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RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

John H. Pope Center, SGTC

May 25, 2022

10:30 A.M.

Minutes Summary

Council Members

(Counties Represented: 11)

Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC
Secretary
Chip Jones, Stewart
Darrell Holbrook, Webster
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Columbus, RVRC Chair
Joshua Deriso, Cordele
Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines

Lee Kinnamon, Americus
Maggie McGruther, Sumter
Melvin Crimes, Webster
Randy Howard, Sumter
Rebecca White, Randolph
Richard Dowdy, Crisp
Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair
Tim Biddle, Chattahoochee
Tom Queen, Taylor
Tony Lamar, Talbotton

Members Not Attending

Albert King, Vienna
Barry Whitley, Butler
Bill McClellan, Schley
Bryon Hickey, Columbus
Carl Oliver, Macon
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman
Doug Ethridge, Harris
Eddie Moore, Georgetown-Quitman
Dr. Edward Lee, Chattahoochee
Eugene Cason, Dooly
Greg Dominy, Schley
James Davenport, Clay
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion
Jayson Griffin, Macon

Jimmy Babb, Lumpkin
Julie Brown, Hamilton
Matt Gunnels, Marion
Pam Jordan, Talbot
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Mark Waddell, Sumter
Patrick Shivers, Clay
Richard McCorkle, Marion
Rob Grant, Harris
Sher'Londa Walker, Talbot
Terrell Hudson, Dooly
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Wesley Williams, Randolph

Others Present

County and City Representatives

U.S. Congressman Sanford D Bishop

Field Representative Jody Redding; Office of Governor Brian Kemp

Southwest Outreach Director Brenda Williams, Office of U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock

Regional Outreach Coordinator Alyse Wolf, Office of U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff

Field Representative Laura Gower for US Congressman Drew Ferguson

Field Representatives Charles White for US Congressman Austin Scott

Representative Carolyn Hugley, Georgia District 136

Representative Debbie Buckner, Georgia, District 137

Representative Mike Cheokas, Georgia, District 138

Senator Freddie Powell Sims, Georgia, District 12

Senator Ed Harbison, Georgia, District 15

District Director Kenneth Cutts (US Congressman Sanford Bishop)

Sarahlyn Stafford, Rural Development Manager

River Valley RC Staff

Welcome and Recognition of Visitors

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Chair, brought the meeting to order. He welcomed council members, distinguished guests, and visitors. Carvel Lewis, Secretary, led the council in prayer and Tameka Harris, Vice-Chair, led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Staff Recognition

Jim Livingston, RVRC Executive Director, recognized employees of the River Valley Regional Commission for Years of Service: Marie Peterson and Tanisha Tookes for 5 years of service, Annie Thompson and Grant Richardson for 15 years of service, Janice West for 35 years of service and Gerald Mixon for 45 years of service. Livingston also presented a gift to Sarah Walls for her upcoming retirement on June 30th. Ms. Walls will be retiring with over 50 years of service.

Regional TSPLOST Results

Carvel Lewis, TIA Roundtable Chair spoke of how pleased he was TSPLOST passed in the election. Mr. Lewis encouraged our city and county officials to talk with those who voted no to TSPLOST and explain what TSPLOST dollars are being spent on. The good news was there were more yes than no votes.

Legislator’s Remarks

Chair Barnes, introduced the following legislators and field representatives who updated the council and guests about legislative matters.

U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop for the 2nd Congressional District of Georgia thanked our region for being a very active region. Bishop spoke of his many years serving our region, the State of Georgia, and our United States. Congressman Bishop said our region has many resources that are supported by our city and county governments.

U.S. Congressman Drew Ferguson for the 3rd Congressional District of Georgia thanked the River Valley Commission board members and employees for making the communities better. He spoke of the many resources provided to help the communities succeed.

Senator Freddie Powell Sims, Georgia, District 12, spoke of the budget for 2023 going into effect July 1, 2022. Senator Powell Sims explained some of the budget line items. She also spoke on the problem of gun violence and asked for us to think about what can be done about it.

Field Representative Jody Redding (for Governor Brian Kemp), read a letter written by Governor Kemp extending his greetings and thanking the RVRC for the many things being done to support growth and prosperity in our region. During Governor Kemp's administration, he has prioritized the economic development of Georgia's rural communities by expanding broadband access to bring more Georgians crucial access to digital networks and have improved infrastructure to connect every corner of our state to the center of commerce. These investments are paying off by bringing jobs to our rural communities.

Senator Ed Harbison, Georgia, District 15 spoke concerning how people should work together to achieve things needed in our state and country.

Representative Carolyn Hugley, Georgia District 136 spoke on various bills approved during the legislative session. She spoke on the importance of healthcare and healthcare workers in our area.

Representative Debbie Buckner, Georgia, District 137 spoke on mental health issues in our state and the importance of training and partnering with law enforcement to train them to de-escalate situations and recognize what's going on with the patient to get them into outpatient treatment facilities rather than county jails. Representative Buckner spoke about several other health related bills that were passed during the legislative session.

Representative Mike Cheokas, Georgia, District 138 spoke about the various committees he serves on. He spoke on the importance of education and healthcare in our state.

Chair Jerry "Pops" Barnes gave the blessing. Lunch was then served.

May 25, 2022

Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Chair

Carvel Lewis, Secretary