



www.rivervalleyrc.org

Columbus Office

710 Front Avenue, Suite A
Columbus, GA 31902
Phone (706) 256-2910
Fax (706) 256-2908
TDY (706)256-2944

Americus Office

228 West Lamar Street
Americus, GA 31709
Phone (706) 256-2910
Fax (229) 931-2745
Fax (229) 931-2917

Toll Free (877) 819-6348

**River Valley Regional Commission
Columbus office, Americus office, and Virtual**

June 23, 2021

Council Members

(Counties 16)

Bill McClellan, Schley
Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe, RVRC Secretary
Carvel Lewis, Quitman
Chip Jones, Stewart
Damon Hoyte, Chattahoochee
Doug Etheridge, Harris
Dr. Edward Lee, Chattahoochee
Greg Dominy, Ellaville
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion
Jayson Griffin, Macon
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee, RVRC Vice
Chairman
Jeanie Barteel, Cordele
Julie Brown, Hamilton

Joe Lee Williams, Stewart
Kenneth Sumter, Ft. Gaines
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Melvin Crimes, Webster
Mickey George, Macon
Randy Howard, Sumter, RVRC Chairman
Rebecca White, Randolph
Sam Farrow, Crisp
Sher'Londa Walker, Talbot
Tameka Harris, Taylor
Terrell Hudson, Dooly
Tom Queen, Taylor
Wesley Williams, Randolph

Members Not Attending

A.J. Rivers, Crisp
Barry Whitley, Butler
Bryon Hickey, Muscogee
Charles Coffee, Chattahoochee
Danny Blackmon, Quitman
Darrell Holbrook, Webster
Eddie Daniels, Vienna
Eddie Moore, Quitman
Eugene Cason, Dooly
James Davenport, Clay

Jimmy Babb, Lumpkin
Maggie McGruther, Sumter
Mark Waddell, Sumter
Matt Gunnels, Marion
Nelson Brown, Americus
Pam Jordan, Talbot
Richard McCorkle, Marion
Rob Grant, Harris
Skip Henderson, Muscogee
Steve Whatley, Cuthbert
Tony Lamar, Talbot

Others Attending

Dr. Jean Sumner, Mercer University
Saralyn Stafford, UGA, Rural Development
Manager for Public Service & Outreach
Janice Jarvis, Sumter County

Michael Bowens, City of Vienna
Clark Harrell, Crisp County, County Mgr.
Douglas Jamieson, Schley County, County Mgr.

Staff

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Sarah Walls, Assist. Executive Director
Katie Howard, AAA Director
Gerald Mixon, Planning Director
Janice West, WIOA Director
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer

Tammy Collins, Finance Officer
Allison Slocum, Senior Planner
John Morgan, Bike-Ped Planner
Camille Bielby, Regional Planner
Tenisha Tookes, WIOA Specialist

WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Randy Howard, Chairman, brought the River Valley Regional Commission council meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. He thanked everyone for joining the meeting either in-person or virtually.

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Vice Chairman, then gave the invocation and Bruce Hill, Secretary, led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF APRIL 28, AND MAY 26, 2021 MINUTES

Council reviewed the April 28 and May 26, 2021 council meeting minutes which were either mailed or emailed to council 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 Randy Howard, Chairman, requested a motion to approve the April 28 and May 26, 2021 council minutes as presented.

Melvin Crimes, Webster County, made the motion to approve the April 28 and May 26, 2021 minutes as presented; Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

MERCER MEDICAL IN THE RIVER VALLEY REGION

Dr. Jean Sumner, Mercer University Medical School of Medicine, updated council members on the status of the medical school and clinics in the region. Dr. Sumner said Mercer Medical clinics are not being opened to undermine systems that are already in place but to assist rural Georgia areas that are in need of quality health care. She explained that these clinics will see any patient –insured or not. The clinics will make same day appointments and house call appointments for those that are too sick to travel. Mercer Medical has opened clinics in Plains and Clay County. Construction is underway for a new clinic in Harris County.

Dr. Sumner explained that companies will be more likely to locate their business to rural areas if quality health care is available for employees and their families. New businesses will help the communities with not only health care but more job opportunities.

Dr. Sumner invited the council to attend the Mercer University School of Medicine grand opening in Columbus that is scheduled for August.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE: FORT BENNING PROJECT UPDATE

Saralyn Stafford, UGA, Rural Development, explained that the River Valley RC is working with the Department of Defense to fund a Local Government Compatible Land Use Study. Carl Vinson Institute will be conducting the

study. It will include Fort Benning, Chattahoochee, Marion, Stewart, Taylor, Harris, and Talbot counties in Georgia and Russell County in Alabama. Ms. Stafford explained that this will be an 18-24 month undertaking. She said there would be a Kick-off Meeting held at the Fort Benning Infantry Museum June 24, 2021. The goals of the project will be to identify compatible uses that will support local economic development in the counties surrounding Fort Benning.

TIA ROUNDTABLE UPDATE

Carvel Lewis, TIA Roundtable Chairman, updated the council on TIA progress. He said that 139 projects have been submitted to the portal and that the Georgia Department of Transportation is performing a fiscal analysis on those projects. Mr. Lewis said the executive committee would be meeting on Wednesday, June 30, to discuss the projects.

RIVER VALLEY RC NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Jerry "Pops" Barnes, RVRC Vice Chair and Chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that the committee had met before the council meeting and discussed possible new RVRC officers. Nominations were Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Chair; Tameka Harris, Vice Chair; and Carvel Lewis, Secretary. No other nominations were reviewed. Randy Howard, Chairman, request a motion to approve Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Chair; Tameka Harris, Vice Chair; and Carvel Lewis, Secretary as River Valley Regional Council officers, as presented.

Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County, made the motion to elect Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Chair; Tameka Harris, Vice Chair; and Carvel Lewis, Secretary, as presented; Melvin Crimes, Webster County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FY21 ANNUAL REPORT

Gerald Mixon presented the FY2021 Annual Report that is submitted to DCA every year. This report is a part of our required activities with the state.

Randy Howard, Chair, request a motion to approve the FY21 Annual Report as presented.

Melvin Crimes, Webster County, made the motion to approve the FY21 Annual Report as presented; Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FY22 ANNUAL BUDGET

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, presented the FY22 Budget Proposal and said that it came with the recommendation of the Executive Committee who met and discussed it earlier. This budget predicts a \$37,592 increase in fund balance in the General Fund, and a \$28,420 increase in net position in the Enterprise Funds. The budget accounts for all federal and state grants and awards that are known about currently, including the DOD project. The General Fund will provide \$113,241 that is needed to cover our matches and expenditures over revenues in the Special Revenue Funds. We have also included a 1% cost of living increase for all employees and additional merit increases based on annual employee performance evaluations.

Randy Howard, Chairman, requested a motion to approve the FY22 budget proposal as presented.

Melvin Crimes, Webster County, made the motion to approve the FY22 budget proposal as presented; Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

STAFF REPORT:

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, reported that through April 30th the RVRC had a net increase in fund balance in the General Fund of \$125,000, and an increase in net position of \$28,000 in the Enterprise Funds. On April 30, 2021 operating cash on hand was \$714,000 and an unassigned fund balance of \$906,759.

Katie Howard, AAA Director, reported that the Area Agency on Aging had started the Senior Farmer’s Market season with approximately 19 markets to be held throughout the region. There will be a Community Senior Farmer’s Market at the Columbus office in August – date TBD. Eleven of the twelve senior centers have reopened. Referrals to the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) have doubled over the last 14 months with no increase in staff. Wellness classes have started back. Please let us know if you would like to have one in your county.

Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director, reported that her work has involved working on three loans which have received approval from the Loan Committee. She is presently working on a few others that will max out the COVID-RLF Loan Fund of \$900,000. Also, she has been working with Jim on various projects such as the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions Annual Meeting which will be held November 3-5 at St. Simons Island.

Janice West, WIOA Director, reported that WIOA enrollments as of June 15, 2021, totaled 139 students in various training activities. The local area received a 9.16% decrease in WIOA federal funds for the upcoming year. Unemployment rates for the region for April 2021 (most recent) was 4.7% compared to 10.1% in April 2020. Rates are decreasing as businesses re-open and people are returning to work.

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, reported that the planning staff is continuing its primary focus on local comprehensive planning, bike and pedestrian events, and that other activities have been numerous. A large amount of administrative time has been expended assisting our local governments pursue the “Broadband Ready Community” designation to enhance their competitiveness for the state’s broadband incentive funding.

Adjourn

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, reminded everyone that the annual Georgia Regional Commission Conference (GARC) will be held at the King and Prince Golf and Beach Resort this year, November 3-5. He asked that council members who would like to attend contact Becky Holmes at 706-256-2910 or bholmes@rivervalleyrc.org to set up conference registration and hotel accommodations.

River Valley Regional Council will not hold a July meeting; the August meeting will be held in Buena Vista.

Randy Howard, Chairman, thanked everyone on staff for their hard work and thanked the council for their work in their communities and the region.

Randy Howard then requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

August 25, 2021

Date

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Chairman

Tamika Harris, Secretary

[Chattahoochee](#) | [Clay](#) | [Crisp](#) | [Dooly](#) | [Harris](#) | [Macon](#) | [Marion](#) | [Muscogee](#)
[Quitman](#) | [Randolph](#) | [Schley](#) | [Stewart](#) | [Sumter](#) | [Talbot](#) | [Taylor](#) | [Webster](#)