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Date: February 15, 2024

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Trumps Catering

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## Minutes

### **Members Present:**

Ronnie Boggs  
Michael Coile  
Tom Crow  
John Daniell  
David Dyer  
Dodd Ferrelle  
Pat Graham  
Doug Haynie  
Bruce Henry  
Todd Higdon  
John Howard  
Jesse Johnson  
Janet Jones  
Deborah Krause  
Dee Lindsey  
Blake McCormack  
Wendell McNeal  
Bill Palmer  
Jay Paul  
Fred Perriman  
Shane Short  
Brad Tucker

### **Members Absent:**

Louise Adams  
Marcello Banes  
Phil Brock  
Cary Fordyce  
Kelly Girtz  
Daniel Graves  
Serra Hall  
Tommie Jennings  
Terry Lawler  
Byron Lombard  
Billy Pittard  
Flemie Pitts  
Roy Roberts  
Jim Shaw  
David Thompson  
William Trimier  
Lee Vaughn

### **Guests Present:**

Wendy Bond, Winterville  
Katrina Cochran, Senator Warnock's Office  
Beth Eavenson, DCA  
Mike Fisher, WGI  
Ava Godbey, Congressman Collins' Office  
Luke Hetland, Lt. Governor's Office  
Kevin Mason, Congressman Collins' Office  
Tony Rogers, Jasper County  
Salik Sohani, Senator Warnock's Office

### **Staff Present:**

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

### **Call to Order**

Chairperson John Daniell called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed attendees to the Council meeting and requested that everyone rise and join him in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. He then invited any guests or visitors to introduce themselves.

Chairperson Daniell informed the attendees that the January 18, 2024 minutes were distributed before today's meeting. He called for a motion to approve the minutes unless there were any additions or corrections. A motion was made by Mayor Fred Perriman and seconded by Commissioner Blake McCormack to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.



## **Items of Local Interest**

Chairperson Daniell announced that today, three counties would report on items of local interest. These include Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton Counties. He invited the county representatives to provide their reports.

### **Oconee County – John Daniell**

- The new Oconee County library will open at the end of February and the Wire Park construction project is almost complete.
- Two members of the Board of Education are retiring.
- A change to Homestead exemption will be on the May 2024 ballot. This will start the senior exemption reset to property-freeze assessments at age 65. This will also allow an additional ten-thousand-dollar exemption to those 75 and older. The general Homestead exemption will increase from \$2,000 to \$5,000; in 2035, that general exemption will increase to \$10,000.
- Almost \$9 million in paving will be completed due to TSPLOST funds.

### **Oglethorpe County- Jay Paul**

- Scaling back at the landfill was initiated to allow time to complete the expansion.
- The Sludge ordinance was passed.
- The Solar farm is under a stop work order.
- The two missing Emu's have returned home safely.

### **Newton & Walton Counties – Shane Short**

- Archer Aviation is creating drones for transportation, heavily backed by United Airlines. They are working on drones that would be able to transport human passengers.
- Rivian has decided on a contractor and should begin construction in the next 60 days when the site plan is finalized.
- In Walton County work has begun on a new \$140 million jail. The facility will have a health clinic, counseling and rehab facilities.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Audit & Finance – Mayor Fred Perriman**

Mayor Perriman said the Audit & Finance Committee members met earlier today and reviewed one item that requires Council action today.

The Committee reviewed the December 2023 financial statements for the 6th month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in excess of expenditures by \$162,200.77.

Mayor Perriman made motions to accept the December 31, 2023 financial report. The motions passed unanimously.



### **Program-of-Work – Wendell McNeal for Mayor Dodd Ferrelle**

Mr. McNeal said the Program-of-Work Committee met prior to today's Council meeting and reviewed one project request and five project closeouts that require Council action today.

The project request includes the following:

- Jackson County requested assistance in updating their comprehensive plan. The fee for this assistance is \$20,000.

The five project closeouts include the following:

- Jasper County for their comprehensive-plan update.
- The City of Monticello for their comprehensive-plan update.
- The City of Shady Dale for their comprehensive-plan update.
- The Town of Newborn for their comprehensive-plan update.
- Oglethorpe County for the Firefly Trail Alignment study.

As an additional note, the comprehensive-plan updates mentioned have received approval from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and have been adopted by the respective local governments.

Based on recommendations by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, Mr. McNeal recommended approving the project request and closeouts for inclusion in the NEGRC's FY2024 Program-of-Work in the form of a motion. Mayor Janet Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Planning and Government Services – Mayor John Howard**

The PGS Committee discussed upcoming efforts of the CEDS Committee. Quarterly economic development meetings will be hosted virtually by the PGS Division starting in April. Any members outside of the CEDS Committee are welcome to attend. Mark Beatty can provide information for meetings. There are no items that require Council action today.

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

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

#### **Age-Friendly Application**

Executive Director Walker discussed the recent application submitted to AARP. AARP's national office approved the application in January, and the Northeast Georgia Region is now designated as "Age-Friendly." Kay Sabetta of AARP will come to the NEGRC office to present certificates in a brief ceremony on March 14, 2024, at 11:00 a.m.



### **Legislative Update**

Executive Director Walker discussed HB269 and SB26, which have passed both houses and are on their way to Gov. Kemp for signing. These bills will allow Workforce Development Boards to convene their meetings telephonically or virtually. These bills would allow the Workforce Development Board flexibility in performing its duties.

### **Southeast Crescent Regional Commission Executive Director, Chris McKinney**

Executive Director Walker informed the Council that the Southern Crescent Regional Commission's (SCRC) new Executive Director, Chris McKinney, started on January 3, 2024. The SCRD encompasses a seven-state region including Georgia and eight counties in the NEGRC. Mr. McKinney is a former Regional Commission Executive from South Carolina.

### **AAA Resolution**

Executive Director Walker discussed the AAA resolutions brought before the Council for adoption each year. The NEGRC functions as an Area Agency on Aging (AAA), and the contract must be renewed for the upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024) with the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS). The two resolutions were circulated to Council members before the meeting. These two resolutions would authorize the continuation of the Aging Services and COVID-19 Response Services to the twelve counties in the Northeast Georgia region for the next fiscal year. They also approve the authority of an individual at the Regional Commission to execute/sign the contracts with DHS and the signature is binding upon the entity. Executive Director Walker stated that if there were no questions regarding the two resolutions they could be adopted in the form of a motion.

Brad Tucker made a motion to adopt the resolutions. Mayor Fred Perriman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

### **Other Business**

There was no other business.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business before the Council, Chairperson Daniell adjourned the meeting at 12:49 p.m.

Amber Bailey  
Amber Bailey, Executive Assistant  
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

04/18/24  
Date Approved