Revised Budget:

- There was an overall increase from the original adopted FY23 budget of 23% amounting to \$3,004,029.
- The Division of Aging had an overall increase of \$3,389,387.
- The Division of Planning & Government Services had an overall increase of \$28,400.
- The Division of Workforce Development had an overall decrease of \$413,758.

In reviewing the FY24 Proposed Budget:

- The FY24 budget is balanced. Therefore, the revenues equal the expenditures.
- The overall revenues and expenditures are projected at \$13,812,852.
- There is an overall decrease of 15.19% from the Revised FY23 budget due to reductions in ARPA funding in our Aging Division and COVID funding in the Workforce Development Division.
- The amount required to match the Regional Commission's programmatic grants is projected at \$467,702.
- To comply with the Department of Audit's recommendations, annual dues are calculated using the most recent population figures provided by the US Census Bureau ACS (American Community Survey) 5-year Estimates. This year's population numbers reflect an increase of \$11,420 in dues for Fiscal Year 2024.

These draft budgets, as presented, will be considered at the June meeting for Council action.



Program of Work Committee – Mayor Dodd Ferrelle

Mayor Ferrelle said the Program-of-Work Committee met prior to today's Council meeting and reviewed four technical-assistance requests and one project closeout for the month. They also reviewed the amended FY23 annual program-of-work and a performance review for the year. These two items require Council action today.

First, the four technical-assistance requests include the following:

- **Jackson County** requested assistance in developing a Land and Water Conservation Fund application to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for River Glen Park improvements. The fee for this assistance is \$500.
- The **City of Hoschton** requested assistance in developing a Land and Water Conservation Fund application to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for Mulberry Park improvements. The fee for this assistance is \$500.
- The **City of Ila** requested assistance in developing an application to USDA-Rural Development for financial assistance for the replacement or upgrades to city hall. The fee for this assistance is \$1,000.
- The **City of Ila** also requested assistance in developing a grant application to the Georgia Department of Transportation for sidewalk-network extensions and, if required, road extensions. The fee for this assistance is \$500.

There is one project closeout for the month for technical-assistance requests completed and officially closed for the following:

- **The City of Walnut Grove** for the development of a downtown masterplan.

Based on a recommendation by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, Mayor Ferrelle recommended approving the technical-assistance requests and project closeout for inclusion in the FY2023 program-of-work in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.

Second, the Committee received a report from Director Walker on the FY23 Program-of-Work activities for the year. The year's annual work program was amended to include all the monthly technical-assistance requests received during the year. The Committee also reviewed the year's agency-wide activities using the adopted standards-of-performance. Based on the Committee's review, Mayor Ferrelle said the amended work program and performance review are recommended for approval in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.



Planning and Government Services – Mayor John Howard

Mayor Howard said the Planning & Government Services Committee met this morning and discussed activities occurring around the region.

NEGRC staff recently attended the GARC Economic Development Conference to learn about housing trends, outdoor recreational investments, and other economic development tools and funding sources. Any questions can be directed to Mark Beatty. Also, the Regional Plan will be considered for adoption at the June Council meeting.

He said there were no actions for Council to take at this time.

Building – Mayor Kelly Girtz

Mayor Girtz said the Building Committee met prior to today's Council meeting. This was our second meeting with an item that requires Council action today.

We reviewed a draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to seek qualified professionals (e.g., architects) to evaluate building options and alternatives identified in the Building Report. The Committee previously reviewed the Building Report at our March 16th meeting.

Based on the Committee's review today, Mayor Girtz recommended publishing the RFQ later this month and proceeding with a review of responding, qualified consultants to perform services related to evaluating building-use alternatives in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.

The Committee expects to report again to the Council in August with updates and or recommendations on consultant selection. With no questions from members, Mayor Girtz concluded his report.

Executive Director's Report – Burke Walker

Executive Director Burke Walker greeted the Council and thanked everyone for their attendance. He stated that no Council action was required on items discussed in his report.

Annual Dues

Executive Director Walker stated that during this time of year, the NEGRC invoices its local governments for the annual Per Capita dues, as state law requires. The NEGRC invoices at the state minimum of \$1 per capita. The most recent Census population estimates are used to calculate the dues, and this year's population increased by 11,420. Sophia Primer, NEGRC CFO, will prepare the invoices, and any questions should be directed to her or Executive Director Walker. Prompt payment of the dues is greatly appreciated as they allow the NEGRC to match state and federal programmatic funds for the upcoming year.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Executive Director Walker discussed his recent meeting with Freddie Broome, Director of Equity & Inclusion for the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). NEGRC is exploring a potential partnership with GMA to offer training at its office for members of the local governments and their staff. Mr. Broome will attend the September Council meeting to provide more information on GMA's training opportunities.

Rural Development Committee

Executive Director Walker informed the Council that in 2024 the legislature will again form and convene the House Rural Development Council. Meetings will be held in August, September, November, and December in locations across the state. One of the meetings will be held in Athens from November 14-15, 2023. More information will be shared as it becomes available.

EDA Economic Recovery Corps (ERC)

Executive Director Walker informed the Council of a new opportunity from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in partnership with the International Economic Development Council. They will provide a Fellow placed at a Regional Commission, local government, or a non-profit organization to address long-standing economic issues revealed through Covid-19. A total of 65 Fellows will be placed nationally with an annual salary of \$75,000. The deadline to submit a preliminary application or "Expression of Interest" is due by June 30, 2023. Placed fellows would start in January 2024 and end in June 2026. For more information, contact PGS Division Director Mark Beatty.

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

Annual Awards

First, Executive Director Walker presented the "Administrator of the Year Award" to Monroe City Administrator Logan Propes. Second, Nancy Stangle, the daughter of Robert L. & Betty Williford, provided introductory remarks followed by Mayor Dodd Ferrelle whom presented the "Robert L. & Betty Williford Distinguished Northeast Georgian Award" to Mike and Martha Jones of Greene County. Mr. and Mrs. Jones could not attend the meeting; Commissioner Dee Lindsey accepted the award on their behalf. After the presentation, Chairperson Palmer congratulated both of this year's recipients.

Other Business

Chairperson Palmer said in odd-numbered years, a slate of officers are nominated to serve the Commission's Council, as required by our bylaws. For this purpose and to fill an upcoming vacancy for the secretary's position and as a private-sector member, he is appointing a Nominating Committee of the following members: Kelly Girtz as Chairperson, Doug Haynie, and himself. The



slate of officers recommended by the Nominating Committee will be presented at the June meeting with the opportunity for other nominations from the floor by Councilmembers.

He also reminded everyone that the next and final meeting of the year will be held at Trumps on June 15, 2023.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Council, Chairperson Palmer adjourned the meeting at 1:03 p.m.

Julie Ball, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

June 15, 2023

Date Approved