

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN  
AUGUST 18, 2016  
NOON**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Graham, Pat  
Blechinger, Linda  
Denson, Nancy  
Ferrelle, Dodd  
Houston, Lamar  
Lyon, Tommy  
Palmer, Bill  
Bullard, Ed  
Crow, Tom  
Plott, Roy  
Shaw, Jim  
Trammell, Gene  
Workman, Stone  
Dyer, Dave  
Dove, Anthony  
Gandy, Roy  
Warren, Ellen  
Perriman, Fred  
Bentley, David  
Ellis, Keith  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Turner, Frank  
Ivie, Charles  
Harden, Amrey  
Berry, Rick  
Johnson, Jesse  
Little Kevin  
Chambers, Joyce  
Roberts, Roy  
Fordyce, Cary

**Members Absent:**

Jennings, Tommy  
Guest, Larry  
Brock, Phil  
Duvall, Valerie  
Blackmon, Jody  
Davis, Melvin  
Pittard, Billy  
Thompson, Greg

**Associate Members Present:**

Horton, Harold  
Seymour, Joel  
Crawford, Charlie

**Guests Present:**

Abby Cox  
Ralph Richardson  
Jon Herschell  
Cheryl Smith  
Andrew Seivers  
John Finley  
Susan Holmes  
Chuck Williams  
Nancy Bobbitt  
Ilka McConnell  
Al McCall  
Barry Dunlap

**Staff Present:**

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

## CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Frank Turner called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June meeting. **Such a motion was made by Commissioner Gene Trammell and seconded by Councilmember Stone Workman. The motion carried unanimously.**

## ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

**Barrow County:** Sales tax revenues continue to trend up, and new home starts are slightly lower than last year but still at a strong level. The County's 260 acre industrial park, Park 53, is progressing. Mas Energy has completed a \$9 million "green energy" project at the Oak Grove landfill, which utilizes three gas fired engines to generate electricity. A new firm, Forrester Roller Company, will be relocating from Gwinnett County into the former Barrow Manufacturing facility in Winder. The County's Economic Development Department received three awards at the Southern Economic Development Council's 2016 Conference; the website received a superior award, and the Economic Development Video won two merit awards. The County has several major road projects scheduled to begin soon. Commission Chair Pat Graham reported that the new County Manager, Michael Renshaw, is doing an outstanding job. The budget process is ongoing, and it is anticipated that there will be no increase in property taxes during the upcoming budget year.

**Clarke County:** A site on Cleveland Road has been approved as the location for a new extension office and fire station. A Committee has been appointed to develop a Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan. The City has located a bike repair stand downtown. Athens Transit recently celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and the City recently received a \$6 million grant from the state to purchase five new hybrid buses. At the same time, the University of Georgia received a \$10 million grant to purchase ten new total electric buses. A new company, VoxPro, has opened in Athens, and will eventually employ 500 persons.

**Elbert County:** The County is now operating the former Bobby Brown State Park, and the revenue for the first year was \$72,000. All campsites located at the Park are reserved for Labor Day and Halloween. The County has completed its budget, and Commission Chairman Lyon advised that it was an \$11.5 million budget with no increase in taxes. The connection of the short line track to CSX has been completed. The County has hired a new Tax Assessor and an Economic Developer.

**Greene County:** Commission Chairman Bullard expressed his pride in the Workplace Fundamentals Program and how successful it has been in the County. The fourth class graduated on August 4<sup>th</sup>; and as a result of this very successful effort, 28 unemployed persons have become employed. Chairman Bullard expressed his appreciation to the Regional Commission and Athens Tech

for their efforts throughout this endeavor and all they have done for Greene County. The final budget review will be held on August 19<sup>th</sup>, the millage rate will be set the week of August 22<sup>nd</sup>, and the budget will be revenue neutral.

### **APPOINTMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR MEMBERS**

The Bylaws provide for private sector representation from each of the twelve counties in the region. Nominees are chosen by the leadership of those counties and submitted to the Council for approval for a one year term. Nominees submitted were as follows:

Barrow	-	Tommy Jennings
Clarke	-	Lamar Houston
Elbert	-	Bill Palmer
Greene	-	Valerie Duvall
Jackson	-	Jim Shaw
Jasper	-	Dave Dyer
Madison	-	Roy Gandy
Morgan	-	David Bentley
Newton	-	Frank Turner
Oconee	-	Amrey Harden
Oglethorpe	-	Jesse Johnson
Walton	-	Joyce Chambers

**A motion to accept these nominations was made by Mayor Fred Perriman and seconded by Mayor Nancy Denson. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Audit & Finance:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting, and members reviewed the Comparative Statements of Revenues and Expenses for the first month of the Fiscal Year. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$1,312. Financial activity for the month was approximately 1/12<sup>th</sup> of the FY2017 Budget.

**A motion to accept the report as given was made by Mr. Amrey Harden and seconded by Mr. David Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.** On another note, representatives of the auditing firm Mauldin & Jenkins were at headquarters the week of August 8<sup>th</sup> conducting the audit for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2016. Their report will be presented at the September Council 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 WINDER** – Assistance in developing a USDA Rural Communities Development Initiative Grant application to benefit the Wimberly Center. The fee for this assistance is \$1,000.

2. **CITY OF WINDER** - Assistance in developing an Appalachian Regional Commission Grant pre-application for a Community Kitchen also at the Wimberly Center. There is no fee for this assistance.
3. **CITY OF LOGANVILLE** – Assistance in developing an Urban Redevelopment Plan and Revitalization Area Strategy. The fee for this assistance will not exceed \$10,000.
4. **OCONEE COUNTY** – Assistance in developing an update to its Comprehensive Plan, due in June 2018. The fee for this assistance will not exceed \$64,185.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, **a motion to approve the Program of Work items for inclusion in the FY2017 Program of Work, effective August 18, 2016, was made by Commissioner Keith Ellis and seconded by Mr. Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Planning & Government Services**

The Committee discussed several items of interest. One item for discussion was the update to the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Next month, each Chairperson will receive a letter requesting appointment of two representatives to serve on the CEDS Committee. Commissioner Lyon will serve as the Chair of the Committee during its eight-month development. The CEDS can be used as the Economic Development component of local comprehensive plans; therefore, this effort is beneficial to each county. No action was required in this meeting.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DOVE'S REPORT**

Staff hit the ground running with the beginning of the new Fiscal Year, with all contracts with state agencies except DCA in place. The FY17 Program of Work is an ambitious one, and staff is working diligently to carry out all responsibilities.

Executive Director Dove attended the Development District Association of Appalachia Summer Board Meeting in Chillicothe, Ohio in July. The meeting included representatives from most of the 13 Appalachian states. It was an opportunity to get together with Federal Co-Chair and the ARC Executive Director and discuss plans for the agency for the next several years. The Appalachian Regional Commission celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015.

A class offered by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government in partnership with the Regional Commission will be held on Monday, August 29<sup>th</sup>. There is no charge, and the class will last for a half day. There will be one class in the morning and one in the afternoon. The class is called MAXGOV, and it is intended to maximize broadband technology usage in your community through digital solutions. The course is specifically developed to teach local government staff and elected officials about broadband technology. Participants will improve the quality of their services, develop informational

and promotional community campaigns, increase citizen involvement, and produce more operations.

In July, Executive Director Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck facilitated a planning retreat for the Lexington Mayor and Council, Historic Preservation Commission, and Downtown Development Authority. The meeting went very well, and participants focused on several items, two of which were the Historic Lexington Presbyterian Church and its future uses and the Meson Trust which assists educational opportunities in the community. At the request of Winterville Mayor Dodd Ferrelle, Mr. Dove and Ms. Beck will facilitate a session in that community in late September.

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM WRAP-UP**

At this time, Workforce Development Director Carol Cofer gave a report on the Summer Youth Program. Ninety youth from the WIOA In-School Youth Program participated in the Summer Work Experience program. There were a total of 75 worksites in our 12 county region, which included non-profit agencies, local governments, and some private sector businesses. New worksites included Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation, Jasper County Pre-School, Madison County Library, and The Tree House in Barrow County. There were additional efforts made to develop worksites that would provide exposure to specific career interests of the students such as Monroe Pediatrics, Young-Levett Funeral Home, and Superior Hair Designs. The Work Experience activity operated for a five-week period from June 6<sup>th</sup> through July 9<sup>th</sup>. Participants worked up to 30 hours per week, and were paid \$7.25 per hour. Ninety-eight per cent of participants completed the Summer Work Experience activity, and twenty-four students successfully secured employment on their own prior to the program. In addition, seven students were hired at their worksites after the completion of the experience, although a number of additional worksite supervisors expressed an interest in hiring their participants pending additional funding.

### **GEORGIA DIVISION OF AGING SERVICES REPORT**

**Abby Cox**, recently appointed as Director of the Division of Aging Services (DAS) at the Department of Human Services, gave a report on the Division of Aging Services. Ms. Cox administers a statewide system of services for older adults, their families, and caregivers. She works closely with other aging organizations and agencies to effectively and efficiently respond to the needs of elderly Georgians. During her presentation, Ms. Cox indicated Georgia has the 11<sup>th</sup> fastest growing 60+ population and the 10<sup>th</sup> fastest growing 85+ population in the nation for the years 2010-2030. During that time frame, Georgia's 85+ population is expected to increase 65.8%. Ms. Cox also emphasized the importance of the Adult Protective Services (APS)/Public Guardianship Office (PGO). The APS investigates abuse, neglect, and exploitation, while PGO serves as guardian of last resort for adults whom the Probate Court has determined to lack sufficient capacity to make or communicate significant responsible decisions concerning their health and safety. She also discussed the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). An ADRC Counselor is often times the first

“touch” an individual has with the aging network. She provided an overview of Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) which supports and assists older Georgians in staying in their homes and communities. Ms. Cox also touched on the Alzheimer’s and Related Dementia State Plan before addressing questions and comments from Council members.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting will be held on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck  
Executive Assistant