

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
OCTOBER 19, 2017
NOON**

MINUTES

Members Present:

Graham, Pat
Jennings, Tommy
Denson, Nancy
Ferrelle, Dodd
Palmer, Bill
Smith, Jeffery
Plott, Roy
Shaw, Jim
Pennamon, Carl
Workman, Stone
Dyer, Dave
Scarborough, John
Ainslie, Andy
Bentley, David
Roseberry, Jerry
Turner, Frank
Daniell, John
Harden, Amrey
Berry, Rick
Boggs, Ronnie
Fordyce, Cary

Members Absent:

Blechinger, Linda
Houston, Lamar
Lyon, Tommy
Guest, Larry
Brock, Phil
Rhodes, Lee
Crow, Tom
Blackmon, Jody
Padilla, Bob
Perriman, Fred
Banes, Marcello
Pittard, Billy
Little, Kevin
Thompson, Greg
Chambers, Joyce
Ledford, Howard
O'Rourke, Tate
Roberts, Roy

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director
Alicia Page, Comptroller
Eva Kennedy, Planner

Associate Members Present:

Seymour, Joel
Adams, Louise

Guests Present:

Brian Johnson
Ryan Moore
Paul Chambers
Beth Eavenson
Cheryl Smith
Steve Smith
Daniela Perry

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 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 the minutes of the September meeting. **Such a motion was made by Mr. David Bentley and seconded by Mr. Cary Fordyce. The motion carried unanimously.**

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Jackson County: Developers are planning to build five million square feet of additional warehouse/distribution space in the County. Two million square feet of existing new space are available now, and two million square feet are under construction. Amazon is up and running in their second distribution center in Jackson County. The facility will eventually provide 1,000 jobs and has an onsite cafeteria that seats 500 persons. The new FedEx Distribution Center is nearing completion. The new culvert installation has been completed on Highway 11 from Jefferson to Winder. Priscilla Murphy, Interim City Manager for the City of Jefferson, was recently named City Manager. Jackson County approved its FY2018 Budget with a rollback in millage rates, but received more tax revenue due to growth. All four high schools in the three school systems surpassed the state graduation rate of 81%, with rates over 94%.

Jasper County: The County received \$750,000 in CDBG funds for improvements to the Senior Center. A SPLOST referendum will be on the Ballot in the upcoming election, and the funds will be used for improvements to the Sheriff's office and upgrades to recreation facilities, among others. The Minneta Crossing Industrial Park located on Highway 83 South is open, and a new prospect is considering the site for possible location. ***Never Too Late***, a residential group home for at risk boys ages 10-18 that are in foster care, will hold open house on October 18th.

Madison County: Chairman John Scarborough advised that after being in office over nine months, they are making a concerted effort to have a more business and people friendly County. The County raised the millage rate this year in order to provide a higher level of services, and a few months back a moratorium was put into place in the County. Over 200 homes are either under construction or permitted at present. Chairman Scarborough praised the school system and its leadership. The County requested and received additional funding from the state to assist in the operation of Watson Mill Park. The County has 111 miles of dirt roads and will be seeking grant funding from DOT to assist with road projects. The old Weyerhaeuser/Trus Joist wood plant off Highway 72 in Colbert will be the site of a 58-megawatt biomass power plant. The plant, owned by Georgia Renewable Energy, uses shredded forestry products to produce energy that will be sold to Georgia Power.

Morgan County: The Hospital Authority acquired a 2%, 25-year loan from USDA for construction of the new hospital, and groundbreaking ceremonies were recently held. Construction of the new high school is underway and is slated for completion in January 2019. A new middle school will be built on the old site and completed by January 2020. Elections will be held in the cities of Madison and Rutledge, and several of the present officials have competition. The Safari Zoo that has been planned in Morgan County for some time is "up and going" again. It is being built on a 600 acre site along Interstate 20. The Cotton Gin Festival

will be held in Bostwick on November 4th. A SPLOST referendum will be coming up in May 2018, and some of the funds will be used for recreation and roads and bridges.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: Members of the Audit & Finance Committee met prior to the Council meeting. Members reviewed the financial statements for the three-month period ending September 30, 2017. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$11,848.56. Financial activity for the period is at approximately 25% of the FY2018 Budget projections overall. Members also reviewed a purchase order to McGarity's Business Products for the purchase of 12 new folding tables that are needed for periodic meetings in the atrium at headquarters. The total expenditure will be \$5,566.67. Meredith Lipson of Mauldin & Jenkins gave the FY17 Audit report, and advised that it was a clean audit with no findings, and received an unmodified opinion. **A motion to accept the financial report as presented, which includes approval of the expenditure of \$5,566.67 for folding tables, and approval of the FY17 Audit was made by Mr. Amrey Harden and seconded by Mayor Roy Plott. 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 OXFORD** – Assistance in updating their Comprehensive Plan. A fee of \$3,000 is required for preparation of two additional planning elements.
- 2. CITY OF AUBURN** – Assistance in updating their Comprehensive Plan. A fee of \$7,500 is required for preparation of two additional planning elements.
- 3. CITY OF COMMERCE** – Assistance in developing an application for Rural Zone designation. The fee for this assistance is \$1,500.
- 4. CITY OF WINTERVILLE** – Assistance in developing a route and parking map to several locations in the City. The fee to develop this GIS map is \$150.

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 October 19, 2017, was made by Mayor Rick Berry and seconded by Mr. Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

Planning & Government Services: The PGS Committee met prior to the Council to discuss several items of interest. Members reviewed information regarding the Commission's FY19 Rural Transit grant application to the Georgia Department of Transportation. This grant application for FY2018 requires authorization and a filing resolution of the Council. After review and discussion, the Committee recommends the application's submission to support the Commission's continued Transit-Planning activities. **A motion to adopt said Resolution was made by Mr. Andy Ainslie and seconded by Mr. Frank Turner. The motion carried unanimously.** The application's materials will be prepared and submitted to GDOT for their review.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove advised of the passing of two persons that were strong supporters of the Regional Commission and has worked closely with them through the years. Allen Stephenson was former Director of the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, and Charles Ivie, former Mayor of Watkinsville, was a member of the Council.

Executive Director Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck will be facilitating the annual retreat for the City of Oxford on Friday, October 27th. This will be the 8th consecutive year facilitating the City's retreat. Principal Planner John Devine will be assisting in the session this year, because Mayor Roseberry wants to focus on the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Member Stone Workman arranged for Law School Dean Bo Rutledge to speak to the Council in November. Executive Director Dove advised that he had heard a lot of good things about Dean Rutledge, and hopes that everyone will try to be in attendance for this presentation.

Executive Director Dove, Ms. Beck, Mr. Burke Walker, and Ms. Carol Cofer visited Georgia Piedmont Technical College on October 16th to meet with Dean Irvin Clark and Joel Alvarado, Director of Community Outreach and Engagement. They wanted to reach out to the Regional Commission with the possibility of partnering on various projects and other opportunities in the future. Mr. Dove and Ms. Beck will attend a ribbon cutting for the new manufacturing building on October 25th.

The Fall Edition of ACCG **County Government Magazine** featured the article ***Regional Commissions Step in to Help Local Government***. A portion of the article focused on NEGRC efforts to assist the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority in development and management of the Bear Creek Reservoir Facility. Many positive comments have been received from local officials in our area regarding the publication.

UPDATE ON RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE JOINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF NORTHEAST GEORGIA

Mr. Ryan Moore, Economic Development Director of Athens-Clarke County former Chairman of the Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia (JDANEG), made a presentation on the seven-county Authority's recent activities. The Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia was organized in 2009 and included the Counties of Elbert, Jackson, Oglethorpe, and Madison. From 2010 to 2013, three additional counties joined – Clarke, Barrow, and Oconee. The Authority meets monthly and for called meetings as needed. The JDANEG is primarily involved in promoting the region and marketing efforts. It works closely with the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD), and NEGRC provides the administrative assistance to the Authority. Activities the Authority has been involved with include the Grow Industry event, Broadband Listening Sessions, GDEcD visits, Strategic Planning 2016, and the annual work plan. The JDANEG is handling the Athens Christian School bond issue, which will result in \$8,000 in revenue to use in continuing to promote the Northeast Georgia Region. JDANEG has been identified as an organization to assist in implementing the Regional Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). The Authority's activities are reported on a regular basis in the Regional Commission's **UPDATE** publication.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW OF THE LOCAL UPDATE OF CENSUS ADDRESSES

NEGRC is assisting the U.S. Census Bureau and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in overseeing the 2020 LUCA for the Northeast Georgia Region. At this time, Brian Johnson, DCA's Director of the Office of Planning and Environmental Management, made a brief presentation on this effort. Mr. Johnson works closely with NEGRC staff on a number of issues. He stated that it is extremely important to have 100% participation from everyone involved in the process. LUCA reviews directly impact the decennial census, which affects the number of Georgia seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and distribution of federal funds. The Census Bureau relies on a complete and accurate address list to reach every living quarters and associated population for inclusion in the census. Highest elected officials should have already received materials from the Census Bureau, and the deadline to register is December 15th, 2017. After Mr. Johnson's presentation, Eva Kennedy, NEGRC Planner and LUCA Coordinator, came forward to address the group. LUCA is the only opportunity offered to tribal, state, and local governments to review and comment on the Census Bureau's residential address list for their jurisdiction prior to the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau relies on a complete and accurate address list to reach every living quarters and associated population for inclusion in the census. The Census is important because it helps the federal government distribute more than \$400 billion in funds annually for infrastructure, programs, and services and helps communities plan for future needs. After the presentations, Mr. Johnson and Ms. Kennedy entertained questions and comments.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on November 16.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant