

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

**MINUTES**

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

**Members Present:**

Graham, Pat  
Blechinger, Linda  
Eisenman, Emily  
Houston, Lamar  
Lyon, Tommy  
Guest, Larry  
Palmer, Bill  
Bullard, Ed  
Crow, Tom  
Plott, Roy  
Fenn, Josh  
Trammell, Gene  
Dyer, Dave  
Dove, Anthony  
Gandy, Roy  
Ainslie, Andy  
Perriman, Fred  
Bentley, Dave  
Ellis, Keith  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Turner, Frank  
Davis, Melvin  
Ivie, Charles  
Boggs, Ronnie  
Fordyce, Cary

**Members Absent:**

Graham, Ernie  
Denson, Nancy  
Brock, Phil  
Duvall, Valerie  
Blackmon, Jody  
Harden, Amrey  
Pittard, Billy  
Johnson, Jesse  
Little, Kevin  
Thompson, Greg  
Knight, Harry  
Roberts, Roy

**Associate Members Present:**

Ouzts, Buddy  
Horton, Harold  
Crawford, Charlie

**Guests Present:**

Mara Register  
Jamie Dove  
Ryan Virgara  
Pam Mayer  
Karen Degges  
Cheryl Smith  
Susie Haggard  
Beth Eavenson  
Jay Boling  
Guy Herring  
Daniella Belton  
Tate O'Rouke

**Media Present:**

Tia Lynn Lecorchick

**Morgan Co. Citizen**

**Staff Present:**

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

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

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

## **ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Jasper County:** New sidewalks and turn lanes have been installed throughout the City, and turn lanes have also been added along S.R. 83. Jasper County is number two in the State for revenue generated from Agri-Tourism. A television series is being filmed in the area, and cell towers have been constructed.

**Madison County:** The recent Rotary Golf Tournament was a big success. Bids for water line installation will be let soon. ACE Hardware in Danielsville recently celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Annual Christmas Parade will be held in Comer on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Morgan County:** Mannington Mills, a leading manufacturer of luxury vinyl tile, will further expand its facility in Morgan County; and create an additional 200 jobs. This is the second expansion in the past year and will make it the largest employer in the County, with over 500 jobs. The BioScience Training Center at Stanton Springs is slated for completion by March 2015. As the result of discussion in the 2014 Retreat, the County Manager explored the possibility of leasing equipment versus purchasing for maintenance of roads and bridges that would result in savings to the County. After bids were received from various vendors, it was obvious that there would be a huge savings to pursue the leasing option. The vendor will be responsible for maintenance of the equipment, thereby resulting in additional savings. It has been 150 years since the March to the Sea, and a three-hour program pertaining to this event was recently held at the Madison-Morgan County Cultural Center.

**Jackson County:** The County has finished the budget process. The recent Luke Bryan concert went very well without any major mishaps. A grand opening was held recently at HomeGoods, a new 800,000 square foot warehouse and distribution center. It is anticipated that two new industries will be locating in Jackson County. One of these will be housed in the McClure Spec Building in the McClure Industrial Park, and the other will go into the East Jackson Industrial Park in Commerce. The available building inventory has been greatly reduced; however, another 1.9 million sq. ft. facility is under construction. The Highway 53 widening project in Braselton is ongoing.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Audit & Finance:** The Committee met prior to the council meeting and reviewed the financial statements for the four-month period ending October 31, 2014. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$2,472. Financial activity for the four-month period was approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the FY2015 Budget projections. A motion to approve the report as presented was made by Vice Chairman Turner and seconded by Mr. Lamar Houston. The motion carried unanimously. Members also reviewed the Request for Proposal process that staff will undertake in selecting an auditing firm for the next three Fiscal Years. NEGRC is required to periodically go through an RFP process to select an auditing firm. It is anticipated that a recommendation of the Committee will be presented to the Council at the January 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. **ELBERT COUNTY** – Assistance in administration and reimbursement of an ARC grant for the Rock Gym Armory facility. There is no fee required for this assistance.
2. **CITY OF WINTERVILLE** – Assistance in preparation of a grant application to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Recreational Trail Program seeking funding for a trail originating in Pittard Park. The fee for this assistance is \$500.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month to be added to the 2015 Program of Work, effective November 20, 2014, was made by Mr. Boggs and seconded by Mr. David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.

**Planning & Government Services:** The Committee met prior to the council meeting to discuss several items of interest. One item was an update to the Planning & Government Services Division schedule for grant applications. The Committee recommends for Council's approval the addition of one grant, DNR Recreational Trails Grant, and the reduction of the fee amount for the DCA Immediate Threat & Danger Grant. A motion to accept this recommendation of the Committee was made by Commissioner Lyon and seconded by Mr. Bill Palmer. The motion carried unanimously. The updated fee schedule becomes effective November 20, 2014.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director Dove advised that NEGRC had great representation at the Annual GARC Conference at St. Simons November 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>. Council members in attendance included Chairman Little, Chairman Davis, Chairman Lyon, and Mr. Houston. Staff members attending included Executive Director Dove, Ms. Beck, Mr. Walker, Mr. Brinson, Ms. Carol Cofer, Ms. Peggy Jenkins, and Ms. Michelle Kelley. The session featuring Ross King of ACCG and Lamar Norton of GMA was outstanding, as

was a presentation on GDOT activities by GDOT Board Member Jay Shaw and Deputy Commissioner Todd Long. Other speakers were DCA Commissioner Gretchen Corbin and Ben Hames, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development for Workforce Development. There were several significant breakout sessions.

The week of November 10<sup>th</sup> was the time for local government associations to have their district meetings in the region. On Wednesday, Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck attended the ACCG function at Reynolds Landing in Greene County. President Kevin Little and 5<sup>th</sup> District Member of the Board of Managers Billy Pittard welcomed everyone. Representative Tommy Benton was present and joined Todd Edwards and Shawn Adams of the ACCG staff in a legislative roundtable. On Thursday evening, GMA held its 5<sup>th</sup> District Meeting at Nicholson City Hall. Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck were attending another function in Braselton, so Mr. Walker represented NEGRC. The meeting was hosted by Nicholson Mayor Ronnie Maxwell, and Joel Seymour presided. Senator Bill Cowser was presented the Champion of Georgia Cities Award by GMA Director Lamar Norton. Representative Benton was also present at that meeting, along with Senator Frank Ginn.

Executive Director Dove and Ms. Beck facilitated a retreat for Mayor Roseberry and the Council of Oxford on October 31<sup>st</sup>. They have conducted that City's retreat on an annual basis for a number of years. After hearing a financial report from Auditors, participants engaged in exercises to determine the City's positives and negatives, reviewed the previously adopted Short Term Work Program, and set short, medium, and long term goals. Oxford has an outstanding Mayor and Council, and the retreat was very beneficial. They will be back in Newton County in mid-January to facilitate a session for the Board of Commissioners, and in early February, they will conduct a retreat for the Barrow County Board of Commissioners.

Executive Director Dove reminded everyone that NEGRC headquarters will be closed the day after Thanksgiving. This being the last Council meeting of the calendar year, he wished everyone a happy holiday season.

### **UPDATE ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

At this time, Planner Justin Crighton gave an update on Comprehensive Plan preparation and implementation. A new round of meetings between the Regional Commission and local governments is required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to discuss the implementation measures currently underway and how the NEGRC can assist local governments get the most out of their investment in comprehensive planning. Participants in the meeting must include elected leadership of the jurisdiction and other key staff involved with developing and implementing the comprehensive plan. The meetings may be conducted jointly by county, involving county officials and those of the municipalities within the county. A separate, individual meeting with the Commission staff may be held if the local governments prefers. Meeting discussion will include an overview of the most recent Comprehensive Plan; adjustments to the existing vision, goals, and/or policies; discussion of specific

assistance the NEGRC can provide; are local governments on track to maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) status; and relevant provisions of the Regional Plan And Regional Resource Plan. Approximately half of the region's counties will be scheduled to meet in the last half of the 2015 Fiscal Year, and the other half will meet in Fiscal Year 2016.

### **OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE CARL VINSON INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT**

The next item on the agenda was a report by Mara Register, Local Government Program Manager for the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG). Each year, thousands of elected and appointed government officials and administrators work to improve their knowledge and skills through CVIOG. Participants benefit from the advanced instructional tools and expertise that Institute instructors bring to all of their education and professional development programs. Local elected officials, administrators, and staff, as well as Board and Authorities, can benefit from quality, customized training and development opportunities. City and county finance and office personnel can improve their financial management skills or earn certification through training programs offered by the Institute. Those employees too busy to attend classes in person can register for online courses. These are just some of the services available through the Institute, and Ms. Register invited everyone to take advantage of what they have to offer.

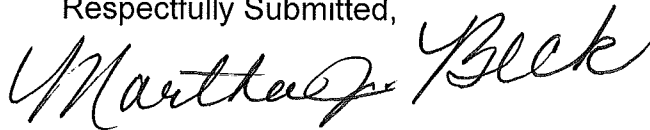
### **OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting will be held on January 15<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