

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN
OCTOBER 18, 2018
NOON**

MINUTES

Members Present:

Graham, Pat
Jennings, Tommy
Ferrelle, Dodd
Houston, Lamar
Lyon, Tommy
Palmer, Bill
Haynie, Doug
Scarborough, John
Padilla, Bob
Ainslie, Andy
Bentley, David
Roseberry, Jerry
Turner, Frank
Daniell, John
Harden, Amrey
Pittard, Billy
Boggs, Ronnie
Little, Kevin
Dally, Hal
Chambers, Joyce
Fordyce, Cary

Members Absent:

Blechinger, Linda
Denson, Nancy
Guest, Larry
Smith, Jeffrey
Brock, Phil
Crow, Tom
Shaw, Jim
Pennamon, Carl
Workman, Stone
Dyer, Dave
Blackmon, Jody
Perriman, Fred
Banes, Marcello
Shearon, Dave
Berry, Rick
Ledford, Howard
O'Rourke, Tate
Roberts, Roy

Associate Members Present:

Seymour, Joel
Adams, Louise

Guests Present:

Bill Twomey
Henry Craig
Jeff Christie
Steve Smith
Chuck Williams
T.K. Adams
Carol Williams

Staff Present:

Jim Dove, Executive Director
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services
Alicia Page, Comptroller

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Jerry Roseberry called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September meeting. **Such a motion was made by Mr. David Bentley and seconded by Mr. Amrey Harden. The motion carried unanimously.**

ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Jackson County: The County's millage rate will remain the same, and the Jefferson and Commerce City School Systems lowered their millage rate. The \$4 million Agriculture Center is progressing very well, and \$500,000 has been raised privately. A County-wide Transportation Plan is underway. In Commerce, the \$1.1 million GE facility is under construction. The site has been approved for up to two million square feet of distribution space behind the Tanger Outlet. Southeast Toyota's new facility in Commerce has the approval to move forward. It will be able to process 200,000 vehicles per year. That is about 800 cars a day that it will ship to dealers. Early voting is underway. In Braselton, a developer has been denied for a second time for a two million square feet distribution space near I-85; however, a 2,400 home subdivision in Hoschton received almost no opposition. The first micro-brewery, Braselton Brewing Company, expects to open for business in November.

Jasper County: No report.

Madison County: Senator Frank Ginn has been hired as the Industrial Development Authority Executive Director for Madison County. The County has five subdivisions under development. The graduation rate last year was 91%, which is an improvement over previous years. The water line from Elberton to Madison County that will supply water to the new renewable energy power plant is being installed. ARC grant funds will assist with this project, and leaders are seeking funds from EDA.

Morgan County: Shire recently held the grand opening of its state-of-the-art Georgia Manufacturing Facility, located in Stanton Springs Industrial Park. After a year of extensions and negotiations, the County and municipalities are close to an agreement on the Service Delivery Strategy. A new high school recently opened, and ground-breaking for the new middle school will be held the week of October 22nd. Grand opening for the new hospital will be held in December. The soccer component of a new recreation complex is nearing completion.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit & Finance: Members of the Audit & Finance Committee met prior to the Council meeting, and members reviewed the financial statements for the two-month period ending August 31, 2018. Revenues exceeded expenditures by \$8,060.23, and financial activity for the two-month period is approximately 83% of our remaining FY2019 Budget projections overall. **A motion to accept the financial report as presented was made by Mr. Harden and seconded by Oglethorpe County Chairman Billy Pittard. The motion carried unanimously.**

Program of Work: The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the following technical assistance requests for the month.

- **CITY OF UNION POINT** - Assistance in regaining its Certified Local Government (CLG) status from Georgia's Historic Preservation Division. There is no fee for this assistance unless completion of specific tasks is required.
- **OCONEE COUNTY** - Assistance in developing a 2019 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application. The application will seek financial assistance through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in expanding the County's existing Senior Center. The fee for this assistance is \$2,000.
- **MORGAN COUNTY** - Help in developing Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) application through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The fee for this assistance will not exceed \$1,500.

Based upon recommendation of the Executive Director, **a motion to accept the technical assistance requests for the month for inclusion in the FY19 Program of Work, effective October 18, 2018, was made by Chairman Pittard and seconded by Mr. Bentley. The motion carried unanimously.** 2018.

Planning and Government Services: The Committee met prior to the Council meeting to discuss several items of interest. Members reviewed the Commission's FY20 Rural Transit grant application to the Georgia Department of Transportation. This grant application for next Fiscal Year requires authorization and a filing resolution of this Council prior to its submittal. **A motion to adopt said resolution was made by Elbert County Commission Chairman Tommy Lyon and seconded by Mr. Ronnie Boggs. The motion carried unanimously.** The application's materials will be prepared and submitted to GDOT for their review.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Georgia Department of Transportation will hold its final stakeholder's meeting regarding the State Aviation Plan next Monday in Atlanta. Executive Director Dove has attended all the meetings thus far as a representative of the Regional Commission and the State Association. GDOT contracted with JVIATION as the project consultant. Findings discussed at previous meetings focused on items such as Runway Protection Zones, Land Use and Height Zoning Requirements, Demand Forecasts, Commercial Enplanements and Operations, and General Aviation Operations. Gaps in current system coverage have been examined along with anticipated costs to improve

the system. Once a summary of the plan is produced, a copy will be made available to Council members.

On Friday, October 26th, Executive Assistant Mott Beck and Executive Director Dove will facilitate the annual retreat of the Oxford Mayor and Council. Mayor Roseberry has been busy designing a full agenda for the retreat and will invite experts from several subject areas. During the afternoon portion of the meeting, the retreat will focus on goals and objectives for the coming year.

Executive Director Dove will continue to monitor activities of the House Rural Development Council. The life of that council was originally set to expire at the end of 2018 but has been extended two years. The Council is expected to recommend establishment of a Center for Economic Competitiveness somewhere in North Georgia similar to the one established at ABAC.

Appalachian Regional Commission Federal Co-Chair Tim Thomas plans to visit the region on Wednesday, October 24th. NEGRC staff will be with him in Madison County as he tours the Med-Link project in which the Regional Commission has been involved. This project included applications for funding from several sources to provide for facility expansion. Of a total cost of more than \$5 million, ARC provided \$326,541 to support purchase of new equipment for treatment rooms. Expansion of the facility will allow for a total of 2800 new patients to be served.

GEORGIA FORESTRY COMMISSION UPDATE

At this time, Chuck Williams, Director of the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) gave an update on that agency. The GFC is responsible for providing leadership, service and education in the protection and conservation of Georgia's forest resources. GFC headquarters are located in Dry Branch, Georgia which is south of Macon, and district and county offices are located throughout the state. Services provided by GFC include fire detection, issuing burn permits, wildfire suppression and prevention services, emergency and incident command system expertise, rural fire department assistance, forest management assistance to landowners and communities, the marketing and utilization of forest resource and nature services, and growing and selling quality tree seedlings for planting. Mr. Williams, his staff, and multiple state agencies have expended considerable time and resources in southern Georgia recently in response to the damage inflicted by Hurricane Michael. In addition to making much-needed equipment available, ten chainsaw strike teams were activated to assist in clearing local roads among other efforts. Four Georgia Forestry Commission facilities were destroyed during the storm.

THE EFFECTS OF MENTAL HEALTH ON COUNTIES AND THE JAIL SYSTEM

ACCG staff member Jeff Christie introduced a presentation on the Mental Health Crisis in the state, delivered by Baldwin County Commissioner Henry Craig. ACCG has appointed a standing committee to address this matter, which is closely linked to the

opioid crisis. The impact on county governments and budgets is significant. In Georgia, there are 349,000 adults and 110,000 children diagnosed with mental illness. The illness is too often treated “under the bridge” and in jails. Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion in lost earnings per year. Mood disorders, including major depression, dysthymic disorder and bipolar disorder, are the third most common cause of hospitalization in the U.S. for both youth and adults aged 18-44. Individuals living with serious mental illness face an increased risk of having chronic medical conditions. An estimated 26% of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness, and an estimated 46% live with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders. Approximately 20% of state prisoners and 21% of local jail prisoners have a recent history of a mental health condition, and 70% of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental health condition and 20% live with a serious mental illness. Commissioner Craig, in regard to the issue, stated, “We must decide if we are going to take action, we must have a discussion about what we must do, and what can we do?”

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be held on November 15th.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck
Executive Assistant