

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN  
AUGUST 16, 2012  
NOON**

**MINUTES**

The August meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup> at Noon at the Athens Holiday Inn. Chairman Jim Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Yearwood, Danny  
Bridges, Robert  
Eisenman, Emily  
Houston, Lamar  
Lyon, Tommy  
Sanders, Bud  
Finch, Charles  
Bicknell, Hunter  
Joiner, Jim  
Cox, Alan  
Nalls, Billy  
Dove, Anthony  
Gandy, Roy  
Ainslie, Andy  
Brooks, Stenette  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Turner, Frank  
Davis, Melvin  
Ivie, Charles  
Harden, Amrey  
Boggs, Ronnie  
Little, Kevin  
Knight, Harry  
Denson, Nancy

**Members Absent:**

Graham, Ernie  
Guest, Larry  
Palmer, Bill  
Wright, Glenn  
Short, Shane  
Thurman, Larry  
Blackmon, Jody  
Perriman, Fred  
Morgan, Kathy  
Pittard, Billy  
Yeany, Russ  
Thompson, Greg  
Lee, Kay  
Roberts, Roy  
Lewis, Vince

**Staff Present:**

Jim Dove, Executive Director  
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant  
Evans Brinson, Comptroller  
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director  
Dave Van De Weghe, Principal Planner

**Associate Members Present:**

Ouzts, Buddy  
Horton, Harold  
Seymour, Joel

**Guests Present:**

Susie Haggard  
Ron Milton  
Jenna Dove  
Beth Evanson  
Bob Thomas  
Vincent Passariello  
Jordan Chinouth  
Tate O'Rouke  
Marsay Simpson

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

Chairman Jim Joiner welcomed members, guests, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June meeting. Such a motion was made by Dr. Stenette Brooks and seconded by Mr. Roy Gandy. The motion carried unanimously.

## **ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Barrow County:** The renovation of Barrow County's historic courthouse complex in Winder will begin on September 17<sup>th</sup>. The Commission approved a \$4.4 million contract with John W. Spratlin and Son. Barrow County and the City of Winder will soon finalize consolidation of dispatching services, and the City will share in the costs of additional personnel required to handle the additional calls. The County has been able to balance the budget for the past two years. \$400,000 in SPLOST revenue will go into the debt service.

**Clarke County:** The Athens-Clarke Commission will have two new members in January. Caterpillar has begun the process of hiring employees in management level. The company will begin equipment testing in August. The addition to the Classic Center is ahead of schedule. Athens-Clarke County is proud of having citizens in the Olympics and bringing home a Gold and Bronze Medal. The Tax Digest has experienced a 2.7% drop. Deputy Manager Bob Snipes has announced his retirement, effective September 7<sup>th</sup>; however, he has agreed to consult on matters pertaining to Caterpillar and the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority. Mayor Nancy Denson advised that she would be traveling to San Antonio, Texas in the near future to see the River Walk development.

**Elbert County:** The County has completed its 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year in the black. The 1,000 ft. extension to the airport runway will be completed by the end of August. Resurfacing of six County roads and some striping are ongoing. The new E-911 system is in operation. A presentation on the State of Elbert County, including Chairman Lyon, the Mayors of Elberton and Bowman, and members of the legislative delegation, was a huge success. Chairman Lyon advised that LOST negotiations are likely headed to mediation. The first reading of the County's Zoning Ordinance will be complete next month.

**Greene County:** The sale of Reynolds Plantation to MetLife has been completed, and Daniels Corporation will be managing the properties. Following the filing of a lawsuit by the NAACP regarding the redistricting effort, maps will now be prepared by the State Reapportionment Office. Construction continues on a hangar at the Greene County Airport. A groundbreaking ceremony recently occurred at the new Good Samaritan Hospital. The second phase of the connector in southern Greene County was completed two weeks ago. A new County Commission Chair and District 4 Commissioner will be seated in January. Greene County LOST negotiations are likely headed to mediation.

## 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. A review of the account balances indicates that the Regional Commission is in strong financial condition. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$1,272, and financial activity for the month was approximately 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the annual FY2013 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. Comptroller Brinson advised that the auditing firm of Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker were in the Regional Commission recently conducting their annual audit for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2012. The Audit report will be presented at the September meeting.

**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 STATHAM** – Zoning Map Update.
2. **ATHENS-CLARKE, ELBERT, JACKSON, MADISON, AND OGLETHORPE COUNTIES** – Administrative support to the Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia. The fee for this assistance is shared among the five participating counties, based on per capita population.
3. **OCONEE RIVER RC&D** – Assistance in implementing a Watershed Plan for a \$31,500 EPD grant. PGS staff will coordinate with Morgan County in developing this plan.
4. **CITY OF WINDER** – Assistance in preparing an Urban Redevelopment Plan.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY2013 Program of Work, effective August 16, 2012, was made by Mr. Lamar Houston and seconded by Mr. Joel Seymour. The motion carried unanimously. 2012.

**Planning & Government Services:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting. The second of three Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meetings was held on August 13<sup>th</sup> at NEGRC headquarters. The meetings continue to have strong participation from Council members, and PGS staff expects to complete the CEDS document by the deadline of August 30<sup>th</sup>. The final meeting will be held on August 27<sup>th</sup>. Another item discussed by members was DRI #2286 in Jackson County, which was found not to be in the best interest of the region. While the finding is advisory in nature, it does require action by the Council. Therefore, a motion to approve the negative finding was made by Chairman Lyon and seconded by Mayor Denson. The motion passed with a majority of the vote. Jackson County Commission Chairman Hunter Bicknell abstained.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Dove gave a summary of the recent T-SPLOST referendum. The referendum passed in three of the twelve regions statewide. He attributed the lack of support to several items including the state of the economy, lack of marketing in regions outside of Atlanta, confusion caused by marketing T-SPLOST in the Atlanta region, and distrust of GDOT by many citizens. State leadership has not shown an appetite for bringing this measure back for a vote in the near future. He entertained several comments and questions from Council members.

Installation of the new roof on the NEGRC annex building is complete, and all ceiling tiles in the facility will be replaced. Also, the E.H. Culpepper Conference Room in the main building will be painted and chair railings installed.

The auditing firm of Clifford, Lipford, Hardison & Parker (CHLP) has completed its work at headquarters, and a report will be given at the Council meeting in September. An independent audit is required on an annual basis by various state and federal grantor agencies.

Executive Director Dove is an appointee to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) of the Commission on Regional Planning. In that role, he meets monthly with representatives of a number of state agencies as they seek to improve interaction among those bodies. Recommendations will be forthcoming from the TCC regarding the enhancement of partnerships throughout the state.

## APPROVAL OF PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES

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 nine of the counties and are as follows:

<b>Barrow</b>	-	<b>Ernie Graham</b>
<b>Clarke</b>	-	<b>Lamar Houston</b>
<b>Elbert</b>	-	<b>Bill Palmer</b>
<b>Jasper</b>	-	<b>Billy Nails</b>
<b>Madison</b>	-	<b>Roy Gandy</b>
<b>Morgan</b>	-	<b>Stenette Brooks</b>
<b>Newton</b>	-	<b>Frank Turner</b>
<b>Oconee</b>	-	<b>Amrey Harden</b>
<b>Walton</b>	-	<b>Harry Knight</b>

Nominations have not been forwarded for Greene, Jackson, and Morgan Counties. A motion to approve the Private Sector nominations for these nine counties was made by Commission Chairman Melvin Davis and seconded by Commission Chairman Dove. The motion carried unanimously.

## **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND THEIR IMPACT**

The next item on the agenda was a report on regional economic development activities by Ms. Susie Haggard, Regional Representative with the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD). Ms. Haggard explained that the GDEcD is the marketing agency for Georgia tourism, film and video, international trade, and global commerce. Statewide, there are 403 projects, up 11%; a total investment of \$5.97 billion, up 32%; and 28,776 jobs created, up 29%. In Region 5, there are 28 projects not including Caterpillar, Toyota or Baxter, a \$296 million investment, and 1,263 new jobs. Foreign investment (Europe, Japan, Korea) is up 30%. Areas with existing facilities are a draw for most companies; however, there is very little inventory left in the region. Caterpillar, Baxter, Toyota, and Kubota facilities were built to suit the project and were site driven. The advantages of locating in this region are transportation (logistics, ports, Hartsfield-Jackson Airport), cost of living, tax structure, right to work/non union, workforce that is young/educated/qualified, training, sites, and buildings. A very active year is anticipated for 2013, as well.

## **NEGA COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

At this time, Comptroller Evans Brinson and Ms. Peggy Hackett gave an in-depth report on the NEGA Coordinated Transportation Program. The Regional Commission contracts with the Department of Human Resources (DHS) to provide human service coordinated transportation to the Northeast Georgia region (11 of the 12 counties). Transportation for Newton County is operated under a separate contract. A detailed report is attached.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting of the Council will be held on September 20<sup>th</sup>.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck  
Executive Assistant

- As Evans mentioned the Regional Commission has contracted with DHS (Dept of Human Resources) Transportation Services Section to provide human service coordinated transportation to the NEGA region; 11 of the 12 counties. Transportation for Newton County is operated under a separate contract with View Point Health.
- The DHS Coordinated Transportation System provides transportation services to the DHS programs (Aging programs, DFCS, A&D Resource Connection); the DBHDD programs (Developmental Disabilities centers, Mental Health programs & clinics); the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (formerly DOL/VR); and several dialysis centers in Clarke and Walton Counties. Clients are transported to program services, to medical appointments and for job training or employment. The HSP determines the eligibility of the riders, and work within the available funding.
- Our contract with the Regional Commission consists of subcontracts with 9 senior centers, Elbert County Transit, Greene County Transit and T&T Transportation to provide transportation to 42 human service providers. In the first month over 14,000 trips were provided.
- The goal of the DHS Coordinated System is to provide safe, reliable, efficient and cost effective transportation to those that have transportation barriers to obtain necessary services and that strive towards independence and self sufficiency. The coordinated system also works with local county transits when possible so that riders may be able to access these systems on their own, which moves them towards greater self sufficiency. For some riders the DHS Coordinated System is a short term solution, for others it is the only means they have to get to their needed services.
- Our transportation providers:
  - Elbert County Transit – Who previously provided transportation through the DOT 5311 Rural Transportation Program to the Senior Center participants and fare box riders in Elbert County, stepped up to the challenge to provide much needed coordination and transportation services to other residents and human service programs in Elbert County.
    - I have known and worked with Rebecca Stephens, the transit manager and senior center director for many years and want to express the good work she has put forth to expand the system in Elbert County.
  - Greene County Transit – Who is operated through the Greene County government by a TPO (Advantage Behavioral Health Systems), also a DOT 5311 Rural Transportation Program. This is one of our veteran systems and are operating as “business as usual” in Greene County. We did not encounter any major changes with this subcontractor.
  - T&T Transportation – Expanded into our region, tripling their coverage area, covering 9 of the 11 counties. T&T also operates in several counties in the CSRA (Central Savannah River Area) and provide transportation to the East Central Hospital. They also operate several counties in the Middle Georgia Area (Putnam and Baldwin Counties).
    - As T&T started up in July, they were able to work with our previous transportation provider, Advantage Behavioral Health Systems utilizing some of Advantage’s vehicles, until the T&T’s new transit style vehicles arrived. Most of these are now in place throughout the region.
    - T&T hired many of the veteran drivers from Advantage, which was a great asset at the startup.
    - Several of our human service providers, clients and families have had to make some adjustments, but T&T continues to move forward in coordinating a safe and reliable system.
- Looking forward... we plan to continue working as a team with the Regional Commission, the subcontractors and the human service programs to strive towards a safe, reliable and efficient transportation system.