

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
FEBRUARY 21, 2013
NOON**

MINUTES

The regular monthly meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, February 21, 2013 at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn. Chairman Jim Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Graham, Pat
Bleching, Linda
Houston, Lamar
Lyon, Tommy
Palmer, Bill
Bullard, Ed
Finch, Charles
Joiner, Jim
Nalls, Billy
Dove, Anthony
Gandy, Roy
Ainslie, Andy
Perriman, Fred
Ellis, Keith
Roseberry, Jerry
Turner, Frank
Davis, Melvin
Ivie, Charles
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Boggs, Ronnie
Johnson, Jesse
Lee, Kay
Lewis, Vince

Members Absent:

Graham, Ernie
Denson, Nancy
Eisenman, Emily
Guest, Larry
Wright, Glenn
Crow, Tom
Pennamon, Carl
Thurman, Larry
Blackmon, Jody
Brooks, Stenette
Little, Kevin
Thompson, Greg
Knight, Harry
Roberts, Roy

Associate Members Present:

Ouzts, Buddy
Horton, Harold
Seymour, Joel
Pitts, Flemmie
Crawford, Charlie

Guests Present:

Peggy Hackett
John Ring
Marsay Simpson
Kathy Papa
Kevin Poe
Bobby McMillan
Donnie Thomas
Jock Connell

Media Present:

Stephanie John

Morgan Citizen

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Evans Brinson, Comptroller
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF JANUARY MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, media, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the January meeting minutes. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Mr. Joel Seymour. The motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Jackson County: The Komatsu expansion is complete, and the \$350 million Toyota Industries Compressor Parts America is scheduled for completion at the end of the year, creating 320 jobs. In the City of Jefferson, Wal-Mart representatives have “backed away” from a possible location along the bypass and will re-evaluate prior to looking at other locations. Also, the City of Jefferson is working with the Department of Community Affairs regarding the Boom Town and Opportunity Zone initiatives.

Jasper County: Mr. Billy Nalls expressed his appreciation for being associated with the Council and its members. He advised that the four new Commissioners were working very well, and the County is lucky to have them. There have been several new restaurants locating in the City of Monticello, and two new industries have located in Jasper County, which means more employment.

Madison County: EPD has given its OK for the County to extend additional water lines throughout the County as needed. Lines are being installed up U.S. 29 to Franklin County. Madison County will then be able to get water from Commerce, Royston, and Franklin County. New industries locating in the region will benefit Madison County, and the new Career Academy in the County will help train a workforce. Commissioner Anthony Dove was happy to report that the County is in good financial shape.

Morgan County: Property taxes in the County had a 5% decrease this year; which is anticipated to be the low, and the housing market is on the increase. Agriculture has an impact of approximately \$65 million on the economy of Morgan County, and an Agriculture Interaction Forum will be held soon to discuss issues with the agriculture community. Baxter and Caterpillar will also have a huge impact on Morgan County, especially in the housing industry and location of suppliers. The County recently completed a Food Hub Feasibility Study. The County and municipalities have been in LOST negotiations for some time; however, it probably will go to Court in April. A \$263,000 Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant was received for construction of a storm shelter that will house 200 individuals. The new website will be online soon.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Human Services: The Committee met at 11:00 a.m. prior to the Council meeting. Given that it was a new Committee, Chairman Melvin Davis provided a handout with a general description of their responsibilities. Peggy Hackett of the Georgia Department of Human Services was asked to provide background on the Coordinated Transportation Program in the region. She presented information on its beginning and NEGRC's involvement since July 1, 2012. She also discussed current providers, potential providers, and future direction. It was the consensus of members that a Request for Proposals should not be issued for FY2014; however, parties wishing to provide or expand transit services during that period should send proposals immediately. The Committee will meet again next month to review any responses. A motion to continue with the existing contract for FY14 was made by Chairman Davis and seconded by Mr. Seymour. The motion carried unanimously.

Audit & Finance: The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the financial statements for the seven-month period ending January 31, 2013. A review of the account balances indicates the sound financial condition of the Regional Commission with cash and near-cash assets exceeding total liabilities, excluding the capital lease obligation, by \$727,000. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$7,410. Financial activity for the seven-month period was approximately 7/12ths of the annual

budget. A motion to approve the financial report 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 request for the month:

1. **CITY OF GOOD HOPE** – Update to the City's Five-Year Short Term Work Program.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance request for the month for inclusion in the FY2013 Program of Work, effective February 21, 2013, was made by Commissioner Billy Pittard and seconded by Commissioner Ed Bullard. The motion passed unanimously.

Planning & Government Services: The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and discussed several items of interest. There are three new members of the Committee including Auburn Mayor Linda Blechinger, Elbert County Private Sector Representative Bill Palmer, and Associate Member Larry Postell, Greensboro City Manager. Members also reviewed the PGS Division's project work for 2013. Strong, regional progress continues to be made in the areas of planning and community and economic development. These items did not require action of the Council.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Annual Newly Elected Officials Orientation was held at the Regional Commission headquarters on Wednesday, January 30th. Over 30 persons were in attendance. Participants heard reports from Executive Director Dove and Department Heads regarding available services provided to the local governments in the region.

Staff continues to facilitate retreats. Planning & Government Services (PGS) Director Burke Walker and Principal Planner Dave Van De Weghe conducted the retreat for the Mayor and Council of Social Circle, and Executive Director Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck conducted retreats for Walton County and Newton County. Upcoming retreats include Elbert County, Braselton, Jefferson, Elberton, and the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee.

The PGS Division held an economic development workshop, ***New Opportunities with Loan and Financing Programs*** at Regional Commission headquarters on February 20th. A number of Representatives from the Department of Community Affairs and the United States Department of Agriculture were in attendance, along with local elected officials and representatives.

USDA PROGRAMS AND THEIR BENEFIT TO YOUR COMMUNITY

At this time, Donnie Thomas, Assistant to the State Director of USDA Rural Development, gave a report on USDA programs and their benefits to communities. The USDA Rural Development programs improve the quality of life for people living in small, rural communities. They provide loans and grants to create or improve fresh water, sewer, and electrical systems. They help low income families buy their first homes, as well as assist developers in providing low-income housing for the elderly and disabled. They work with small and emerging businesses

to create and save jobs, and provide technical assistance to community leaders. In Georgia, USDA Rural Development staff delivers business, community facility, utilities and housing programs. All programs are for rural areas only. Details of each program can be found at www.rurdev.usda.gov/regulationsandguidance.html.

COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION – PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

The next item on the agenda was a report on the Coordinated Transportation Program by Peggy Hackett, Regional Transportation Coordinator. As Chairman Davis alluded to in his report, the Regional Commission has been serving as Contractor for Coordinated Transportation for this region since FY2013. A copy of Ms. Hackett's comprehensive report is attached.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on March 21st.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant