



Date: June 15, 2023

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Trumps Catering

Minutes

Members Present:

Ronnie Boggs
Michael Coile
Tom Crow
John Daniell
Dodd Ferrelle
Pat Graham
Daniel Graves
Doug Haynie
Todd Higdon
John Howard
Janet Jones
Terry Lawler
Blake McCormack
Wendell McNeal
Bill Palmer
Jay Paul
Fred Perriman
Joel Seymour
Jim Shaw
Craig Snow
Amy Stone
Brad Tucker

Members Absent:

Louise Adams
Marcello Banes
Linda Blechinger
Phil Brock
David Dyer
Cary Fordyce
Kelly Girtz
Steve Horton
Don Jernigan
Jesse Johnson
Dee Lindsey
Byron Lombard
Jill Parham
Billy Pittard
Flemie Pitts
Bill Ritter
Roy Roberts
Shane Short
David Thompson
Lee Vaughn

Guests Present:

Wendy Bond, Winterville
John Solis Barcena
Jacob David
Beth Eavenson, DCA
Kevin Mason, Rep. Collins (GA-10)
Hudson Ostome
Martha Revelo, Senator Warnock
Hunter Spear, Governor Kemp
Carol Williams, Workforce Development Board
Beverly Young, Bogart

Staff Present:

Julie Ball
Mark Beatty
Carol Cofer
Carol Flaute
Mamie Mills
Sophia Primer
Megan Vogt
Burke Walker

Call to Order

Chairperson Bill Palmer called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed attendees to the June Council meeting and asked everyone to rise and join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairperson Palmer said the May 18, 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 Fred Perriman and seconded by Commissioner Blake McCormack. The motion passed unanimously.



Items of Local Interest

Chairperson Bill Palmer announced that today, three counties would report on "items of local interest." These include Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton Counties. Newton County deferred to the next Council meeting. He invited each county to provide their reports:

Oconee County – Chairman John Daniell

- Construction on the new administration building on Highway 441 is almost complete. A ribbon cutting will be held on July 25, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. A Board of Commissioners meeting will follow.
- The Watkinsville Public Library project should be completed by the end of 2023.
- The City of Bogart was thanked for their assistance establishing the Sexual Assault Nursing Program (SANE) facility and for their donations to the Fire Department.

Oglethorpe County – Chairman Jay Paul

- Resurfacing of 12-14 miles of county roads is underway.
- Construction and Demolition (C&D) landfill had to be closed for two weeks to perform remediation after a notice from the Environmental Protection Agency.
- A local ordinance was passed to allow regulation of sludge dumping.

Walton County – Mayor John Howard for Chairman David Thompson

- The county is using \$9 Million in ARPA funds to replace and extend water lines and add a new water tower.
- Construction has begun on Monroe's new \$130 Million public safety complex.
- Walton and Oconee selected Jacobs Engineering to proceed with the final design for a 16-million gallons per day (MGD) water-treatment plant at the Hard Labor Creek Reservoir.
- An election for a new Sheriff will be held.
- The most recent Census reported a population of 103,065. Residential growth continues across the county.
- Construction on a new Whataburger is underway.

Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Mayor Fred Perriman

Mayor Perriman said the Audit & Finance Committee members met earlier today and reviewed several items. Two items require Council action today.

The first item was the review of the April 2023 financial statements for the 10th month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in excess of expenditures by \$343,029.35. Mayor Perriman made motions to accept the April 2023 financial report. The motions passed unanimously.



Second, the NEGRC's 3-year audit service contract with Rushton & Company will expire on June 30, 2023. Our audit services are normally contracted for a 3- or 5-year period. We would like to extend the three-year audit service contract with Rushton & Company for one year. A Request for Proposal (RFP) for audit services will be issued in 2024 to procure an auditor for a new audit contract. Mayor Perriman made motions to accept a one-year extension for audit services with Rushton & Company. The motions passed unanimously.

Program-of-Work – Mayor Dodd Ferrelle

Mayor Ferrelle said the Program-of-Work Committee met prior to today's Council meeting and reviewed two technical-assistance requests and two project closeouts for the month. They also reviewed the Proposed FY24 Program-of-Work for the Commission's work in the upcoming year.

These two items require Council action today.

First, the technical-assistance requests for the month include:

- **Greene County** requested assistance in developing a grant application to the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council for purchasing environmental controls and preservation supplies to conserve historical and archived county-government documents. The fee for this assistance is \$250.
- **Jackson County** requested assistance in developing an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant application for financial assistance in constructing a sewer-line extension to the Jackson County Airport. There is no fee for this assistance.

The two project closeouts for the month for technical assistance requests were completed and officially closed for the following:

- The **City of Elberton** for assistance with grant administration of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for rehabilitating the downtown Bailey building.
- The **City of Winterville** for assistance completing an update to their comprehensive plan.

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 reviewed the Proposed FY24 Program-of-Work activities for the upcoming year. It includes activities from the Commission's three programmatic and administrative divisions. The Proposed FY24 budget will be presented later in today's meeting and will support these activities.

Based on the Committee's review, Mayor Ferrelle recommended the adoption of the proposed FY24 Program-of-Work activities for the Regional Commission's staff in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.



Planning and Government Services – Mayor John Howard

Mayor Howard said the Planning & Government Services Committee has one item that requires Council action today:

- The Georgia Department of Community Affairs has determined, as of May 18th, that the 2023 update of the Regional Plan adequately addressed the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning. The deadline for Council adoption is June 30th. Based on the Committee's review, Mayor Howard recommended approval of the 2023 update to the Regional Plan in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.

Mayor Howard, the said there are two items that do not require action today:

- The Planning & Government Services Division plans to submit an Expression of Interest by June 30th to participate in the Economic Recovery Corps (ERC) fellowship program. If selected, an economic development fellow will be placed in the Northeast Georgia region to assist with project development and other community and economic development initiatives for a 2.5-year period.
- The Georgia Department of Transportation selected the Northeast Georgia region as a sub-recipient of rural-transit development funding. A regional, rural-transit development study will be performed and facilitated by GDOT and Blue Cypress Consulting over the next 12 months. Local governments will be contacted directly for participation in the input phase of the project.

Personnel – Mayor Doug Haynie

Mayor Haynie said one item requires Council action from the Personnel Committee.

As is required each year, the Personnel Committee conducted its annual performance review of Executive Director Walker. The Committee met in April for this purpose that included our review of Director Walker's activities and accomplishments during the year. The Committee, in its evaluation, believed Executive Director Walker exceeded expectations for the year. Based on the Committee's review, Mayor Haynie recommends approval of Executive Director Walker's performance for this year in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.

Chairman Palmer asked any guests or visitors to introduce themselves.



Executive Director's Report – Burke Walker

Executive Director Walker greeted the Council and thanked everyone for their attendance. He recognized NEGRC staff members: Mamie Mills, Carol Flaute, and Megan Vogt.

Georgia Association of Regional Commissions

Executive Director Walker stated that at the recent GARC meeting, Larry Hanson of the Georgia Municipal Association extended an invitation for free grant-writing training. GMA has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding that was distributed and is awaiting approval from Regional Commissions' Executive Directors.

Area Agency on Aging

Executive Director Walker discussed the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA). These provide Medicare counseling and outreach services in the 12-county region. DHS requires a resolution from the Council to authorize the continuation of these services for the next contract year, which runs from September 1, 2023, to August 30, 2024. The resolution was circulated prior to the meeting for review. Executive Director Walker asked Chairman Palmer if he was in agreement or unless there were questions, consideration of the resolution's approval is appropriate that was followed by a motion from Palmer and a second. The motion carried unanimously.

Development District of Appalachia (DDAA)

Executive Director Walker informed the Council that he would attend the Summer Board meeting of the DDAA in July in Tannersville, Pa. There are four Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) counties in our region: Barrow, Elbert, Jackson, and Madison. The DDAA supports the ARCs and the services they provide in their regions.

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

Recommendation on the Revised FY23 and Proposed FY24 Budgets – Terry Lawler for Mayor Fred Perriman

Mr. Lawler said the Committee 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 originally 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.

Based on the Committee’s review, Mr. Lawler made motions to adopt the FY23 Revised Budget and the FY24 Proposed Budget. The motions passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee Report – Mayor Doug Haynie for Mayor Kelly Girtz (Chairman)

Mayor Haynie said two items in his report today require Council action.

First, the Nominating Committee, as appointed by Chairman Palmer last month, met last week. We considered Councilmembers to serve as Officers and as a private-sector member to fill an upcoming vacancy for the Council Secretary. The nominated Secretary would serve as a Council Officer with the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The nominated Secretary would serve a two-year term.

Mayor Haynie said that the Nominating Committee nominates Mr. Shane Short to serve as a Council Officer and Secretary on the Commission’s Council. Unless there are other nominations from the floor, he said he would like to make the nomination in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.

The second item for Council consideration is the slate of officers nominated to serve two-year terms beginning July 1, 2023. The Officers include Linda Blechinger as Chairperson, John Daniell as Vice Chairperson, and Shane Short as Secretary. Mayor Haynie said that if the Chairman agreed, he would ask for any additional nominations from the floor. There were none. Mayor Haynie said this slate of officers is presented for Council approval in the form of motions. The motions passed unanimously.

Chairman’s Award to Bill Palmer – Mayor Doug Haynie

Mayor Haynie said this Council owes considerable gratitude to our current Chairman, Bill Palmer. Bill served as a Council Officer for six years and guided the Commission’s Council throughout his tenure. He has also served as the GARC Policy member and served on numerous Council Committees. He has shown leadership, friendship, and stewardship through some very tough times. In recognition of your service, Mr. Chairman, please accept the “Chairman’s Award” for



your outstanding leadership to this organization and on behalf of an appreciative Council. Mr. Haynie then presented a plaque to Chairman Palmer and thanked him for his continued service.

Transition of Officers/Oaths of Office – Chairman Bill Palmer

Chairman Palmer thanked Mayor Haynie for his report and the Committee’s efforts. He said two of our newly-elected officers could not be with us today. However, our new Vice Chairperson is here, and I will now ask him to please come forward and receive his oath of office.

Chairman Palmer said it has been a wonderful six years, and he has enjoyed every minute. He thanked the Council for letting him be in his position for the past two years.

He then swore in John Daniell as Vice Chairperson and turned the gavel over to him, serving in Chairperson Blechinger’s absence.

Other Business

Vice Chairperson Daniell reminded the Council they did not meet in July and that the next meeting would be August 17, 2023.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Council, Vice-Chairperson Daniell adjourned the meeting at 1:05 p.m.



Julie Ball, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

August 17, 2023

Date Approved