



Date: April 18, 2024

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Trumps Catering

Minutes

Members Present:

Marcello Banes
Ronnie Boggs
John Daniell
Dodd Ferrelle
Cary Fordyce
Pat Graham
Doug Haynie
Bruce Henry
John Howard
Deborah Krause
Terry Lawler
Dee Lindsey
Blake McCormack
Bill Palmer
Billy Pittard
Jim Shaw
Shane Short
Brad Tucker

Members Absent:

Louise Adams
Phil Brock
Michael Coile
Tom Crow
Kelly Girtz
Daniel Graves
Serra Hall
Todd Higdon
Tommie Jennings
Jesse Johnson
Janet Jones
Byron Lombard
Bill Palmer
Jay Paul
Billy Pittard
Flemie Pitts
Roy Roberts
David Thompson

William Trimier
Lee Vaughn

Guests Present:

Mike Fisher, WGI
Kevin Mason, Collins GA-10
Mayor Rick Roquemore, City of Auburn
Tony Rogers, Jasper County
Salik Sohani, Senator Warnock's Office
Carol Williams, Workforce Development Board
Amanda Willis, City of Carlton
Srikanth Yamala, Barrow County

Staff Present:

Mark Beatty
Carol Cofer
Peggy Jenkins
Mamie Mills
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. The guests included Amanda Willis from the City of Carlton, Srikanth Yamala, Barrow County Manager, Mayor Rick Roquemore, City of Auburn, and Salik Sohani from Senator Warnock's Office.



Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the March 21, 2024 meeting were reviewed. As there were no changes, Cary Fordyce made the motion to approve. Blake McCormack seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with a unanimous vote.

Items of Local Interest

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

Jasper County – Bruce Henry

- The Sheriff's Office will complete the construction of a \$10,000,000 Detention Center in the first week of June 2024.
- The State Legislature has requested that Jasper County create an Elections Board with an Elections Superintendent by the end of the calendar year. Previously, the Probate Judge performed this function.
- Primitive Campgrounds are under construction in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources that includes eight new dugouts. There will also be a new picnic shelter with picnic tables at the park.
- Planning and Zoning – short term rentals need regulations as the county tries to control growth. They are looking at subdivisions with five acre lots, to avoid crowded housing developments.

Morgan County- Blake McCormack

- Morgan County received a \$25,000 grant from Meta for new wi-fi in the area.
- The new Park construction is on schedule for Spring 2025.
- The NAACP will host a parade and the 25th Annual Madison Fest "Madfest" place on Saturday, April 20, 2024. Madfest will include seventy-five local and regional crafters, garden plants, food trucks, and live music.
- There are eight candidates running for Sheriff. On May 4, 2024, there will be a forum and debate for candidates running for Sheriff and other local offices.
- Local resident, Thomas Hawkes, who died in a fire, was presented with an award from the citizens and community leaders of Morgan County
- The SPLOST referendum was approved in February 2024.

Jackson County- Jim Shaw for Tom Crow

- The United States Census highlights that Jackson County is the fastest growing micropolitan area in the country by percentage and second fastest growing by absolute number. There are over 500 micropolitan regions, which are areas centered on a city of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000.



- The Jackson County School District is probably the fastest growing in the state. Over the past 5 years it has grown by 37% and has increased by more students than Gwinnett County Schools.
- In August, Jackson County Schools will open the second new school in two years and has purchased 170 acres in West Jackson to build new facilities.
- Work is underway on a T-Splost referendum for the November election ballot. The cities and county have just begun the pursuit of an Intergovernmental Agreement on how the funds will be distributed. If they manage an agreement, \$200 million could be raised over six years.
- Jefferson has recently ended its moratorium on new residential developments and annexations.
- Commerce has closed on a property for a new wastewater treatment facility.
- Braselton recently held a grand opening of its newly renovated library.
- By the end of this election cycle Jackson County will have 2 new commissioners, a new Board of Commissioners Chair, a new Sheriff and 2 new superior court judges.

Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Terry Lawler

The members of the Audit and Finance Committee met earlier today and reviewed the financial statements. Last month there was no quorum, the Committee reviewed the January 2024 financial statements for the 7th month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in excess of expenditures by \$205,140.79.

This morning, the Committee reviewed the February 2024 financial statements for the 8th month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in excess of expenditures of \$248,662.99. Chairperson Lawler recommended the Council's acceptance of the January 2024 and February 2024 financial statements, as presented, in the form of a motion. The statements were unanimously approved by the recommendation, and no further motion was necessary.

There was an evaluation of the Request for Proposals for FY24-FY28 audit services. Based on internal evaluation scores, a recommendation is made by the Committee that Rushton LLC be awarded the contract for services for fiscal years 2024 through 2028. Motions were made by Chairperson Lawler to award contract services to Rushton LLC. The motions were unanimously approved by the members.

Program-of-Work – Wendell McNeal

Chairperson McNeal stated that there were five project closeouts:

The five project closeouts include the following:

- The City of Porterdale's USDA Administrative Services.



- The City of Winterville’s CDBG-RDP application for the historical blacksmith building.
- Athens-Clarke County Government – Historical Cobbham Foundation for the old Athens Jail.
- Jackson County’s Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant.
- City of Hoschton’s Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant.

The motions were made by the Chairperson McNeal to accept the closeouts for both months. The motions were unanimously approved by the members.

Planning and Government Services – Mayor John Howard

There is no action required today as part of the report. A point of note is that Jackson County is updating their comprehensive plan, as they are the fourth fastest growing county in the state. With this growth comes the addition of another school district.

Personnel Committee

No report was presented at this time.

Executive Director’s Report – Burke Walker

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

GARC Economic Development Conference

Early next month, Burke Walker, Jody Graichen, Mark Beatty, and Bill Palmer will attend the GARC conference at the Legacy Lodge at Lake Lanier Islands in Buford, Georgia.

Executive Director Walker thanked the council for the requested congressional letters of support for the funding of the building. Two applications were submitted earlier this month, and the last one will be submitted later this month. Staff will continue to research funding sources for implementing the Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR).

ARC in Washington recently approved the annual planning grant with funding at the same level as in previous fiscal years. This covers the counties of Barrow, Jackson, Madison, and Elbert. The NEGRC will match these funds internally. NEGRC is working through DCA and Beth Evanson regionally. Executive Director Walker informed the Council that he will attend an ARC strategic-planning session at DCA later in the month.

Housing Availability

Executive Director Walker informed the Council that NEGRC is internally hosting a regional forum on Friday, June 21, 2024 from 12:00pm to 1:30pm. A RSVP is requested by May 17, 2024. Lunch will be provided courtesy of Jackson EMC.



Other Business

Chairman Daniell informed the Council that the Awards Committee would be convening immediately after the Council meeting to review and vote on the Robert L. and Betty Williford Distinguished Northeast Georgian Award and the Local Government Administrator of the Year. There was no other business.

Adjournment

With no further business before the Council, Chairperson Daniell adjourned the meeting at 12:58 p.m.

Amber Bailey
Amber Bailey, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

6/20/24
Date Approved