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Date: August 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  
Dodd Ferrelle  
Pat Graham  
Doug Haynie  
John Howard  
Tommie Jennings  
Jesse Johnson  
Janet Jones  
Deborah Krause  
Terry Lawler  
Blake McCormack  
Wendell McNeal  
Carol Myers  
Bill Palmer  
Fred Perriman  
Shane Short  
William Trimier  
Brad Tucker

### Members Absent:

Phil Brock  
David Dyer  
Kelly Girtz  
Daniel Graves  
Serra Hall  
Bruce Henry  
Todd Higdon  
Dee Lindsey  
Jay Paul  
Billy Pittard  
Jim Shaw  
David Thompson  
Lee Vaughn

### Guests Present:

Ansley Belton, Blue Cypress Consulting  
Wendy Bond, Winterville  
Katrina Cochran, Senator Warnock's Office  
Beth Eavenson, DCA  
Mike Fisher, WGI  
Amanda Hatton, Blue Cypress Consulting  
Luke Hetland, Lt. Governor's Office  
Allen Hulme, Elbert County  
Hope Iglehart, Senator Ossoff's Office  
Grace Martin, Bogart  
Andy Pippin, GMC  
Tony Rogers, DAJC  
Evan Rosch, Collins GA-10  
Matthew Wilson, GDOT  
Greg Ziesenhene, Collins GA-10

### Staff Present:

Amber Bailey  
Mark Beatty  
Carol Cofer  
Peggy Jenkins  
Mamie Mills  
Burke Walker

### Call to Order

Chairperson John Daniell called the meeting to order at 12:32 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 June 20, 2024 minutes were distributed prior to the meeting. He called for a motion to approve the minutes unless there were any additions or corrections. A motion was made by Mr. Brad Tucker and seconded by Mr. Shane Short to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.



## **Items of Local Interest**

Chairperson Daniell announced that today, four counties would report on items of local interest. These include Barrow, Clarke, Elbert and Greene Counties. He invited the county representatives to provide their reports.

### **Barrow County – Pat Graham**

- The TSPLOST collections began April 1, 2024 and should generate an estimated \$130 million for road improvements over the next five years.
- Several new staff members have joined the leadership team; Wes Geddings, as Deputy County Manager, Trey Wood as Chief Financial Officer and Brian Stewart as Public Information Officer.
- The new Kroger has broken ground. It is 119,000 square feet and will be located on Highway 81 south of Highway 316.
- King Steel is completing its 100,000 square foot manufacturing facility on Bert Day Road near the Barrow airport. They are a structural steel fabricator and will be adding 50 new jobs.
- The county adopted a balanced budget in June and set the 2025 millage rates in July. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that millage rates were rolled back to revenue neutral.
- On July 25, 2024 a mediation session was led by former Attorney General Sam Olens between Barrow county's six cities. Winder is hopeful that their objections will be resolved and a SDS agreement will be adopted without going back to court.

### **Clarke County- Carol Myers**

- Construction on the final Clarke County segment of the Firefly Trail will begin soon. This will span from downtown Athens to the Oglethorpe County line in Winterville.
- Sales tax revenues continue to trend positively so the current SPLOST and TSPLOST packages will sunset earlier than expected. A new TSPLOST referendum will run in early 2026.
- Meissner has broken ground on a new facility that will provide 1700 jobs.
- Filming has begun at the Athena film studio.

### **Elbert County- Allen Hulme**

- A \$1.8 million paving project using TSPLOST funds will begin at the end of September.
- A \$2.7 million LMIG paving project will begin soon.
- The airport resurfacing project is almost complete. This was a \$3.2 million project including the entire runway, taxi way, turn around, and ramp.
- The full-time (24/48) fire department is now fully staffed.
- Ground has been broken on a new County Extension Service Building. This will be a new home for the Elbert County 4-H. There will be large classrooms and meeting rooms for different events.
- Caitlin Dye was hired as Executive Director of the Development Authority of Elbert County, Elberton and Bowman.



- A lot of money has been invested into the county road system, emergency services and the community. Elbert county is expecting big things to happen in the near future.

### **Greene County – Terry Lawler**

- Due to the growth in the county and the limited space in the county administrative building, the county will construct a new building for the tax commissioner, building and zoning departments, and the tax assessor near the existing department of driving services and 911 center.
- The Board of Commissioners updated the existing local ordinance on tattoo parlors by adopting the Georgia Department of Public Health Rules and Regulations for Body Art. There are presently no tattoo businesses in Greene County.
- The Commissioners approved an 8-unit t-hangar expansion at the airport.
- The BOC will have one new commissioner representing district 4. The district 2 commissioner and the chairman had no opponent.
- The Board of Education will have a new chairman and district 5 representative. The district 2 board member was reelected.
- There will also be a new probate judge and tax commissioner due to the incumbents retiring.

## **Committee Reports**

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

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

The Committee reviewed the June 2024 financial statements for the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in excess of expenditures by \$378,388.89. These statements are unaudited and subject to change pending the final FY24 NEGRC audit.

Mayor Perriman made motions to accept the June 2024 financial report. 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 six project requests and two project closeouts that require Council action today.

The six project requests include the following:

- Greene County requested assistance in developing a 2025 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for expansion of their Senior Center. The fee for this assistance is \$6,000.
- The City of Jefferson requested assistance in facilitating a retreat for the City's Downtown Development Authority. There is no fee for this assistance.



- The City of Winder requested assistance in facilitating a Board retreat for the City's Housing Authority. There is no fee for this assistance.
- Barrow County requested assistance in developing a county-wide trails masterplan. There is no fee for this assistance.
- The City of Statham requested assistance in facilitating a retreat for the City's Council and staff. There is no fee for this assistance.
- The City of Oxford requested assistance in developing a 2025 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application for aging water line replacement along various streets. The fee for this assistance is \$6,000.

The two project closeouts include the following:

- The City of Winterville for developing a grant application for the skatepark.
- The City of Oxford for grant administration for a 2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for water-infrastructure improvements.

Based on recommendations by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, Mayor Ferrelle recommended approving the project request and closeouts for inclusion in the NEGRC's FY2025 Program-of-Work in the form of a motion. The motions passed unanimously.

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

The PGS Committee discussed the increase in large housing development DRI reviews in various counties, totaling 7,340 units. Georgia Tech, NEGRC and UGA will collectively be hosting a cyber-security training for manufacturers, small businesses, and local governments on October 22, 2024.

There were no items requiring Council action.

### **Building– Chairman John Daniell**

Chairman Daniell said the Building Committee met prior to the meeting and reviewed updated information about building improvements and alternative options for the headquarters' building.

No action was required as we continue to pursue solutions and consider alternatives.

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

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

### **Private Sector Appointments**

Executive Director Walker stated that as the new fiscal year begins, we are required by our bylaws to have counties appoint or reappoint a Council private sector or non-public member. We look forward to these members participating again this year. Also, Chairman Daniell updated Committee assignments, and that list was distributed with the meeting notice.



### **NEGRC Staff**

Executive Director Walker informed the Council of the recent passing of NEGRC CFO, Sophia Primer's mother and asked Council members to keep Sophia's family in their thoughts and prayers. Alyssa Keaton, a recent graduate of UGA, is our new Administrative Assistant.

### **GARC Annual Conference**

Executive Director Walker stated that the GARC conference is planned for November 6-8, 2024 at the King and Prince in St. Simon's Island. The NEGRC plans to take about 5 staff and 5 Councilmembers. The agenda will include agency speakers, informational sessions, training for staff, and opportunities for Councilmembers from all 12 Commissions to network.

### **CyberArc**

Executive Director Walker informed the Council that he'd recently met with Alex Adair to discuss the UGA/Carl Vinson Institute of Government program called CyberArc. This is a program available to local governments and organizations to assess their cybersecurity needs. The program offers a "risk review" of your systems with the purpose of enhancing cybersecurity awareness while addressing any threats. The assessment comes in a report form, prepared by students, at no cost. Please contact the NEGRC for more information.

### **Southern Crescent Regional Commission**

Executive Director Walker stated that the SCRC announced its 17 grant recipients. Two of those grants were prepared by NEGRC staff. One for Jasper County's food bank and the other for STEM Workforce training in Clarke, Newton, and Walton counties. Each grant is \$350,000. NEGRC is unique in that it covers portions of both the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Southeastern Crescent Regional Commission. For the inaugural grant funding opportunity, we are pleased with the results. Congratulations to Carol Cofer (Workforce Division Director) and Mark Beatty (PGS Division Director).

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 1:18 p.m.

Amber Bailey  
Amber Bailey, Executive Assistant  
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

9/19/24  
Date Approved