

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
JANUARY 18, 2018
NOON**

MINUTES

Members Present:

Denson, Nancy
Houston, Lamar
Palmer, Bill
Smith, Jeffery
Rhodes, Lee
Haynie, Doug
Perriman, Fred
Workman, Stone
Dyer, Dave
Padilla, Bob
Ainslie, Andy
Bentley, David
Banes, Marcello
Roseberry, Jerry
Daniell, John
Pittard, Billy
Little, Kevin
Chambers, Joyce
Fordyce, Cary
Ledford, Howard
Roberts, Roy

Members Absent:

Graham, Pat
Blechinger, Linda
Jennings, Tommy
Ferrelle, Dodd
Crow, Tom
Lyon, Tommy
Guest, Larry
Brock, Phil
Shaw, Jim
Scarborough, John
Blackmon, Jody
Perriman, Fred
Turner, Frank
Harden, Amrey
Berry, Rick
Boggs, Ronnie
O'Rourke, Tate

Associate Members Present:

Ouzts, Buddy
Seymour, Joel

Guests Present:

Jimmy Hix*
Vernell Hix
Paul Chambers
Carol Williams
Don Jernigan

*Representing Tom Crow

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Alicia Page, Comptroller
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services
Carol Cofer, Workforce Development Director
Michele Kelley, Area Agency on Aging Assistant Director

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Jerry Roseberry called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff and asked for a motion to approve minutes of the November meeting. **Such a motion was made by Commissioner Billy Pittard and seconded by Mr. Cary Fordyce. The motion carried unanimously.**

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Barrow County: No report was given.

Clarke County: Due to Mayor Denson's illness, she asked Executive Director Dove to give a brief report. Athens was recently profiled as being the 6th in the nation of all cities in job growth, and the unemployment rate continues to decrease and is down to 4.1%.

Elbert County: Economic Developer Rusty Warner is working on the possible location of two industries in the County, and this endeavor would take the cooperation of both the City and County. The City of Elberton recently welcomed two new retail stores to the downtown area. Elbert County Chairman Tommy Lyon will not seek a fourth term. The Highway 72 widening project will be completed by the first of March. The corridor will then be four-laned from Athens to Elberton. Elbert County Memorial Hospital was named #9 in the state as a Top Small Hospital for 2017.

Greene County: The Liberty Connector will move forward when weather conditions permit and should be completed later this year. Supported by the Lake Oconee Area Builder's Association, a new fee schedule will go into effect February 1st that will reduce the number of permits pulled for a typical single-family dwelling. Instead of a building permit along with an electrical permit, a plumbing permit and any other permits, only a single building permit will be needed. The Greene County Commissioners included \$400,000 in the FY2018 Budget for indigent care, which is generated through the Hospital Special Tax District Fee. The Athens Tech's ManufactureReady class of seven graduated recently, and Economic Development Director Sam Young attended on behalf of the County. This initiative is an intensive six-week program that prepares unemployed individuals for success in the field of manufacturing. The Greene County School System was awarded a \$3.15 million grant for the new College and Career Academy. The Publix at Lake Oconee has opened its \$3 million expansion to their existing 65,000 sq. ft. store on Lake Oconee Parkway.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: The Committee met prior to the Council meeting, and members reviewed the financial statements for the five-month period ending

November 30, 2017. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$40,936.74. Financial activity for the period should be approximately 42% of the FY2018 Budget projections overall. A proposed Whistle Blower policy was presented to the Committee with a recommendation for its adoption. After review and discussion, the Committee voted to adopt said policy. The document will be placed in the Regional Commission's Employee Handbook. **A motion to accept the report as presented was made by Mr. Lamar Houston and seconded by Commissioner Pittard. The motion carried unanimously.**

Program of Work:

The Program of Work Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review the following technical assistance requests for the month:

1. **CITY OF NICHOLSON** - Assistance in preparing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for architectural services in developing rehabilitation plan for the former Benton Elementary School. There is no fee for this assistance.
2. **MADISON COUNTY** - Assistance in developing three grant applications to the Appalachian Regional Commission, OneGeorgia Authority, and the Economic Development Administration. These applications will seek funding for water system improvements to support the location of a new company. A fee of \$2,500 is required for the OneGeorgia application.

Based upon recommendation of the Executive Director, **a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY2018 Program of Work, effective January 18, 2018, was made by Commissioner Pittard and seconded by Mr. David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

Planning & Government Services: The Committee met prior to the Council meeting to discuss several items of interest. A draft of the NEGRC's Regional Plan, prepared by staff under the new planning rules, is ready for Committee and Council review. The draft is posted on the NEGRC's website and has also been distributed to the Committee. Any review comments by Council members may be directed to NEGRC staff (Mr. Walker or Mr. Crighten). At the February Council meeting, Council will consider the draft's submission to DCA for review. No action was required by Council at this time.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove introduced Doug Haynie who will serve as the Municipal Representative from Jackson County. Mr. Haynie has served in the Arcade City Government for many years, including multiple terms as Mayor. He is a commercial insurance agent with Reeves Insurance Agency and has been active in the insurance business for the last 34 years.

At this time, Executive Director Dove gave a report on the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB) Program, managed by the State Road and Tollway Authority. The GTIB provides grants and low interest loans on a competitive basis to accelerate transportation project delivery. Since 2009, \$106 million has been awarded via five rounds of funding - \$83 million in grants, and \$23 million in loans. Applicants must be local governments (city, county, regional commissions), community improvement districts, or state government entities (two or more may apply together). Projects must be motor fuel tax eligible, and costs can be related to preliminary engineering, right-of-way, and construction. Investments are usually related to projects that address critical local and state transportation needs including economic development and mobility, demonstrate a high degree of local commitment, include innovative transportation solutions, are close to the start of, at, or under construction, or demonstrate a high degree of feasibility. GTIB will accept loan and grant applications through March 22, 2018, with awards expected to be announced in June. New policy allows LMIG funds to serve as match and repayment source for loans if a project addresses select bridges.

Our nation is in the middle of a public health crisis due to the flood of opioids pouring into its cities and counties. Recently, the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's Executive Directors heard a report on this crisis from James Vaughn, former Attorney and past Commissioner of Monroe County. A team of Attorneys filed a motion to create a federal opioid Multi District Litigation (MDL), and it was granted by the judicial panel on MDLs. This Team of Lawyers is equipped to cut off the opioid supply at the source – the wholesale distributors and manufacturers – and to stop the infiltration of these drugs to the communities, and to help make a difference in U.S. cities and counties. The Team has already been engaged by several Georgia counties.

The Workforce Development Division recently had its yearly monitoring by the State. There was only one finding and one observation, which is the lowest they have ever had. Congratulations to Workforce Development staff!

The February meeting of the Council will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn. Council members will park in the parking lot adjoining the hotel at no cost.

Executive Director Dove advised that the Keynote Speaker, Merrill Wilcox, could not make the trip to Athens from Atlanta due to icy road conditions. She will speak at an upcoming meeting, as schedules allow.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING AREA PLAN

AAA Assistant Director Michelle Kelley gave an update on the Area Plan. The Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA), as amended in 1973, established the Area Agencies on Aging. In 1974, the Northeast Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission was designated as the Area Agency on Aging for the Northeast Georgia Planning and Service Area. The OAA also states that the Area Agency on Aging must create an Area Plan. The GA Department of Human Services/Division of Aging Services,

the State Unit on Aging, requires the AAA to prepare a four year area plan with annual amendments. The area plan describes the Planning and Service Area, its people and resources. The development of the Area Plan involves conducting public hearings; conducting a needs assessment; analyzing data to determine needs and priority areas; updating goals and objectives and creating a budget for the next fiscal year, which runs from July 1st to June 30th. Needs Assessment survey results, public hearing comments, incoming calls for services, and Census data are reviewed to identify and prioritize the four most needed services to meet the needs of older individuals, at-risk adults, and persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers in the region. Currently the four priority services are: Transportation, Home Delivered Meals, Respite and Homemaker. The Area Plan contains goals and objectives that will be followed by AAA Staff and local Service Providers to advance the current service delivery system. The goals focus on several areas, such as, reaching more underserved persons; increasing food security and access to healthy food options; expanding outreach to more Medicare beneficiaries; and ensuring programs and services remain available to those most in need. Eligibility for services is determined by our screening staff, called the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). They are available to speak with anyone about the services and resources available in the region. The Area Plan also includes the budget for the next fiscal year. Much of the budget is designated by legislature or by minimum set asides. The AAA submits the completed Area Plan to the Aging Advisory Council for feedback and approval, and financial documents are approved by the Regional Commission Council. The completed Area Plan is submitted to the Georgia Department of Human Services/Division of Aging Services for final approval by March 1st of each year.

OTHER BUSINESS

The February meeting will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn on Thursday, February 15th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant