

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN  
JANUARY 21, 2016  
NOON**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Blechinger, Linda  
Ferrelle, Dodd  
Houston, Lamar  
Lyon, Tommy  
Palmer, Bill  
Trammell, Gene  
Dyer, Dave  
Gandy, Roy  
Ainslie, Andy  
Perriman, Fred  
Bentley, David  
Ellis, Keith  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Davis, Melvin  
Harden, Amrey  
Pittard, Billy  
Berry, Rick  
Johnson, Jesse  
Little, Kevin  
Fordyce, Cary

**Members Absent:**

Graham, Pat  
Bartlett, Wayne  
Denson, Nancy  
Guest, Larry  
Bullard, Ed  
Brock, Phil  
Duvall, Valerie  
Crow, Tom  
Plott, Roy  
Shaw, Jim  
Workman, Stone  
Dove, Anthony  
Blackmon, Jody  
Turner, Frank  
Ivie, Charles  
Thompson, Greg  
Chambers, Joyce  
Roberts, Roy

**Associate Members Present:**

Horton, Harold  
Ouzts, Buddy  
Seymour, Joel  
Adams, Louise

**Media Present:**

Blake Giles, **Oconee Enterprise**

**Guests Present:**

Greg Boike  
Andy Seaver  
Josh Findley  
Tate O'Rouke  
Paul Chambers  
Tommy Lowmon  
Daniela Belton  
Beth Eavenson  
Cheryl Smith

**Staff Present:**

Jim Dove, Executive Director  
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant  
Evans Brinson, Comptroller  
Burke Walker, Planning & Government Services Director  
Megan Vogt, Certified Options Counselor

**CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

Vice Chairman Jerry Roseberry 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 minutes of the November meeting. **Such a motion was made by Commissioner Tommy Lyon and seconded by Commissioner Kevin Little. The motion carried unanimously.**

## **INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

Due to the elections in the fall, the Council has four new members, and Executive Director Dove was asked to introduce them. Winterville Mayor Dodd Ferrelle is replacing Emily Eisenman as the Municipal Representative from Athens-Clarke County, and Mayor Rick Berry of Lexington replaced Ronnie Boggs as Municipal Representative from Oglethorpe County. Mayor Ferrelle is a Musician, and Mayor Berry has the Goodness Grows Nursery in Lexington. Two of our new members could not be in attendance; Jim Shaw and Stone Workman. Mr. Shaw will be the Private Sector Representative for Jackson County, replacing Josh Fenn. Mr. Shaw has recently been hired as the new Jackson County Chamber of Commerce Director. Mr. Workman is a new Councilmember for the City of Monticello and will serve as the Municipal Representative for Jasper County. We welcome all of our new members and look forward to working with them.

## **ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Barrow County:** Mayor Linda Blechinger introduced Tommy Lowmon, the new Mainstreet Director. The former Perry-Rainey Institute dormitory is being rehabilitated into a multi-use space for adult learning and community activities. The City is utilizing the Community Development Block Grant Redevelopment Fund (CDBG-RDF) Program to fund part of the renovation in addition to City resources. The Bicycle Trailhead should be breaking ground soon. The site will feature a fountain, seating areas, convenient drop offs, and beautiful landscaping. The area for the Community Garden has been cleared, boxes are being built, and the sod is ready to be installed.

**Clarke County:** No report.

**Elbert County:** The short line rail line between Elberton and Toccoa is now operational. A Called Meeting was held to finalize the 2016 SLPOST project list. Tractor Supply Company, the largest rural lifestyle retail store chain in the United States, will be locating in the BI-LO facility. Renovations to the Historic Samuel Elbert Hotel in Downtown Elberton are ongoing. The Moeller Tech South industry in Elberton makes injection molded plastic parts for auto customers including BMW, Mercedes, Volkswagen, Toyota, and Honda. The company employs 200 persons, and 90% of those Elbert County citizens.

**Greene County:** No report

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Audit & Finance:** The Committee met prior to the Council and reviewed the financial statements for the six-month period ending December 31, 2015. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$3,711. Financial activity for the period was approximately ½ of the annual 2016 Budget projections. **A motion to accept the report as given was made by Mr. Harden and seconded by Mr. David Bentley. 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. **CITY OF JEFFERSON** – Assistance in developing a Historic Preservation Fund grant application. Funds from the grant will be used to prepare a preservation plan for the second floor of the historic Jackson County Courthouse. The fee for this assistance is \$550 that will be paid by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners.
2. **WALTON COUNTY** – Update to the Comprehensive Plan. This update is due June 30, 2017 and includes the municipalities as a joint plan. A “Basic Plan” will be prepared by the NEGRC at no cost to the local governments. Any required, additional plan elements will be provided at a cost-not-to-exceed of \$30,000.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a **motion to approve the Program of Work items for inclusion in the FY2016 Program of Work, effective January 21, 2016, was made by Commissioner Pittard and seconded by Mr. David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Planning & Government Services** – The PGS Committee met prior to the Council to discuss several items of interest. Of particular interest was the Committee’s review of 2015 PGS Projects as requested by local governments. Of the 31 projects requested in 2015, 22 were completed, nine are in-progress, and none were cancelled. Members were pleased that these projects addressed many different needs and benefited the region in numerous areas. No items required action by the Council.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Executive Director Dove expressed how proud he was of staff efforts regarding the Human Resources Classification and Compensation Plan for Oconee County. Chairman Davis approached him several months ago and asked if the Regional Commission could undertake such an effort. Although it is not something that staff has a lot of experience with, and after discussing it with Chairman Davis, it was decided that staff would proceed with the Plan. There were several meetings with Oconee County staff, and the project was completed and submitted to Chairman Davis and the Board of

Commissioners at a meeting in December, and it appeared to meet with their expectations.

Mr. Dove will be hosting a three-day meeting of the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) Board January 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> at the Georgia Center. He is President of the DDAA, which represents the 73 Local Development Districts such as ours that is part of the federally designated Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The ARC extends from New York to Georgia and as far west as Mississippi. In addition to the approximately 20 Board members in attendance, Federal Co-Chairman Earl Gohl and ARC Executive Director Scott Hamilton will be joining the group.

Mr. Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck will facilitate the Annual Planning Retreat for the City of Madison Mayor and Council on January 28<sup>th</sup> at NEGRC headquarters. They have also been in discussion with Elbert County, the City of Elberton, and the Town of Braselton regarding their annual sessions. The Council will be given a report on these efforts as they occur.

Mr. Dove has been invited by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) to assist in reviewing portions of a handbook for local economic developers currently being developed. He will be attending a half-day meeting in early February with others invited by CVIOG as the process begins. CVIOG is heavily involved with local governments, ACCG, GMA, and others in publishing such materials along with training opportunities.

As President of the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions, Mr. Dove continues to attend a Council meeting of each Regional Commission as time allows. Thus far, he has attended five including River Valley, Northwest Georgia, Atlanta Regional Commission, Heart of Georgia, and Middle Georgia. A visit to Southern Georgia is scheduled for late March. At these meetings, Mr. Dove describes the activities of the Association and mentions some of the successes that the Northeast Georgia RC has enjoyed over the years. He reports that each Regional Commission Council is different; however, like the Northeast Georgia Council, everyone is working on matters of mutual interest and concern.

### **OVERVIEW OF AREA AGENCY ON AGING ACTIVITIES**

At this time, Certified Options Counselor Megan Vogt gave an overview of activities of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). The purpose of the AAA is to provide access to information on community resources, allowing older adults and individuals with disabilities to remain independent in their communities. The Options Counseling & Information and Referral Assistance Programs provide certified information counselors linking individuals to the right services and resources at the right time. Staff can also meet individuals in nursing homes to discuss options for returning to the community. The Intake, Screening & Waiting List Management is a screening tool that measures the level of impairment and level of unmet need to determine eligibility. The Aging and Disabilities Resource Database is accessible by area agencies on aging around the

state and focuses on services and programs that benefit older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers. Other services offered include community outreach and education; transportation for those 60 years or older that need to go to doctor appointments, visits to the pharmacy, or shopping; insurance counseling, and caregiver support.

## **REPORT ON UPPER OCONEE WATER COUNCIL PLANNING EFFORT**

The next item on the agenda was a report by Greg Boike of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission regarding the Upper Oconee Water Council Planning effort. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GAEPD), with oversight from the Georgia Water Council, developed the first Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan (State Water Plan), which was adopted by the Georgia General Assembly in January 2008. The State Water Plan included a provision to create 10 water planning regions across the state, each guided by a Regional Water Planning Council. Part of the mission of each council was to create a Regional Water Plan for submittal to GAEPD by the end of September 2011. The Upper Oconee Regional Water Planning Council (Council) is comprised of 29 individuals who represent a cross-section of public and private stakeholders within the Region's 13 counties – Baldwin, Barrow, Athens-Clarke, Greene, Hancock, Jackson, Laurens, Morgan, Oconee, Putnam, Walton, Washington, and Wilkinson. Its vision is to create a regional plan that focuses on managing water as a critical resource vital to the health, economic, social and environmental well-being of its citizens. Eleven full meetings were held to develop the Regional Water Plan between February 2009 and September 2011. Meeting current and future water needs will require periodic review and revision of these plans. Therefore, the State Water Plan and associated rules provide that each Regional Water Plan will be subject to review by the appropriate Regional Water Planning Council every five years. The Council and other appropriate parties have held several meetings to begin this update. Further updates on this effort will be forthcoming.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting will be held on February 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck  
Executive Assistant