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## RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

Buena Vista, GA

October 25, 2023

10:30 A.M.

Meeting Minutes

### **Council Members (Counties Represented: 14)**

Albert King, Vienna

Barbara Cullefer, Lumpkin

Barry Witley, Butler

Bill McClellan, Schley

Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert

Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee

Chip Jones, Stewart

Darrell Holbrook, Webster

Eugene Cason, Dooly

J.R. Dowdy, Crisp, Vice-Chair

James Davenport, Clay

Jayson Griffin, Macon

Jessie Smith, Sumter

Joshua Deriso, Cordele

Larry Sparks, Talbot County

Melvin Crimes, Webster

Ransom Farley, Hamilton

Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Secretary

Terrell Hudson, Dooly

Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee

Toyia Tucker, Columbus

Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

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### **Members Not Attending**

Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe

Carl Oliver, Macon

Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC Chair

Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman

Doug Ethridge, Harris

Greg Dominey, Schley

Jeff McCarter, Randolph

Joe Lee Williams, Stewart

Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines

Kevin Brown, Buena Vista

Lee Kinnamon, Americus

Maggie McGruther, Sumter

Randy Howard, Sumter

Richard McCorkle, Marion

Rob Grant, Harris

Shane Grier, Marion

Tom Queen, Taylor

Skip Henderson, Columbus

Tony Lamar, Talbotton

### **Others Present**

Mary Stevens, Talbot Chamber of Commerce

Laura Gower, Congressman Ferguson's Office

Rebecca White, DCA

Nicole Acree, Taylor County Development Authority

Kenny Riner, Chattahoochee County Manager

Tom Horn, Columbus Water Works

Chloe Landreth, New Horizons Behavioral Health

Christopher Drake, Congressman Bishop's office

John Watford, President SGTC

Paul Farr, Director of Business Services, SGTC

Velma Coley, Andersonville Mayor Pro-Tem

Vicki Wainwright, Butler Administrator

Jill Harrison, Oglethorpe City Council

Deborah Jones, Randolph County Manager

Betsy Covington, Chatt. Community Foundation

Andy Hilmes, C4C Coalition

Mac Moye, Stewart County Manager

Brenda Williams, Senator Warnock's office

Alyse Wolf, Senator Ossoff's office

Tracy Mosley, Urban League of the River Valley

Chris Johnson

### **RVRC Staff Attending**

Jim Livingston, Executive Director  
Katie Howard, AAA Director  
Allison Slocum, Assistant Director of Planning  
Blaine Hoskins, Planning  
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer

Tracie Hadaway, Planning  
Mariyana Kostov, Planning  
Janice West, WIOA  
John Morgan, Planning

### **WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

J.R. "Dick" Dowdy, RVRC Vice-Chair, Crisp County, brought the meeting to order and welcomed visitors. Secretary Tameka Harris, Taylor County led the council in prayer and Vice-Chair Dowdy, lead the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MINUTES\***

The council reviewed the September 27, 2023 meeting minutes which were emailed to members the previous week for their review. The minutes were also included in the council packets that were available at the meeting. There being no additions or changes, Vice-Chair Dowdy asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was made by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County and seconded by Toyia Tucker, Columbus.

### **MURALS IN THE RIVER VALLEY**

Chris Johnson spoke about the murals he has been painting in the various communities in Georgia. He shared a slideshow with examples of his artwork that have beautified buildings, silos, and other structures in these communities.

### **APPROVAL FOR THE THRIVING COMMUNITIES REGIONAL PILOT PROGRAM\***

Tracie Hadaway, Senior Planner presented the Thriving Communities Regional Pilot Program grant application: Ms. Hadaway said the Thriving Communities Program is a federal grant funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The Regional Pilot Program will provide funding to regional planning agencies to assist with the capacity to improve our communities. The program addresses transportation, land use, housing, and economic development. The River Valley Regional Commission is asking our communities to send a letter expressing their willingness to be partners in this initiative. The grant is due November 28th. Council approval is needed to submit the application. Vice-Chair Dowdy asked for a motion to approve the Thriving Communities Regional Pilot Program. The motion was made by Albert King, Vienna and seconded by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County.

### **APPROVAL OF THE 2023 ANNUAL UPDATE – EDA COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY\***

Tracy Hadaway gave the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Update. She said this is the 2023 Annual Update to the 2022 CEDS 5-year plan and needs council approval to submit the update to the Economic Development Administration. Vice-Chair Dowdy asked for a motion to approve the 2023 Annual Update to the EDA Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Albert King, Vienna.

### **FY 2024 BUDGET AMENDMENT\***

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, reported the Budget Version Two for FY24 was presented to the Executive Committee and recommended by them for Council approval. The amendment shows a decrease of \$32,000 in the projected change in fund balance in the General Fund, and it includes a minor decrease of \$112 in the proprietary funds' projected change in net position. The main reasons for the changes are an increase in health insurance premiums which raised fringe benefit costs and an increase in the transfers from the General Fund that are needed to cover grant matches and deficits between revenues and expenditures in the special revenue funds. The budget includes all new and revised contract amounts for FY24. Overall, the RC is now projected to have a \$12,036 increase in net position in governmental funds, and a \$13,659 increase in net position in the enterprise funds, for an overall increase of \$25,695. Vice-Chair Dowdy

asked for a motion to approve the Budget Version Two for FY24. The motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Melvin Crimes, Webster County.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**Emily Chambers, Finance Director**

Through August 31, 2023 there was a decrease in fund balance of \$70,000 in the General Fund, leaving a total fund balance of \$968,854 with cash on hand of \$642,830. The proprietary funds had an increase in net position of \$4,160 and total net position of \$2,031,000 at the end of August. The Finance Department has almost completed the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for FY23 and will have that report presented by the auditors at the December Council meeting.

**Kia Barrow, Assistant AAA Director**

Total contacts so far for October are 611. There are 435 clients on the HCBS waitlist and 8 on the EDWP waitlist. Additional money was given to providers for homemaker and personal care services. AAA is currently referring clients off the waiting list for those services. Staff is continuing to participate in Family Connections, Senior and Lawmen Together (SALT). Tai Chi and CDSMP classes are being taught in Columbus. AAA is referring APS clients for immediate services using ARPA funds.

**Rick Morris, Direction of Planning and Government Services**

Staff reported working on six comprehensive plans which include Clay, Harris, Webster, Taylor, Crisp and Webster counties. Staff attended festivals in Pine Mountain and Waverly Hall to gather community input for the Harris County Comprehensive Plan. RVRC staff are currently working on four zoning cases and one historic property review for a room addition in Pine Mountain. Currently asking EPD for a one-year grant extension to close out the current brownfield work ongoing in Crisp, Dooly, Macon and Sumter Counties. Estimated close out date is September 30, 2024. Reminded our board members that the Bicycle and Pedestrian events that we participate in began in 2006 with two events and have now expanded to 7 events in 2023.

**Janice West-Director of WIOA**

WIOA currently has 81 Individuals enrolled in training service. WIOA staff assisted with a Rapid Response Dislocated Worker employee informational session onsite at US Ceramics. The business is closing and laying off employees at the site. Staff attended a two-day Rapid Response training session sponsored by the State office. The purpose of the training was to help local staff coordinate with State Rapid Response coordinators to assist businesses that may be closing or experiencing layoffs. Regional unemployment rates for August 2023 were 4.8% which is slightly higher than the state average of 3.4%. Individual county unemployment rates are listed in the Staff Activity report.

**ADJOURN**

As there was no further business, Vice-Chair Dowdy requested a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Motion was made by Terrell Hudson, Dooly County and seconded by Melvin Crimes, Webster County. The meeting was adjourned.

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December 6, 2023

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Carvel Lewis, Chair

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Tameka Harris, Secretary