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RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
Marion County Commission Office
100 East Burkhalter Avenue
Buena Vista, Georgia
Minutes
April 26, 2017

Members Attending/Representing

(Representing 16 Counties)
A.J. Rivers, Crisp County
Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe
Carlton Wilson, City of Ellaville
Cecil "Butch" McMickle, Marion County
Chip Jones, Stewart County
Danny Blackman, Georgetown-Quitman County
Doug Etheridge, Harris County
Dr. Edward Lee, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
Fred Gordon, Muscogee County
Harry Lange, Harris County
Hobby Stripling, City of Vienna
James Morton, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
Jayson Griffin, Macon County
Jeanie Barte, City of Cordele
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee County
Jim Lawrence, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
Jimmy Bradley, Randolph County
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County
Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Melvin Crimes, Webster County
Mickey George, Macon County
Nelson Brown, City of Americus
Pam Jordan, Talbot County
Patricia Goodman, Randolph County
Randy Howard, Sumter County
Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Shirley Ann Christian, City of Fort Gaines
Tameka Harris, Taylor County
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
Tom Queen, Taylor County
Tommy McKenzie, Macon County
Tony Kennedy, Webster County

Members Not Present

Barry Whitley, City of Butler
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County
Clinton Perry, Jr., Taylor County, RVRC Chair
Debbie Stone, Stewart County
Dr. Carole Rutland, Muscogee County
Evelyn Turner Pugh, Muscogee County
Freeman Montgomery, Talbot County
Greg Barineau, Schley County
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion County
Jason Hoch, Schley County
Lee Hubbard, Clay County
Ralph Brown, City of Buena Vista
Rebecca Chambers, City of Hamilton
Sam Farrow, Jr., Crisp County
Steve Whatley, City of Cuthbert
Wally Summers, Sumter County

Others Present

Brad Bryant, Vice President, REACH Program
Sara Neely, Business Development Consultant,
REACH Program
Margie Dicky, REACH Program
Norman Graves, Principle, Golden Gourmet
Dr. David Lewis, Muscogee County School District,
Superintendent
Melvin Blackwell, Muscogee County School System
Anna Hurt, GA Department of Economic Development
Representative, Region 8
Casey Beane, DCA Representative, Region 8
Candy Head, GA Department of Labor Representative,
Region 8
Tim Buchannan, Chattahoochee County School System
Jimmy Davis, Macon County Commissioner
Edwina Turner, Stewart County Family Connections
John Brent, Harris County
Janet Joiner, City of Vienna

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

Equal Opportunity Employer

Staff Present

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

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director
Jim Livingston, Community & Economic Director
Janice West, WIOA Director
Becky Holmes, Office Manager

Welcome and Recognition of Visitors

In the absence of Clinton Perry, Jr., Chair, Randy Howard, Vice Chair, brought the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. He welcomed the council and visitors. Patti Cullen, Executive Director, announced that Rebecca Chambers, Mayor of the City of Hamilton, and her husband had been in an automobile accident and she was hospitalized. Ms. Cullen asked that everyone keep Ms. Chambers in their prayers. Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Secretary, led the council in prayer and Harry Lange, Harris County, led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review and Approval of Minutes*

Council reviewed the minutes of the March 22, 2017 council meeting. There being no changes to the minutes, Randy Howard, Vice Chair, requested a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2017 meeting. Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Melvin Crimes, Webster County, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

“The REACH of the River Valley”

REACH Vice President, Brad Bryant, and Sara Neely, Business Development Consultant for the REACH program, gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the importance of the REACH Scholarship program. Mr. Bryant said the goal of the REACH program is: “To ensure that Georgia’s low income, academically promising students have the academic, social, and financial support needed to graduate from high school, access college, and achieve postsecondary success”. He said that 12 of the 16 school systems in the River Valley region are a part of the REACH network but that help is needed to enroll the remaining four school systems: Harris, Schley, Webster and Talbot Counties. Mr. Bryant said if these four schools join the REACH program the RVRC region will be the 1st in the state to have all schools participating in the program. The program will enroll 82 students in the River Valley region this year and hopes to enroll over 400 students within 5 years. Upon completion of the program the student will receive a scholarship to attend either a college or technical school. This will not only improve the lives of the students but also assist the River Valley region with a workready workforce for existing and new businesses.

Golden Gourmet “Culinary Care” Approach

Norman Graves, Principal of Golden Gourmet, LLC, explained that Golden Gourmet is a frozen food company that is the 4th largest provider of senior meals in the United States. They have sites in Irvin, Homerville and Americus. The Americus location has completed a 60,000 square foot building creating 68 new jobs. It is producing 9,000 boxed meals per day and 12,000 frozen meals per day. Mr. Graves explained that all meals are cooked on site and that the plant is inspected daily by USDA. He said the average cost per meal is \$3.50 or including delivery would be \$4.50 per meal. Golden Gourmet is a state wide meal provider for the Community Care Services Program (CCSP) and Service Options Using Resources in a Community Environment (SOURCE) program. Mr. Graves said that the senior citizens are happy to see their meals being delivered so they will have a nutritious meal and because they may not see anyone else that day. The delivery person is also able to speak with the senior and report any concerns they may have about the senior’s health or living conditions. After answering questions he had samples of their product for everyone to see.

Budget Amendment*

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, presented the final budget amendment of the year. She explained that the Executive/Finance Committee met before the council meeting, reviewed the amendment and recommended approval. Emily said that there were very few changes and that the budget was on track. Emily then requested a motion to approve the final budget amendment of the year.

Randy Howard, Vice Chair, requested a motion to approve the budget amendment. Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to approve the budget amendment; Melvin Crimes, Webster County seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, presented the staff report for the finance department. The financial reports for February 2017 were included in the council packet. Emily requested that if there were questions to contact her at the RVRC office. Emily also reminded everyone to not park in the Dialysis Center parking area during future meetings.

Katie Howard, AAA Director, presented the staff report for the Area Agency on Aging department. Approximately \$5 million in new Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) funding was approved by the General Assembly. She said that no one was on the waiting list for services in Webster County. She asked that if anyone knew of a senior citizen in the region that needed services to call the AAA office. Katie said the Senior Walk would be held on May 5th, from 8 am – 11 am, at Peachtree Mall and that the first 200 participants would receive a free t-shirt and approximately 80 door prizes would be given away.

Jim Livingston, Community & Economic Development Director, presented the staff report for his department. He reported that staff had submitted 14 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications totaling \$6.4 million to the Department of Community Affairs in April. He asked that everyone continue to take pictures of problem sites that could be used for potential grant applications next year. Staff is managing 20 CDBG projects in addition to the Vienna Rural Development Fund (RDF) which is almost ready to close out, and Sumter County's OneGeorgia project. Jim explained that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) survey will be open until May 5th and urged everyone to complete the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018CEDS>. The goal is to have 300 respondents. He said staff had submitted an application for ColumbusMakesIT to the City of Columbus for funding to help make improvements to their space (which is part of the RVRC building).

Janice West, WIOA Director, presented the staff report for the WIOA department. Janice said the goal of having 250 people enrolled in WIOA training activities this year is attainable since 236 people are enrolled to date. She reported that Lower Chattahoochee and Middle Flint Workforce Development Boards had approved the WIOA Regional Plan revisions. Janice announced that the State Workforce Division has grant funds available for High Demand Career Initiatives (HDCI) of up to \$250,000 per region, for a two year period, and that Lower Chattahoochee and Middle Flint WIOA areas have applied for the funds. The grant money would be used to purchase needed software packages.

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, presented the staff report for the Planning department. Gerald said that work continues on comprehensive plans for Sumter County, Dooly County, Randolph County and all their municipalities. Staff continues to provide zoning and subdivision related assistance. A final contract for a Healthy Watersheds Initiative grant for Kinchafoonee Creek in Marion and Webster Counties was received from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. Gerald said staff continues to plan for several bicycling events. Columbus Bicycle Week (May 13th-19th), Pedaling for Kids Challenge (May 13th), Ride with the Mayor (May 16th), Ride of Silence (May 17th), and Bike to Work Day (May 19th). The Department of Human Services (DHS) Transit program received an award from the National Association of Development Organizations for outstanding work by ensuring that a new subcontractor was selected and trained when a current subcontractor stopped providing services on short notice in Muscogee, Harris, and Chattahoochee counties. DHS Transit staff is also in the process of scheduling transportation for seniors across the region to attend the Annual Senior Picnic scheduled on May 9th in Americus. He asked that everyone attend the 2020 Census meeting in Americus tomorrow. RVRC staff is willing to assist each jurisdiction with verifying addresses.

Patti Cullen, Executive Director, reminded everyone that the May Council meeting would be held on Wednesday, May 24th at the Josh Gibson Center, at 10:30 am. She explained that it will be the Annual Legislative Luncheon and invited everyone to attend.

Adjourn

Randy Howard, Vice Chair, requested a motion to adjourn. Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to adjourn; Terrell Hudson, Dooly County, seconded the motion.

April 26, 2017
Date

Clinton Perry, Jr.
Clinton Perry, Jr., Chairman

Jerry "Pops" Barnes
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Secretary