

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN  
AUGUST 15, 2013  
NOON**

**MINUTES**

The August meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, August 15, 2013 at the Athens Holiday Inn. Chairman Jim Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Graham, Pat  
Blechinger, Linda  
Graham, Ernie  
Denson, Nancy  
Eisenman, Emily  
Houston, Lamar  
Lyon, Tommy  
Palmer, Bill  
Bullard, Ed  
Crow, Tom  
Joiner, Jim  
Nalls, Billy  
Dove, Anthony  
Blackmon, Jody  
Gandy, Roy  
Ainslie, Andy  
Brooks, Stenette  
Ellis, Keith  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Davis, Melvin  
Ivie, Charles  
Boggs, Ronnie  
Johnson, Jesse  
Little, Kevin  
Lee, Kay  
Roberts, Roy

**Members Absent:**

Guest, Larry  
Wright, Glenn  
Finch, Charles  
Fenn, Josh  
Pennamon, Carl  
Thurman, Larry  
Perriman, Fred  
Turner, Frank  
Harden, Amrey  
Pittard, Billy  
Thompson, Greg  
Knight, Harry  
Lewis, Vince

**Associate Members Present:**

Ouzts, Buddy  
Seymour, Joel  
Crawford, Charlie

**Guests Present:**

Gene Trammell  
Karen Degges  
Lee Chastain  
Jock Connell  
Ellen Warren  
Leta Talbird  
Rhonda Hawks  
Julian Jackson  
Kirby Atkinson  
Chris Atkinson  
Lamar Palmer

**Staff Present:**

Jim Dove, Executive Director  
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant  
Carol R. Cofer, Workforce Development Director  
Evans Brinson, Comptroller  
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director  
Peggy Jenkins, Area Agency on Aging Director

## **WELCOME AND APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Jim Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the June meeting minutes. Such a motion was made by Dr. Stenette Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Tommy Lyon. The motion carried unanimously.

## **ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Barrow County**: A new GDOT project is ongoing in downtown Winder, and it is the first of its kind in the State of Georgia. Interlocking concrete panels are fabricated offsite and brought in during the evening and installed. The project will take another seven to eight months to complete. Auburn and Winder are in the process of updating their Short Term Work Program, and the County will hold a public hearing pertaining to its update at the end of the month. Auburn has been approved by DCA for Opportunity Zone status, and Winder has also applied for this ranking. Lanier Tech has broken ground for its new campus, and the Board of Education is constructing a Career Academy on the same site. Both of these facilities are scheduled to open in August 2014. The County is nearing completion of the budget; and after five years, the tax digest has stabilized. The Board of Commissioners recently voted to bring in a Consultant to study whether there would be a cost saving by utilizing privatization.

**Clarke County**: A new interchange is underway on Loop 10 at Olympic Drive, and a bridge will be constructed to alleviate the at-grade crossing. Broad Street/Atlanta Highway is being resurfaced through the downtown area. It is anticipated that bonds will be utilized to fund an additional 200 parking spaces at the Classic Center. Telescopic seating will also be added to the Classic Center in order to accommodate ice sporting events. The Downtown Master Plan is almost complete, and new electronic parking meters will be added in the downtown area.

**Elbert County**: All volunteer fire departments in Elbert County have obtained a rating of 4, which will result in insurance savings for area residents. S.R. 368 from Elberton to the South Carolina border and S.R. 172 from Bowman to South Carolina are being resurfaced. Commissioner Lyon has asked the Board of Commissioners to consider a millage increase that will be used primarily for construction of a spec building. The Tax Digest is down this year, and this is the seventh consecutive year that the County budget has been in the black. The ACCG District Meeting will be held on October 21<sup>st</sup> at Smithonia Farm.

**Greene County**: Construction of the new St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital is progressing very well. Along with this new facility, funding and control of indigent care will be issues that must be addressed. Commissioner Ed Bullard asked for advice and counsel from other local governments that have experience with

indigent care issues. The County has divided into quadrants to protect the integrity of agriculture and tourism. The Commissioners have discussed the establishment of an Economic Development Commission that would be responsible for coordinating Greene County's economic development marketing efforts to prospective industry and employers. The County would like to construct a facility that would bring this Commission in with the Tourism Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, the Development Authority, etc. where all of these organizations would be working together for a common vision.

### **APPOINTMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR MEMBERS TO THE COUNCIL**

The Regional Commission Bylaws provide for private sector representation from each of the region's twelve counties. Nominees are chosen by the leadership of each of those counties and submitted to this Council for approval for a one-year term. Nominations have been submitted by each of the counties and are as follows:

<b>Ernie Graham</b>	-	<b>Barrow County</b>
<b>Lamar Houston</b>	-	<b>Clarke County</b>
<b>Bill Palmer</b>	-	<b>Elbert County</b>
<b>Charles Finch</b>	-	<b>Greene County</b>
<b>Josh Fenn</b>	-	<b>Jackson County</b>
<b>Billy Nalls</b>	-	<b>Jasper County</b>
<b>Roy Gandy</b>	-	<b>Madison County</b>
<b>Stenette Brooks</b>	-	<b>Morgan County</b>
<b>Frank Turner</b>	-	<b>Newton County</b>
<b>Amrey Harden</b>	-	<b>Oconee County</b>
<b>Jesse Johnson</b>	-	<b>Oglethorpe County</b>
<b>Harry Knight</b>	-	<b>Walton County</b>

A motion to approve the Private Sector nominations for the twelve counties was made by Commissioner Lyon and seconded by Commissioner Kevin Little. The motion carried unanimously.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Audit & Finance:** Members of the Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the Comparative Statement of Revenues and Expenses for the first month of the Fiscal Year. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$1,786. Financial activity for the month was approximately 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the FY2014 Budget projections. A motion to approve the financial statement as presented was made by Mr. Lamar Houston and seconded by Commissioner Anthony Dove. The motion carried unanimously. Representatives from the auditing firm of Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker were at the Regional Commission the week of August 5<sup>th</sup> conducting their annual audit for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2013. Their report will be presented at the September meeting of the Council.

**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. **JASPER COUNTY** – Assistance in completing the development of their (partially completed) Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan. The NEGRC fee for this assistance is \$6,426 that will be reimbursed through the County's Georgia Emergency Management Administration Grant.
2. **TOWN OF BETHLEHEM** – Update to Town's Short-Term Work Program (STWP) and facilitation of a Strategic Planning Component. The total cost for this assistance is \$2,500 that will be cost-shared by the NEGRC's DCA Planning Grant, resulting in a local fee of \$250.
3. **WALTON COUNTY** – Assistance in developing and administering an OneGeorgia Regional Economic Business Assistance (REBA) grant application to support the \$80 million expansion of the Hitachi Automotive Systems of America facility. The fee for this assistance is \$1,500.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY2014 Program of Work, effective August 15, 2013, was made by Mr. Ronnie Boggs and seconded by Commissioner Little. The motion carried unanimously.

**Human Services:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review and discuss the Money Follows the Person Program and hear an update on the senior centers in our region. The Money Follows the Person (MFP) Program allows elderly and disabled persons that reside in nursing homes or other long-term care institutions to move out and live in their own homes and communities. The state pays for long-term care in the home and community-based setting rather than an institutional setting. If eligible for the MFP program, the state will provide the participant with assistance with security and utility deposits, furnishings, basic household items, moving costs, medical equipment, environmental modifications, and help the individual connect with other community resources for a period of one year. In other business, all senior centers met and/or exceeded programmatic and financial goals. The Northeast Georgia senior programs continue to be held in newer state-of-the-art facilities in comparison to most counties across the state of Georgia. Together, the senior centers provided 265,655 units of congregate meals, home delivered meals, friendly visiting, telephone reassurance, health related assistance, and outreach services to 3,752 persons during Fiscal Year 2013.

**Planning & Government Services:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review and discuss several items of interest. The Council's Regional Work Program Update was forwarded to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in April, and it has been approved. The final step in this process is for the Council to adopt, by resolution, the Regional Work Program Update as required by DCA and recommended by the Committee. That being said, a motion to adopt the Resolution was made by Commissioner Lyon and seconded by Mayor Jerry Roseberry. The motion carried unanimously. This update will remain in effect through Fiscal Year 2014, ending on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

At this time, Director Dove presented highlights of the recently announced Georgia Statewide Transportation Plan/Update. The purpose of the Plan is to combine elements of a traditional, statewide long-range transportation plan with the business case for transportation investment. It will reflect changes in planning context since the last 2005 Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) and the 2010 Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (SSTP). The Plan principles include multimodal, focus on the policy and programmatic rather than project level, and fiscally constrained and aspirational components. Director Dove highlighted other components of the Plan including key differences from previous plans, phases of plan development, existing conditions, trade-off analysis, and stakeholder outreach. The final report is slated to be completed by 2015.

Director Dove and Ms. Beck will be facilitating a strategic planning retreat for the Newton County Board of Commissioners on Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>. The session will focus on several previously identified items, such as transportation, community centers, financial reporting, solid waste, and judicial center expansion. On the following Friday, they will facilitate a retreat for the Morgan County Board of Commissioners. Some of the items to be discussed include employee related issues, ways to maintain the County's agricultural viability, Conservation Use Program, setting priorities for the future, and communication between the Board of Commissioners and pertinent staff.

Director Dove recently attended the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) Summer Board Meeting in Lexington, Kentucky of which he serves as Second Vice President. It was interesting to learn that the Appalachian Regional Commission and Economic Development Administration funding are faring well in congressional negotiations.

At the September Council meeting, Chris Edwards of Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker will present the FY2013 Audit report. He and his staff were in the NEGRC office the week of August 5<sup>th</sup> doing field work, and there are no surprises anticipated with this Audit.

The Governor's Office of Workforce Development (GOWD) recently conducted their second annual audit of the Workforce Development Program. There were only two minor findings; and there were only five observations, which were also very minor in nature. These are being addressed, and a response detailing required action will be forwarded to GOWD.

The City of Monticello was awarded an Employee Incentive Grant in the amount of \$420,000. The funds will be used to build a rail spur and improve drainage facilities for Norton, a new industry. Forty-two jobs will be created, and \$2.6 million in private investment will be generated. Nina Kelly of the NEGRC staff developed the application.

At this time, Director Dove expressed his and the staff's appreciation to outgoing Chairman Jim Joiner. He has been an outstanding Chairman and represented the Regional Commission in an exemplary manner for the past two years.

## **PLANNING & GOVERNMENT SERVICES ACTIVITIES**

The next item on the agenda was a report by Planning and Government Services (PGS) Director Burke Walker on various activities being conducted by that Division. Mr. Walker began his discussion by stressing the importance of Qualified Local Government (QLG) status. It gives local governments eligibility for state loan and grant programs. Since January, the PGS Division has reached out to local governments to offer assistance in any way possible with this issue. At the beginning of January, only 65% of the local governments in the region had QLG status; and that percentage has increased to 85% as of August 1st. The Division has completed and reviewed sixteen local Short Term Work Program Updates, and nine are currently underway. PGS staff is developing seven Pre-disaster Mitigation Plan Updates, and this is the second time the staff has assisted with these plan updates. Mr. Walker also updated the Council on efforts of the Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia (JDANEG). The JDANEG was originally formed in 1994 as a multi-county Development Authority and included Clarke, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton. The reason for its formation was to promote economic development and, at that time, Bioscience efforts. Between 1998 and 2002, four counties requested removal since state law at that time only allowed participation in one development authority. However, during this time, Elbert County joined and the membership was Elbert, Jackson, Madison, and Oglethorpe Counties. The JDANEG requested that the NEGRC provide administrative support in 2012. Oconee County has since joined the Authority, and Barrow County is awaiting accepting resolutions by JDANEG members so they can join.

## **AREA AGENCY ON AGING UPDATE**

At this time, Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Director Peggy Jenkins gave an update on the AAA Division. The AAA partners with the Georgia Department of Human Services to address the needs and concerns of the elderly and disabled citizens of Northeast Georgia. The Division oversees a budget of \$5,791,534 and provides approximately 303,000 units of service to 5,614 persons. Some of the programs available include GeorgiaCares, Elderly Legal Assistance, Community Care Services, Money Follows the Person (reported on earlier in the meeting), Chronic Disease Self-Management, and Community Care Transitions. The projected increase in the 60+ population by 2020 in the Northeast Georgia region is expected to be 134,368. The AAA realizes that there is not enough funding to serve this growing population, but it is seeking other mechanisms to serve the Northeast Georgia elderly and keep them healthy. Since 2006, Georgia has benefited from very small yearly increases in interstate funding; however, sequestration has essentially taken away these increases.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

The Nominating Committee consisted of Buddy Ouzts, Billy Pittard, and Lamar Houston (serving as Chairman). After careful deliberation, the following were nominated to serve a two-year term as an officer of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council:

Chairman	-	Kevin Little
Vice Chairman	-	Frank Turner
Secretary	-	Jerry Roseberry

A motion to accept the slate of officers as presented was made by Mr. Houston and seconded by Mr. Buddy Ouzts. The motion carried unanimously.

## **TRANSITION OF OFFICERS AND OATH OF OFFICE**

At this time, Chairman Joiner administered the Oath of Office to the new officers. (Mr. Turner was not in attendance, and the Oath will be administered at the next meeting). Following the Oath, Chairman Joiner expressed appreciation for being allowed to serve and thanked everyone for their dedication and service to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. He then turned the gavel over to Chairman Kevin Little.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Chairman Little thanked everyone for attending and expressed appreciation for allowing him to serve as Chairman of the Council. He advised that the next meeting will be held on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck  
Executive Assistant