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RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
Marion County Commission Office
October 23, 2019
10:30 A.M.
Minutes Summary

Members Attending

(Representing 15 Counties)
A.J. Rivers, Crisp County
Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe,
RVRC Secretary
Carlton Wilson, Ellaville
Chip Jones, Stewart
Damon Hoyte, Cusseta-Chatt.
Danny Blackmon, Quitman
Doug Etheridge, Harris

Dr. Edward Lee, Chattahoochee
Ernest Jenkins, Clay
Harry Lange, Harris
Jayson Griffin, Macon
Jeanie Bartee, Cordele
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee,
RVRC Vice Chairman
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart
Knox Blackmar, Talbotton
Maggie McGruther, Sumter

Matt Gunnels, Marion
Melvin Crimes, Webster
Mickey George, Macon
Pam Jordan, Talbot
Randy Howard, Sumter, RVRC
Chairman
Richard McCorkle, Marion
Tameka Harris, Taylor
Terrell Hudson, Dooly
Tony Kennedy, Webster

Members Not Present

Barry Waters, Ft. Gaines
Barry Whitley, Butler
Clay Jones, Sumter
Carvel Lewis, Quitman
Dr. Carole Rutland, Muscogee
Freeman Montgomery, Talbot

Greg Barineau, Schley
Hobby Stripling, Vienna
James Morton, Chattahoochee
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion
Jimmy Babb, City of Lumpkin
Jimmy Bradley, Randolph
Nelson Brown, Americus

Ralph Brown, Buena Vista
Rebecca Chambers, Hamilton
Sam Farrow, Jr., Crisp
Steve Whatley, Cuthbert
Tom Queen, Taylor
Wally Summers, Sumter

Others Present

Robyn Crittenden, Commissioner, Dept. of Human Services
Abby Cox, Director, Division of Aging Services
Skip Henderson, Muscogee County
Shonda Blair, Taylor County Chamber of Commerce
Rebecca White, Randolph County Chamber of Commerce
Paul Farr, South Georgia Technical College
Chris Kelley, Field Rep. for Congressman Bishop

Janice Jarvis, Sumter County, Fiscal Administrator
Laura Gower, Field Rep. for Senator Johnny Isakson
Ann Holloway, City of Lumpkin
Debbie Stone, City of Lumpkin
Edwina Turner, Stewart County Family Connections
Sarah Lee Crumbs, Quitman County Family Connections
Susan Gallagher, New Horizons

Staff Members

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Sarah Walls, Assistant Director
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer
Gerald Mixon, Planning Director

Rick Morris, Planning Director
Katie Howard, AAA Director
Janice West, WIOA Director

Allison Slocum, Historic Pres./Planner
Becky Holmes, Office Manager

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

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WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Randy Howard, Sumter County, 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 Chair, 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 September 25, 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.

There being no changes or additions Randy Howard, Chair, requested a motion to approve the September 25, 2019 council minutes. Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented; Jeanie Bartee, Cordele, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

CHANGE TO THE AGENDA

Chair Howard requested a motion to amend the agenda to address the sale of RVRC property. Terrell Hudson, Dooly County, made a motion to amend the agenda; Harry Lange, Harris County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

SALE OF RVRC PROPERTY

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, explained that RVRC owned property located in Ellaville that has been leased to RESA for the past 25 years and that RESA is interested in purchasing the property. He stated that the Executive Committee had met and discussed it before the council meeting and was recommending moving forward with the sale of the property. He explained that the building needs about \$100,000 in repairs and that the value is \$63,000 for the RVRC to avoid a loss on the building. Jim said the By-Laws require a council vote to move forward with the sale of the property.

Richard McCorkle, RESA Executive Director, thanked the executive committee and staff for working to make the purchase possible and looks forward to a continued partnership with the commission. The property sale will also need to be approved by his board.

Chairman Howard requested a motion to move forward with the sale of the RVRC property located in Ellaville. Earnest Jenkins, Clay County made a motion to move forward with the sale of the property located in Ellaville for \$63,000; Mickey George, Macon County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

AGING IN GEORGIA

Abby Cox, Director, Division of Aging Services, introduced Robyn Crittenden, Commissioner of the Department of Human Services. Ms. Crittenden updated council on services that are available to senior/disable citizens in the state. She also thanked Katie Howard and her staff for their work in the region. Mr. Crittenden asked everyone to review the Aging section in the RVRC Annual Report.

COLUMBUS AND THE REGION

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee Co., RVRC Vice Chairman, introduced guest speaker Mayor Skip Henderson, City of Columbus. Mr. Barnes said that Mayor Henderson had served 21 years on the Columbus City Council before being elected Mayor. He said the council is grateful that he ran for mayor because he knows the needs of the city.

Mayor Henderson announced that Evelyn Turner-Pugh has resigned from the Columbus City Council, effective October 31, due to health concerns. A celebration is being planned and will be announced at a later date. Mayor Henderson said that he will be replacing her on the RVRC Council as a member.

He said, “the State of Columbus” is very strong and has good development ongoing but is also facing challenges, in all communities, with a poverty rate of 22 percent and increasing criminal activities. He noted that the success of Columbus depends on the success of rural Georgia just as rural Georgia’s success depends on Columbus.

INSURANCE APPROVAL*

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, update the council saying that RVRC employees have health insurance coverage through the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). GMA is now offering vision coverage to be included in the policy at no cost to the employee. Cost to the RVRC would be \$300 per month. Emily said the Executive Committee had discussed the coverage change and has recommended approving the coverage change.

Randy Howard, Chairman, requested a motion to approve vision coverage being added to the GMA policy. Ernest Jenkins, Clay County, made a motion to approve the policy change to include vision coverage; Harry Lange, Harris County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

STAFF REPORTS

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer; Katie Howard, AAA Director; Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director; Janice West, WIOA Director; and Gerald Mixon, Planning Director; presented staff reports for their departments.

Chair Randy Howard reminded everyone that the Georgia Association of Regional Commission’s Annual Meeting will be held at St. Simons Island, November 6-8, and encouraged everyone to attend.

ADJOURN

Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to adjourn; Melvin Crimes, Webster County, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.