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RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
Marion County Commission Office
Minutes
November 16, 2016

Members Attending/Representing

- (Representing 16 Counties)
A.J. Rivers, Crisp County
Barry Whitley, City of Butler
Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe
Carlton Wilson, City of Ellaville
Chip Jones, Stewart County
Debbie Stone, Stewart County
Doug Etheridge, Harris County
Dr. Edward Lee, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
Evelyn Turner Pugh, Muscogee County
Fred Gordon, Muscogee County
George Moore, Webster County
Harry Lange, Harris County
Jannie Barte, City of Cordele
Jim Lawrence, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County
Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton
Lee Hubbard, Clay County
Melvin Crimes, Webster County
Mickey George, Macon County
Mike Speight, Crisp County, RVRC Secretary
Pam Jordan, Talbot County
Patricia Goodman, Randolph County
Randy Howard, Sumter County
Rebecca Chambers, City of Hamilton

Staff Present

- Patti Cullen, Executive Director
Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer
Katie Howard, AAA Director
Rick Morris, Planning Director

Others Present

- Russell Lipford, Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker, LLC
David McCoy, Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker, LLC
Bill Twomey, Sumter County
Candice Head, Dept. of Labor
Doug Goodin, Sumter County Chief Appraiser
Sylvester Dumas
Jason Tinsley, Marion County

- Richard Morris, Georgetown-Quit. Co., RVRC Vice Chair
Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Shirley Ann Christian, City of Fort Gaines
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
Tom Queen, Taylor County
Tommy McKenzie, Macon County
Wally Summers, Sumter County

Members Not Present

- Cecil "Butch" McMickle, Marion County
Clark Henderson, Crisp County
Clinton Perry, Jr., Taylor County, RVRC Chair
David Kinsey, Georgetown-Quitman County
Dr. Carole Rutland, Muscogee County
Freeman Montgomery, Talbot County
Greg Barineau, Schley County
Hobby Stripling, City of Vienna
James Morton, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion County
Jason Hoch, Schley County
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee County
Jimmy Bradley, Randolph County
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Nelson Brown, City of Americus
Steve Whatley, City of Cuthbert
Ralph Brown, City of Buena Vista

- Gerald Mixon, Planning Director
Jim Livingston, Community & Economic Director
Janice West, WIOA Director
Tammy Collins, Finance Officer
Becky Holmes, Office Manager

- Edwina Turner, Stewart County
Judy Tucker, City of Columbus
Jimmy Lockerman, Chief Appraiser, Dooly County
Sarah Cook, Center of Innovation for Agribusiness
Ricky Hood, Hamilton



### **Welcome and Recognition of Visitors**

Richard Morris, Vice-chair, brought the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and welcomed guest and council. Mr. Morris welcomed new visitors Jimmy Lockerman and guest speaker, Sarah Cook. Mr. Morris then led the council in prayer and Mike Speight, Secretary, led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes\***

Council reviewed the minutes of the October 26, 2016 council meeting. There being no changes to the minutes, Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Jeanie Bartee, City of Cordele, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Review and Approval of FY2016 Independent Audit Report\***

Russell Lipford and David McCoy, CPA, of Clifton, Lipford, Hardison and Parker, LLC presented the River Valley Regional Commission's Independent Audit Report for FY2016. Mr. Lipford stated that they had met with the Finance Committee before the council meeting to review and discuss the report in detail. He explained that there were no findings and the opinion was favorable.

It was reported that the Finance Committee had voted to approve the audit report and made a motion to bring it before the Council. Knox Blackmar seconded the motion to accept the FY2016 Independent Audit Report as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Growing Georgia's Agribusiness Industry**

Sarah Cook, Project Manager for the Center of Innovation for Agribusiness, gave a presentation about the importance of the agribusiness industry to the region. She explained that agribusiness is the largest industry in the State of Georgia contributing \$74.3 billion to Georgia's economy. Ms. Cook explained that the Center of Innovation for Agribusiness links businesses to partners that help food entrepreneurs start, grow or expand their operations. Her office also assist with the growth and development of agribusiness by providing help to new businesses, food business development and new agriculture technology. She said that locally grown foods are now being distributed regionally and internationally. She asked that if anyone would like to know more about the Center of Innovation for Agribusiness or needs help to call her office in Tifton Georgia.

### **Private Industry Appointment\***

Patti Cullen, Executive Director, explained that Chair Clinton Perry, Jr. had chosen not to seek re-election on the Taylor County Commission and was therefore no longer eligible to remain as a county official on the River Valley Regional Council. She then asked council to appoint Clinton Perry, Jr. as a Private Industry Appointee. Bruce Hill, Mayor City of Oglethorpe, made a motion to approve Mr. Perry as a Private Industry Appointee; Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Cullen said that Mike Speight, a Private Industry Appointee, was moving out of the area and will no longer be eligible to serve on the council. She then presented Mr. Speight with a plaque and thanked him for his service on the council and in the region. Patti then said that Mr. George Moore, Commission Chair for Webster County, did not run for re-election and would no longer be eligible to remain on the council as an elected official appointee. She then presented him with a plaque and thanked him as well for his service on the council and in the region.

### **Resolution Authorizing Application for Section 5311 Funding\***

Jarrold McCarthy, Mobility Manager, requested authorization to submit an application for Section 5311 funding for transit endeavors. Jarrold explained that funds would help to coordinate vehicles to multiple programs, coordinate across boundaries, and provide cost analysis to different systems. He also explained

[Chattahoochee](#) | [Clay](#) | [Crisp](#) | [Dooly](#) | [Harris](#) | [Macon](#) | [Marion](#) | [Muscogee](#)  
[Quitman](#) | [Randolph](#) | [Schley](#) | [Stewart](#) | [Sumter](#) | [Talbot](#) | [Taylor](#) | [Webster](#)



that a good transit system helps to maintain the population in the cities and counties by giving citizens a reliable mode of transportation to and from work.

Patricia Goodman, Randolph County, made a motion to approved authorization to submit an application for Section 5311 funding; Evelyn Turner-Pugh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Resolution Authorizing Application for EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant\***

Jim Livingston, Community and Economic Development Director, requested authorization to submit an application for an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. Jim said the application would focus on sites in the four-county area of Crisp, Dooly, Macon, and Sumter counties, however it may be expanded out to other counties at a later date.

Terrell Hudson, Dooly County, made a motion to approve authorization to submit an application for an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant; Harry Lange, Harris County, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Staff Reports**

Jim Livingston, Community and Economic Development Director, presented the staff report for his department. He explained that staff would be submitting Community Development Block Grant applications for twenty (20) projects thru out the 16 county area. He said staff continues to work on current projects with several near closeout. Jim announced that the Columbus State University Georgia Film Academy held their first graduation in Columbus and that graduates were excited to begin work in the film industry.

Katie Howard, Area Agency on Aging Director, presented the staff report for her department. She explained how the waiting lists for senior services are calculated, using guidelines set by the state, with the most in need of services being served first. These services are case management, congregate meals, home delivered meals, homemaker services, respite care, in-home services and personal care services. Katie also explained what each of the services provide and said if anyone needed any of the services or knows someone who does to call the Aging and Disability Services (706-256-2900) at the RVRC office for a screening. She said the deadline is December 9<sup>th</sup> for Open Enrollment to make any changes to Medicare plans. Katie said if anyone needed help or knew of an organization that would like to have a staff member speak to their group to call the RVRC office.

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, presented the staff report for his department. He said that staff continues to provide zoning assistance to Talbot, Chattahoochee, Stewart and Quitman Counties and the cities of Pine Mountain, Richland, Hamilton, and Butler. The GIS staff is working with several counties updating their tax parcel maps. A proposal is under consideration to update the City of Oglethorpe's cemetery map and plot records. Gerald said that GIS staff is also helping Randolph County assemble their E-911 data to merge with the new E-911 system. Gerald said the Historic Preservation Commission held a training, in Columbus, on November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. The RVRC Historic Preservation Planner gave a grant writing presentation and assisted with a Walking Tour of the Original City Historic District. He said staff is also gathering information for the City of Vienna concerning the Dooly Campground National Register Nomination. Gerald said the new transit provider, Medical Transport of Georgia, is going very well.

Janice West, WIOA Director, presented the staff report for her department. Janice said that health care careers are in high demand throughout the 16 county area. A regional meeting was held October 26<sup>th</sup> about the grant process for the High Demand Career Initiative (HDIC) grant which can be used to support regional sector healthcare initiatives. Grants may be awarded up to \$250,000 for a two year period.

Chattahoochee | Clay | Crisp | Dooly | Harris | Macon | Marion | Muscogee  
Quitman | Randolph | Schley | Stewart | Sumter | Talbot | Taylor | Webster

Equal Opportunity Employer

She said one activity of the WIOA program was On-The-Job Training (OJT). Paxen Learning Center began as a provider for this program and they are beginning to acquire new contracts with companies to provide OJT. Employers will receive 50-75 percent reimbursement for OJT wages.

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, explained that the finance committee did meet before the regular council meeting to discuss the FY2016 Independent Audit Report. She explained that the report was too large to email but that copies were available for review. The report will also be available on the RVRC website. Emily said there was a budget deficit last month but that it would balance out in the coming months.

**Other Business**

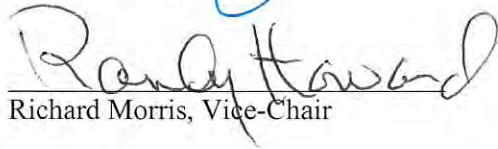
Patti Cullen thanked everyone that was able to attend the 2016 GARC Annual Conference. She said it was one of the best conferences to date.

**Adjourn**

Richard Morris, Vice-Chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to adjourn, Evelyn Pugh, Muscogee County, seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned.

January 25, 2017  
Date

  
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Clinton Perry, Jr., Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Morris, Vice-Chair