**RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**
**Marion County Commission Office**
**August 28, 2019**
**10:30 A.M.**
**Minutes**

**Members Attending**
(Representing 16 Counties)
A.J. Rivers, Crisp County
Barry Waters, City of Ft. Gaines
Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe, RVRC Secretary
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County
Chip Jones, Stewart County
Doug Etheridge, Harris County
Dr. Edward Lee, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
Ernest Jenkins, Clay County
Harry Lange, Harris County
Hobby Stripling, City of Vienna
James R. “Bump” Welch, Marion County
Jayson Griffin, Macon County
Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee Co., RVRC Vice Chair
Jimmy Bradley, Randolph County
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County
Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton
Matt Gunnels, Marion County
Melvin Crimes, Webster County
Pam Jordan, Talbot County
Randy Howard, Sumter County, RVRC Chair
Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Tameka Harris, Taylor County
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
Wally Summers, Sumter County
Tony Kennedy, Webster County

**Members Not Present**
Barry Whitley, City of Butler
Clay Jones, Sumter County
Carlton Wilson, City of Ellaville
Clinton Perry, Jr., Taylor County
Damon Hoyte, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman County
Dr. Carole Rutland, Muscogee County
Evelyn Turner Pugh, Muscogee County
Freeman Montgomery, Talbot County
Greg Barineau, Schley County
James Morton, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
Jeanie Bartee, City of Cordele
Jimmy Babb, City of Lumpkin
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Nelson Brown, City of Americus
Mickey George, Macon County
Ralph Brown, City of Buena Vista
Rebecca Chambers, City of Hamilton
Sam Farrow, Jr., Crisp County
Steve Whatley, City of Cuthbert
Tom Queen, Taylor County

**Others Present**
Brittney Hickom, Department of Community Affairs
Deana Perry, Department of Community Affairs
Casey Bean, Department of Community Affairs
Chris Kelley, Field Rep. for Congressman Bishop
Debbie Stone, City of Lumpkin
Janet Joiner, Vienna, Community Development Director
Janice Jarvis, Sumter County, Fiscal Administrator
Justin Strickland, Marion County
Kathy Burns, Field Rep. for Senator Perdue
Laura Gower, Field Rep. for Senator Johnny Isaakson
Laura Lee Berstein, Cusseta-Chatt. County Manager
Lisa Goodwin, Columbus Consolidated Government
Melissa Moody, AAA Advisory Council
Rebecca White, Randolph Co. Chamber of Commerce
Regina McDuffie, Macon Co., County Manager

---

Equal Opportunity Employer
WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS
Randy Howard, RVRC Chair, brought the regular meeting of the River Valley Regional Council to order at 10:30 a.m. He welcomed council members and visitors. Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee County, RVRC Vice Chairman, gave the invocation and Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe, RVRC Secretary, led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES*
Council reviewed the minutes of the June 26, 2019 council meeting which were either mailed or emailed to council members the previous week for their review. The minutes were also available in the council packet at the meeting.

One change was requested on the minutes under the staff reports. “The Regional Transportation Roundtable will be made up of 1 elected official from each county, “the mayor of each city”, and 2 elected officials from each consolidated government” should read “The Regional Transportation Roundtable will be made up of 1 elected official from each county, and “one mayor elected by the mayors of the county”. The Columbus Consolidated Government, the Unified Government of Cusseta-Chattahoochee County, the Unified Government of Georgetown-Quitman County, and the Unified Government of Webster County will choose a second elected member of the consolidated government to serve on the Regional Roundtable.

Randy Howard, RVRC Chair, requested a motion to approve the June 26, 2019 council minutes including the amendment of the make-up of the Regional Transportation Roundtable. Barry Waters, City of Ft. Gaines, made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented with the amendment; Melvin Crimes, Webster County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

GEORGIA BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM
Deana Perry, Executive Director of Broadband and Brittnay Hickom, Broadband Program Manager, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, updated the council by presenting a PowerPoint explaining the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative Program. Ms. Perry explained the program is to promote and deploy Broadband services throughout the state to unserved areas with a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds. She said Broadband has become essential to businesses, education, healthcare, agriculture, and overall quality of life but that high speed internet is not accessible to many of Georgia’s rural communities. The state has approved rules for a grant program but awaiting guidance from legislature on funding.

REGIONAL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT ADOPTION RESOLUTION*
Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, requested approval of the Regional Plan Annual Report adoption resolution as required by the Department of Community Affairs.

Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to adopt the Regional Plan Annual Report resolution; seconded by Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County. The motion passed with no opposition.
TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT ACT (TIA) ROUNDTABLE PROCESS
Jim Livingston, Executive Director, updated the council on the creation of the Transportation Roundtable. He said there are 4 steps: electing officers, setting guidelines, approve the executive committee nominees and discussing the criteria for the TIA projects. The first two items will be discussed at the first meeting of the TIA Roundtable on September 4 at the county commission office in Buena Vista. The second meeting (date and time to be announced) held will be to approve the executive committee and discuss criteria for TIA projects.

STAFF REPORTS
Jim Livingston, Executive Director, reported for the Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act (WIOA) department. He explained that Janice West, WIOA Director, was unable to attend due to the annual State monitoring of the WIOA program. Compliance, financial and programmatic areas will be monitored and a report will be provided to the RVRC within 30 days.

Katie Howard, AAA Director, stated that the Senior Farmer’s Market was a great success again this year. Twenty dollar vouchers were given to 1,450 seniors that they were able to buy fresh vegetables and fruits from local farmers at the Senior Farmer’s Market. Katie announced that staff is available to speak about AAA subjects at meeting, clubs, churches, etc. If interested call the RVRC office at 706-256-2910.

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, reported the Comprehensive Plan for Clay County, Fort Gaines, Bluffton, and Crisp County were adopted in June. Staff gave a favorable review for the Love’s Travel Stop and County Store, in Crisp County, as a potential Development of Regional Impact was released in July. Staff continues to provide technical assistance or zoning issues to Chattahoochee, Stewart, Talbot and Quitman Counties. The cities of Richland and Hamilton are being assisted on zoning and subdivision related matters. Pre-disaster Mitigation Plan updates are underway for Dooly, Marion, Crisp, Randolph, Stewart, Talbot and Webster Counties. Clay County’s plan has been submitted to GEMA for approval. A Brownfield Assessment grant was awarded to the RVRC in the amount of $600,000 to assess contaminated sites within Sumter, Crisp, Dooly and Macon Counties. Staff is monitoring 3 watersheds; Pataula Creek, Lone Cane Creek, and Mountain Oak Creek. Historic Preservation staff reviewed 9 applications in July and August for Certificates of Appropriateness for the Columbus Board of Historic & Architectural Review.

Grant Richardson, Community Development, reported that staff continues administer 15 Community Development Block Grants. The Immediate Threat and Danger Grant (ITAD) for the City of Bluffton closed out and the Reynolds ITAD is now in the Environmental Review process.

The Department of Community Affairs Annual Fall Conference will be held October 15-17 at the Great Wolf Lodge in LaGrange. Early registration before October 1 is only $200. Hotel rooms are being held at a discounted rate.

Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director presented the Economic Development staff report. She reported that Broadband continues to be the focus of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Initiative but the committee will consider other items at the meeting in September. Staff is continuing to work with potential projects to help fund them through the Revolving Loan Fund program. Sarah requested if anyone knew of someone that is considering opening or expanding a business and needs funding to contact her at 706-256-2910.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, said counties and cities have received a list of addresses that have been rejected by the Census bureau. He explained that each address will need to be checked for accuracy to ensure all people are counted for the census.
Susan Galliger, New Horizons Behavioral Health, announced New Horizons is presenting the Third Annual Children’s Mental Health Symposium, September 13, 2019, at Piedmont Columbus Regional Conference Center in Columbus. She encouraged everyone to attend.

Chris Kelley will be the new field representative for Congressman Sanford Bishop due to the retirement of Elaine Gillispie.

Casey Bean, Department of Community Affairs, announced the Georgia Academy for Economic Development will be holding a Spring 2020 class. Anyone interested in attending can contact Casey Bean at casey.beane@dca.ga.gov for more information.

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, announce the Georgia Association of Regional Commission’s Annual Meeting will be held November 6-8 at the King and Prince Beach and Golf Resort. He encouraged council members to attend if possible.

**ADJOURN**

Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to adjourn; Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

9/25/2019

Randy Howard, Chair

Bruce Hill, Secretary