



Date: January 16, 2025

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Trumps Catering

Minutes

Members Present:

Ronnie Boggs
Marty Clark
Micheal Coile
John Daniell
Dodd Ferrelle
Pat Graham
Daniel Graves
Serra Hall
Doug Haynie
Bruce Henry
Todd Higdon
John Howard
Janet Jones
Deborah Krause
Terry Lawler
Blake McCormack
Wendell McNeal
Carol Myers
Bill Palmer
Jay Paul
Fred Perriman
Billy Pittard
Tony Rogers
Shane Short
DeAshley Thurman
Brad Tucker

Members Absent:

Marcello Banes
Phil Brock
David Eady
Kelly Girtz
Tommie Jennings
Jesse Johnson
Dee Lindsey
Jim Shaw
David Thompson
William Trimier
Lee Vaughn

Guests Present:

Sallie Fuller, Collins GA-10
Stephen Goad, North High Shoals
Allen Hulme, Elbert County
Sarah King, Colling GA-10
Grace Martin, Bogart
Ben McDaniel, DAWC
Jesus Rubio, Senator Warnock's Office
Salik Sohani, Senator Warnock's Office
Greg Ziesenhene, Collins GA-10

Staff Present:

Amber Bailey
Mark Beatty
Carol Cofer
Eva Kennedy
Sophia Primer

Call to Order

Chairperson John Daniell called the meeting to order at 12:32 p.m. He asked that everyone rise and join him in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Guests or visitors were invited to introduce themselves.

Chairperson Daniell informed the attendees that the October 17, 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 Mayor Fred Perriman 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 Jackson, Jasper, Madison and Morgan Counties. He invited the county representatives to provide their reports.

Jackson County – Marty Clark

- Jackson County will not be opting out of House Bill 581.
- The 2nd phase of the animal shelter construction is underway.
- The transfer station and Jackson County Senior center are both undergoing expansions.
- An additional 61 acres of park land have been acquired.
- A retirement celebration for former Chairman Tom Crow will be held 2/3/25 from 4-6pm at the newly constructed county Administration building.

Jasper County- Bruce Henry

- Bruce Henry has been reappointed as the Board of Commissioners Chairman.
- Rob Alexander is the new Commissioner for District 3.
- The retirement program for county employees has been approved.
- An election board with 3 members has been established and an election supervisor has been hired.
- Construction projects are underway on the Board of Commissions building, Elementary and Primary schools.
- T&F Lumber is expanding their facility by 10,0000 square feet.
- New businesses such as a coffee shop, BBQ restaurant and business park are recent additions to the County.
- A new subdivision is being built on Jackson Lake Rd.
- The Development Authority of Jasper County has a new Director, Tony Rogers.

Madison County- Todd Higdon

- Two new light industrial parks that are 77acres and 170 acres are under construction.
- Seven new businesses totaling around \$150 million have opened in the County.
- The firm SBG, has recently completed a leisure services plan.
- CPL completed work on updating the County's zoning ordinances in January.
- A \$1 million Community Development Block Grant for water improvements.
- The BOC recently voted to move control of the Water department from the IDBA to the County.
- The potential long-term impact of House Bill 581 remains a concern.
- Sludge dumping continues to be an issue in the county.



Morgan County- Blake McCormack

- Two BOC seats are open due to the resignation of Chairman Kurtz and the passing of Donald Harris.
- The new \$25 million recreation department will be completed in April of 2025.
- Sheriff Tyler Hooks will be taking over due to the retirement of Sheriff Robert Markley.
- Kevin Little was hired as the Public Works Director for the Roads and Bridges Department.

Committee Reports

Audit & Finance – Mayor Fred Perriman

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

The Committee reviewed the October 2024 financial statements for the 4th month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in excess of expenditures by \$404,095.30. The Committee also reviewed the November 2024 financial statements for the 5th month of the fiscal year that reported revenues exceeding expenditures by \$394,215.07

Mayor Perriman made motions to accept the October and November 2024 financial reports. 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 four (4) project requests and one (1) project closeout that required Council action today.

The project requests included the following:

- The City of Oxford requested assistance with preparing a Safe Streets for All grant application to support local planning activities. The fee for this assistance is \$1,500.
- The City of Monticello requested assistance with a Historic Resource Survey of their Local Historic District. The fee for this assistance is \$10,000.
- Elbert County requested assistance with the facilitation of their annual retreat. There is no fee for this assistance as costs are covered by the Commission's ARC and DCA Planning contracts.
- Greene County requested a plan implementation meeting for the County's cycle of comprehensive plans. There is no fee for this assistance as costs are covered by the Commission's DCA Planning contract.

The project closeout included the following:

- The City of Winterville's strategic retreat facilitation.



Based on recommendations by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, Mayor Ferrelle made motions to approve these project requests and project closeout for inclusion in the FY2025 program-of-work. The motions passed unanimously.

Planning and Government Services – Mayor John Howard

Mayor Howard said the Planning and Government Services Committee had no items requiring Council action.

Personnel Committee Report – Mayor Doug Haynie

Mayor Haynie said the Personnel Committee met earlier today and reviewed one (1) item requiring Council action. The proposed changes to the Personnel Policies and Procedures (Employee) Handbook and Performance Pay Matrix were distributed to Council members with the meeting notice. The recommended changes are as follows:

- Extending the Performance Pay Matrix from 20 to 25 years and increasing the minimum and all subsequent years by two (2) percent.
- Removing all references to the “20 Step” Pay Matrix
- Adjusting the effective date of the adopted Performance Pay Policy and the deadline for employees’ salaries to match a step within the appropriate pay grade to January 5, 2025.

Executive Committee Report – John Daniell

Chairperson Daniell stated that due to a lack of quorum the Executive Committee met after the Council meeting on November 21, 2024 to approve recommendations from the Audit & Finance Committee as follows;

- Approval of the September 2024 Financial Report.
- Approval of two line-item budget adjustments. One to the General Fund in the form of a decrease to purchased and contract services of \$10,500 and an increase to supplies and materials by \$10,500. Another to Aging Services in the form of a decrease in purchased and contract services by \$45,000 and increase in supplies and materials by \$45,000.

The Executive Committee voted to approve a recommendation from the Program of Work Committee to approve five project closeouts.

- Historic Preservation Fund grant administration assistance for the cities of Union Point and Winterville.
- Comprehensive Plan Updates for the cities of Arcade and Talmo.
- Facilitation of the Winder Housing Authority’s Strategic retreat.

The Executive Committee also voted to approve a recommendation from the Planning and Government Services Committee to adopt the Regional Transit Plan.

The Executive Committee recommended approval of these items and Chairman Daniell asked if there were any questions. Bill Palmer motioned to approve these items with a second from Blake McCormack.



Chairman Daniell stated that the Executive Committee has been in the process of reviewing the current NEGRC bylaws. There will be proposed amendments at the February Council meeting so at least 2/3 of the Council will need to be in attendance to adopt any changes.

Executive Director's Report – Eva Kennedy

Executive Director Eva Kennedy greeted the Council and thanked everyone for their attendance. She had one item to present that required Council action.

GMEBS

Executive Director Kennedy stated that the Georgia Municipal Employee Benefit System (GMEBS) had recently received a favorable determination letter from the IRS for the Defined Benefit Retirement Plan. Each employer using the GMEBS Retirement Plan is required by the IRS to adopt the restated Adoption Agreement as part of the restatement process. The Plan, as approved, incorporates required federal law updates, as well as administrative updates adopted by the Board of Trustees of GMEBS over the last several years. A draft resolution to adopt those amendments was circulated out with the packet for this meeting. She stated that if there were no questions, she'd like to ask that the Council consider adoption and execution of that resolution. Mayor Daniel Graves motioned to approve execution of the GMEBS resolution and Jay Paul seconded.

Legislative Session Start

Executive Director Kennedy congratulated the City of Monroe on being one of the newly designated PlanFirst communities that will be recognized at the end of the month.

The Georgia Association of Regional Commissions has been working on requesting an increase to the level of DCA funding that Regional Commissions receive. That funding is used to support key services we're required to provide, including assistance with comprehensive plan updates. The funding regional commissions receive from DCA for those services has been reduced by 31.5% since 2010. This is putting an increasing strain on Regional Commissions, as we have to combat inflation and increasing competition in the job market. GARC is working with Appropriations to try and get this trend corrected; but if any of you find yourselves with an opportunity to comment on the great work that your regional commission does and the value that an increase to the DCA regional commission planning contract would have, we'd greatly appreciate it.

NEGRC Staff

Executive Director stated that NEGRC staff work to support 3 different authorities in the region: The Joint Development Authority (JDA), the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority (UOBWA) and the Solid Waste Authority of Northeast Georgia (SWA). Executive Director Kennedy would like to work on increasing NEGRC staff pride as well as regional pride. She stated that she'll work to



make sure we're creating opportunities for connection and conversation and finding common ground amongst those in our region.

There were no questions or comments, so Executive Director Kennedy concluded her report.

Other Business

Chairman Daniell reminded the Council that the next meeting would be held on February 20, 2025.

Adjournment

With no further business before the Council, Chairperson Daniell adjourned the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

Amber Bailey
Amber Bailey, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

2.20.25
Date Approved