

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN  
MARCH 20, 2014  
NOON**

**MINUTES**

The March meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, March 20, 2014 at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn. Chairman Kevin Little called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Graham, Pat  
Blechinger, Linda  
Lyon, Tommy  
Palmer, Bill  
Finch, Charles  
Plott, Roy  
Trammell, Gene  
Nalls, Billy  
Dove, Anthony  
Ainslie, Andy  
Perriman, Fred  
Ellis, Keith  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Turner, Frank  
Davis, Melvin  
Harden, Amrey  
Johnson, Jesse  
Little, Kevin  
Roberts, Roy  
Lewis, Vince

**Members Absent:**

Graham, Ernie  
Denson, Nancy  
Eisenman, Emily  
Houston, Lamar  
Guest, Larry  
Bullard, Ed  
Wright, Glenn  
Fenn, Josh  
Crow, Tom  
Thurman, Larry  
Blackmon, Jody  
Gandy, Roy  
Brooks, Stenette  
Ivie, Charles  
Pittard, Billy  
Boggs, Ronnie  
Thompson, Greg  
Fordyce, Cary  
Knight, Harry

**Associate Members Present:**

Ouzts, Buddy  
Seymour, Joel  
Crawford, Charlie

**Guests Present:**

Gary Gerrard  
Dane Thorne  
Stacey Thorne  
Kathy Papa  
Ben Ayers  
Craig Dennis  
Leta Talbird  
Paul Chambers  
Tim Blade  
Dennis Farrell  
Peggy Hackett  
David Dyer  
Carol Williams  
Mario Bolanos

**Staff Present:**

Jim Dove, Executive Director  
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant  
Evans Brinson, Comptroller  
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director  
Peggy Jenkins, Area Agency on Aging Director  
Toshia Lewis, Gateway/ADRC Director

## **CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Kevin Little called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the February meeting. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Commissioner Gene Trammell. The motion carried unanimously.

## **ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Barrow County:** The Safewise Report recently released the top 50 safest cities/towns in Georgia; and in Barrow County, Auburn ranked #1, and Braselton ranked #8. Also, the City of Jefferson ranked #9. Street and road construction in the City of Winder is complete, and the streetscape project is ongoing. The County has completed renovations to the Historic Courthouse, the Courthouse Annex, and the old jail. This was a \$5.1 million project that was funded with SPLOST proceeds. County offices will be relocating back to downtown Winder during the first week in April. Schuetz Container Corporation, a \$45 million investment that will create 110 new jobs, has located in Carl. Mizuno USA has announced that it will relocate to Braselton, creating 150 new jobs. **Golf Week Magazine** rated two Barrow County golf courses in the "*Top 15 Courses You Can Play in Georgia*", those being the Georgia Club and The Legends at Chateau Elan.

**Clarke County:** No report.

**Elbert County:** The County received \$492,000 in LMIG funds. Commissioner Lyon advised that he will not have opposition for Chairman this year. Another Commissioner will not run, and two others will have opposition. The City of Bowman elected a new Mayor and one Councilmember. The Board of Commissioners voted to have a referendum for a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mil increase to build a spec building that will hopefully attract industry and bring more jobs to the County. Over 1,700 jobs have been lost in the area over the past year. Renovations to the Rock Gym are complete, and a theatre company has leased the facility for one year. The County has applied for grant funding to purchase sound equipment and furniture. The Chamber of Commerce 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet will be held in the Rock Gym on Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Greene County:** No report.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Audit & Finance:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review the financial statements for the eight-month period ending February 28, 2014. The account balances indicated a sound financial condition, with cash and near cash assets exceeding total liabilities, excluding the capital lease obligation, by \$797,000. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$3,889. Financial activity for the

eight-month period was approximately 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the annual 2014 Budget. A motion to approve the financial statement as presented was made by Mr. Frank Turner and seconded by Commissioner Anthony Dove. 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. **MORGAN COUNTY** – Assistance in preparing a OneGeorgia EDGE Grant application to support the expansion of Mannington Mills, creating 196 jobs. The application seeks \$300,000 in funding, and the fee for this assistance is \$1,500.
2. **CITY OF MONROE** – Assistance in developing signage for Project Road Share within the City Limits. There is no fee required for this technical assistance that is provided for in the Regional Commission's GDOT contract.
3. **CITY OF SOCIAL CIRCLE** – Assistance in reviewing the City's existing sign ordinance and its future land use map,. Any required ordinance or mapping revisions will be provided after the review and applicable fees are quoted.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the requests for inclusion in the FY14 Program of Work, effective March 20, 2014, was made by Mr. Billy Nalls, and seconded by Mr. Frank Turner. The motion carried unanimously.

**Planning & Government Services:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and discussed several items of interest. Ms. Kathy Papa with the Department of Community Affairs gave a brief presentation on the new PlanFirst Designation. This new designation will recognize communities with a proven track record of implementing their comprehensive plan and a history of good plan development. DCA wants to help local governments showcase how communities use plans to improve the quality of life for their residents. After questions, the Committee then reviewed an updated 2014-2018 Regional Work Program for the previously adopted Regional Plan 2035. Members found the Work Program to be complete and recommended that the Council approve a resolution for transmittal of the Regional Plan's Work Program to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review. The resolution was presented, and a motion to approve the resolution was made by Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Mr. Gene Trammell. The motion carried unanimously. Following DCA's review and comment, the 2014-2018 Regional Work Program will be presented to the Council for consideration at a later meeting.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck facilitated four retreats/planning sessions for local governments in recent weeks. The Elbert County Board of Commissioners held its annual planning retreat on February 21<sup>st</sup>. The session

focused on economic development efforts, along with presentations by constitutional officers and department heads. A joint retreat of the City of Porterdale Mayor and Council, Planning & Zoning Board, and Historic Preservation Commission was held on February 27<sup>th</sup>. Attendees engaged in identification of strengths and weaknesses and developed a list of prioritized short term goals. The Town of Braselton Mayor and Council held its annual strategic planning session on March 7<sup>th</sup>. A "Year in Review" was presented, and attendees reviewed progress on last year's goals and identified prioritized goals for the next twelve months. Finally, a session was facilitated for the City of Elberton Mayor and Council on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Reports were given by various Department Heads, and the Mayor and Council discussed possible ordinance updates and economic and downtown development. Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck have facilitated 100 such sessions since the beginning of this endeavor.

Executive Director Dove will be in Washington, D.C. for five days attending the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) Annual Conference which runs concurrently with the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Annual Conference. He is a member and officer of the DDAA Board, and serves on the NADO Board of Directors, as well. Several members of the group will meet with Senators Isakson and Chambliss on Tuesday. Burke Walker will attend the DDAA session. A complete report on the meetings will be forthcoming.

Executive Director Dove recently participated in the design of a Growth Management Course for ACCG's Life Long Learning Academy at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Also participating were two County Commissioners, a County Manager, and CVIOG/ACCG staff. Most likely, Executive Director Dove will assist with teaching the class on June 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Local Officials Orientation held on February 27<sup>th</sup> was a huge success. Approximately 25 persons attended the session, and reported that it was very helpful and informative. As a result of the orientation, NEGRC has received several requests for technical assistance.

Executive Director Dove made a presentation at the Jackson County Leadership Program Growth Day on March 13<sup>th</sup>. It was a very worthwhile occasion, and he has presented to this group multiple times.

### **AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CONNECTION PRESENTATION**

The Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) is a valuable resource for seniors, persons with disabilities, family members, caregivers, and professionals. It is not a place, but a new way of providing information and assistance, awareness, and access. The ADRCs offer options counseling to assist in planning for long-term services and supports. Clients can learn about their options based on preferences and resources that are available. Through an interview and assessment, a Counselor will learn about what is most important when planning for the future, what are the physical needs, what kind of help does the person need to stay in the home or community, who

is available to offer assistance, what are the financial resources, and eligibility for financial aid. Some of the programs available are benefits counseling, eligibility screening, employment options, family caregiver assistance, housing, legal assistance, in-home services, and how to apply for services/benefits, Medicaid Waiver Programs, prescription drug assistance, private pay services, and transportation services for the elderly and disabled. There are 25,167 resources available statewide and 4,121 in the Northeast Georgia region that offer information and assistance to seniors.

### **COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION IN GEORGIA**

Over the past year, the Council has heard a number of presentations regarding the Coordinated Transportation Program. At this time, Dane Thorne, President of Thorne Transportation, gave a report on coordinated transportation and his involvement in this endeavor. Mr. Thorne is serving as the Department of Human Services (DHR) Subcontractor that is providing transportation services for DHS consumers in Athens-Clarke, Oconee, and Oglethorpe Counties, and it is possible that the firm will be expanding operations into other Northeast Georgia counties in the coming year. Thorne Transportation was started in 2004 with one vehicle and a vision to try to give the best possible transportation service to those in need. In March 2013, he expressed interest in providing transportation in the NEGRC region. The firm has implemented computer software, along with GPS technology, to help make the process run more efficiently. They will strive to find the best possible scenario to deliver the best service, while being customer oriented. The fleet is mainly larger vehicles, and it is anticipated that smaller vehicles will be added to the fleet in the future. He is a great "team player" that is graciously working with both Human Services Providers and other transportation subcontractors to help make DHS Coordinated Transportation a success. At the conclusion of Mr. Thorne's presentation, Mr. Brinson presented a Resolution that ensures that the NEGRC will comply with all rules and regulations regarding the Federal Transportation Administration funding provided for in the DHS Coordinated Transportation Amendment #2 for 2014. A motion to approve the resolution was made by Mr. Turner and seconded by Commissioner Lyon. The motion carried unanimously.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting will be held on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck  
Executive Assistant