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## RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

Marion County Commission Office  
100 East Burkhalter Avenue, Buena Vista, Georgia

### Minutes

September 27, 2017

#### Members Attending/Representing

(Representing 16 Counties)

A.J. Rivers, Crisp County  
Barry Whitley, City of Butler  
Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe  
Danny Blackman, Georgetown-Quitman County  
Debbie Stone, Stewart County  
Doug Etheridge, Harris County  
Dr. Carole Rutland, Muscogee County  
Dr. Edward Lee, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County  
Evelyn Turner Pugh, Muscogee County  
Fred Gordon, Muscogee County  
Harry Lange, Harris County  
Hobby Stripling, City of Vienna  
Jason Hoch, Schley County  
Jayson Griffin, Macon County  
Jeanie Bartee, City of Cordele  
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee County  
Jim Lawrence, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County  
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County  
Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton  
Lee Hubbard, Clay County  
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County  
Melvin Crimes, Webster County  
Nelson Brown, City of Americus  
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, ACCG  
Tom Queen, Taylor County  
Tony Kennedy, Webster County  
Wally Summers, Sumter County

#### Members Not Present

Carlton Wilson, City of Ellaville  
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County  
Cecil "Butch" McMickle, Marion County  
Chip Jones, Stewart County  
Clinton Perry, Jr. Taylor County, RVRC Chair

Freeman Montgomery, Talbot County  
Greg Barineau, Schley County  
James Morton, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County  
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion County  
Jimmy Bradley, Randolph County  
Mickey George, Macon County  
Pam Jordan, Talbot County  
Ralph Brown, City of Buena Vista  
Rebecca Chambers, City of Hamilton  
Sam Farrow, Jr., Crisp County  
Steve Whatley, City of Cuthbert  
Tommy McKenzie, Macon County

#### Others Present

Morgan Law, GA Chamber of Commerce  
Laura Gower, Representative for Senator Johnny Isakson  
Kathy Burns, Senator Perdue's Representative  
Elaine Gillispie, Congressman Bishop's Representative  
Sarah Lee Crumbs, Georgetown-Quitman County Family  
Connections Coordinator  
Edwina Turner, Stewart County Family Connections  
Candy Head, GA Department of Labor, Region 8  
Casey Beane, DCA Representative, Region 8  
Jason Lawson, Middle Flint E-911 Authority, Director  
Vicki Wainwright, City of Butler  
Janet Joiner, City of Vienna  
Ronnie Crozier, County Administrator, Clay County  
Ricky Hood, City of Hamilton  
John Brent, Harris County  
Ms. Karen Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman

#### Staff Present

Patti Cullen, Executive Director  
Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director  
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer  
Kia Barrow, ADRP Program Manager  
Jim Livingston, Community & Economic Development Dir.  
Janice West, WIOA Director  
Ansley Fitzner, Planner  
Becky Holmes, Office Manager

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

Randy Howard, Vice Chair, brought the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. in the absence of Clinton Perry, Jr., Chair. He welcomed everyone and requested Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Secretary, lead the council in prayer. Bruce Hill, Mayor of Oglethorpe (Macon County), led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Council reviewed the minutes of the September 27, 2017 council meeting which were mailed or emailed to council members the previous week for their review.

Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Terrell Hudson, Dooly County, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Review and Approval of FTA Section 5304 Project Application\***

Patti Cullen, Executive Director, requested approval of a resolution authorizing the filing of an FTA Section 5304 Project Application with the Georgia Department of Transportation in order to complete a transit plan for Webster County.

Patricia Goodman, Randolph County, made a motion to approve the resolution authorizing the filing of the 5304 project application; Harry Lange, Harris County, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Georgia 2030 – Regional Outlook**

Patti Cullen introduced Morgan Law, CEcD, who is the Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at the Georgia Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Law gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining many of the challenges Georgia faces in rural areas such as the lack of education to meet industry needs, the child poverty level and drug abuse. He said that 139 counties in Georgia are designated as rural counties but Georgia is ranked the best State to business with. Unfortunately, the state is ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> in education, 45<sup>th</sup> for people living below the poverty level guidelines and 43<sup>rd</sup> for children living in poverty when compared to other states. He said opportunities exist in rural areas of the state such as quality of life and place making in small towns to overcome some of the challenges.

He explained that top job fields in the future will be health care, construction, and Science, Technology, Engineering and March (STEM) based employment. Agriculture will have a tremendous impact for future jobs as well as defense, tourism, logistics and transportation and health care. Mr. Law said a Rural Prosperity Summit will be held November 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> at the University of Georgia in Tifton, Georgia and invited everyone to attend. To registered and learn more about the summit the website is: [www.gachamber.com](http://www.gachamber.com).

### **Review and Approval of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy\***

Jim Livingston, Community and Economic Development Director, gave a presentation of the proposed Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document to be submitted to the

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Economic Development Administration (EDA). He explained the document is web-based plan and can be viewed at <https://garc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=1a4494ae6594e9a96696056911f363b>.

Jim explained that the CEDS is a 5-year plan that has been worked on for the last year. He recognized and thanked members of the CEDS committee for their hard work on the document.

Jim then requested approval of the council to submit the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for approval. Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to approve submittal of the CEDS document; Melvin Crimes, Webster County, second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Staff Reports**

Patti announced that nine communities in the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) area received Community Development Block Grant funding this year. Five of these projects were written by RVRC staff for the communities of Cordele, Montezuma, Pine Mountain, Reynolds and Talbotton. She congratulated each of the communities on successful applications.

Emily Chambers, Finance Director; presented the staff report for the Finance department. She explained that the final, official audit for FY16 is not yet in but the audit was clean and no findings are expected. She said the finance report for July was included in the council packet.

Janice West, WIOA Director, presented the staff report for the WIOA program. She said that 191 people were served, thru various WIOA funded training activities, during the period of July 1<sup>st</sup> thru today. Janice explained that the Americus Career Center (Georgia Department of Labor) serves as the Comprehensive One Stop Center. Plans are underway installing electronic devices and equipment that will enable individuals to be able to connect with agencies that have chosen an electronic direct link rather than to be co-located at the One Stop Center. On October 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, at Callaway Gardens, the Georgia Workforce Leadership Association will hold a meeting. Several trainings will be offered to local WIOA staff. Janice stated that the annual local WIOA monitoring process has begun. River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) WIOA monitoring is scheduled for February 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

Kia Barrow, ADRC Program Manager (Aging Department), presented the staff report for the Area Agency on Aging. She said work continues on the Assistive Technology Lab with the staff of the Georgia Tech Tools for Life providing a training on June 26<sup>th</sup>. A grand opening is planned for the Assistive Technology Lab in Americus during November. A Chronic Disease Self-Management Lay Leader Class was taught during August. Eight (8) volunteers were certified to teach classes in the community. These classes are being offered at no charge due to a grant from WellCare. Staff also held two (2) additional Farmers' Markets at Patriot's Point and Arbor Point in Columbus. Twenty dollar (\$20) vouchers were given to 118 seniors at these events. The River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) Area Agency on Aging gave out the most vouchers in the state this year. The additional funding was provided by the Department of Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Patti reminded everyone that the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's (GARC) Conference will be held November 8<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> at St. Simons Island. She urged all that could attend to

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start making plans. She also announced that a Martin Luther King, Jr. committee meeting would be held immediately following the council meeting. Several members announced events happening in their cities.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the council, Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to adjourn; Dr. Fred Gordon, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

October 25, 2017  
Date

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Clinton Perry, Jr., Chair

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Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Secretary