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RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

Marion County Commission Office and On-line

February 23, 2022

10:30 A.M.

Minutes Summary

Council Members

(Counties Represented: 15)

Albert King, Vienna

Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert

Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC
Secretary

Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee

Chip Jones, Stewart

Darrell Holbrook, Webster

Doug Ethridge, Harris

Dr. Edward Lee, Chattahoochee

Jayson Griffin, Macon

Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Columbus, RVRC Chair

Jimmy Babb, Lumpkin

Joe Lee Williams, Stewart

Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines

Kevin Brown, Buena Vista

Maggie McGruther, Sumter

Melvin Crimes, Webster

Pam Jordan, Talbot

Randy Howard, Sumter

Rebecca White, Randolph

Richard Dowdy, Crisp

Richard McCorkle, Marion

Rob Grant, Harris

Sher'Londa Walker, Talbot

Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair

Tim Biddle, Chattahoochee

Wesley Williams, Randolph

Members Not Attending

A.J. Rivers, Crisp

Barry Whitley, Butler

Bill McClellan, Schley

Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe

Bryon Hickey, Columbus

Carl Oliver, Macon

Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman

Eddie Moore, Georgetown-Quitman

Eugene Cason, Dooly

Greg Dominy, Schley

James Davenport, Clay

James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion

Joshua Deriso, Cordele

Julie Brown, Hamilton

Lee Kinnamon, Americus

Mark Waddell, Sumter

Matt Gunnels, Marion

Patrick Shivers, Clay

Terrell Hudson, Dooly

Tom Queen, Taylor

Tony Lamar, Talbotton

Skip Henderson, Columbus

Others Attending

Jim Youngquist, SERDI
Tim Ward, SERDI
Mark Watson, GDOL
Paul Farr, Southwest Georgia Technical College
Natalie Bradley, DCA
Joyce Barlow
Cal Myers, City Council Buena Vista
Rayetta Volley, Sumter County Administrator
Diadra Powell, Americus City Manager

Will Johnson, Marion County Manager
Toyia Tucker, Columbus Consolidated Government
Tammye Pettyjohn Jones, Sanford Bishop’s Office
Brenda Williams, Raphael Warnock’s Office
Susan Gallagher, New Horizons
James Loyd, Columbus Technical College
Michelle Delaney, Austin Scott’s Office

Staff

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Katie Howard, AAA Director
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer
Tammy Collins, Finance Officer
Rick Morris, Planning
Janice West, WIOA
Mariyana Kostov, GIS Planner

John Morgan, Bike-Ped Planner
Sarah Wall, Asst. Executive Director
Merri Spence, Executive Secretary
Gerald Mixon, Planning
Kat Mournighan, Planning
Scottie DeClure, Planning
Camille Bielby, Planning

WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Chair, brought the River Valley Regional Commission council meeting to order at 10:30 A.M. Chair Barnes welcomed visitors Mark Watson with the Georgia Department of Labor and Jim Youngquist and Tim Ryan from Southeastern Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) to the meeting.

Carvel Lewis, RVRC Secretary, then gave the invocation and Tameka Harris, Vice-Chair led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY 26, 2022 MINUTES*

Council reviewed the January 26, 2022 meeting minutes which were 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, Pops Barnes, Chair, requested a motion to approve the January 26, 2022 council minutes as presented.

Darrell Holbrook, Webster County made the motion to approve the January 26, 2022 minutes as presented; Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

DOL UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS INFORMATION

Janice West, WIOA Director introduced Mark Watson, GDOL Director of Workforce Statistics Division. Mr. Watson started the presentation by explaining what the DOL Statistic Division does and the type of information available. He went on to explain how they compile their information and what they use it for.

Darrell Holbrook, Webster County made a comment about the need for more Emergency Medical Service manpower. Jim Livingston noted that will be looked into further.

The slideshow will be sent via email to each council member.

SERDI STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF RVRC

Jim Youngquist and Tim Ware, Southeast Regional Directors Institute reported on the strategic assessment they performed in January. Mr. Youngquist reported that links for on-line surveys were sent to commission members and to local government managers and administrators. He also said they interviewed around 20 regional leaders to talk about the current and future hopes of the regional commission. They interviewed 9 focus groups in the River Valley Region.

Mr. Youngquist continued by going over some preliminary recommendations and said in the next 3 weeks they will submit a complete record report and appendix that will provide Mr. Livingston and the council with much insight based on the outcome of the interviews.

The complete presentation will be sent via email to each council member.

THE AARP NETWORK OF AGE-FRIENDLY STATES AND COMMUNITIES

Katie Howard, AAA Director reported that the RVRC has been designated as an Age Friendly Region by AARP. This designation includes all of the cities and counties in the region. Each county was presented with a framed certificate with this designation to post in their offices.

AREA PLAN APPROVAL*

Katie Howard, AAA Director asked for approval of FY23 Area Plan which serves as the Area Agency on Aging budget and strategic plan.

Chairman Barnes asked for a motion to approve the FY23 Area Plan. Motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and Seconded by Carvel Lewis, Quitman County. The motion was passed with no opposition.

ACL/DAS PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS GRANT APPLICATION*

Katie Howard asked for approval for the RVRC to partner with the West Central Public Health District and the Georgia Department of Public Health to apply for funding to help with COVID efforts.

Chair Barnes requested a motion to approve the ACL/DAS Public Health Workers Grant Application. Motion was made by Melvin Crimes, Webster County to approve the grant and was seconded by Darrell Holbrook. Motion was passed with no opposition.

APPROVAL OF JOB DESCRIPTIONS – H.R. AND AAA ASSISTANT*

Jim Livingston, Executive Director asked council to approve two new job descriptions. One for a H.R./Communications Manager and the other for a AAA Assistant.

Chair Barnes requested a motion to approve the two job descriptions. Motion was made by Tim Biddle, Chattahoochee County and seconded by Tameka Harris, Taylor County. The motion was passed with no opposition.

FY 2022 BUDGET AMMENDMENT 2*

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer reported FY 2022 Budget Amendment 2 is the last budget amendment of the fiscal year and includes all new contracts/amendments that have materialized since the last budget amendment. This amendment provides for an increase in Change in Fund Balances and Net Position of approximately \$5,000 and reflects an overall projected increase of \$156,550.

Chair Barnes requested a motion to approve the FY 2022 Budget Amendment 2. Motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County to approve Budget Amendment 2 and seconded by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County. The motion was passed with no opposition.

STAFF UPDATES

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer reported, through the first half of the fiscal year, the Operating Funds are at 48% of budgeted revenues and 47% of budgeted expenditures, so we are right on track with our budgets. There has been a net increase in Fund Balance of about \$60k in the General Fund through December 31, leaving an overall Unassigned Fund Balance of \$970,543.

In the Enterprise Funds we had an increase in net position of approximately \$15k plus \$709k in loan money from the EDA Cares RLF award. We now have a Net Position Restricted for Loans of almost \$2 million and just over \$1 million of that is Cash on Hand.

Katie Howard, AAA Director shared information about the Wait List and those in attendance were encouraged to share the phone number for the ADRC with those persons who are interested in information and/or services.

Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director gave a brief report concerning the CEDS Meeting which took place prior to the full Council Meeting. The committee had requested at last month's meeting to receive information about the status of the TSPLOST Referendum that is scheduled for May 24th of this year. In that regard, Gerald Mixon, RVRC Planning Director, gave a very informative break-down how the progress of the list of projects had been derived at for presentation to GDOT for consideration of being attached to the list for funding should the TSPLOST be approved by the taxpayers.

Ms. Walls also reported that \$700,000 of the EDA COVID-19 RLF has already been committed and/or loaned and that we do have a project pending that will utilize the balance of the funds if approved by the Loan Committee. This project should be presented to them within the next month or two.

Janice West, WIOA Director reported the WIOA enrollment is currently serving 84 individuals in various WIOA services as of February 9, 2022. WIOA Service providers are conducting outreach and recruitment for new WIOA eligible who need educational or occupational skills training for employment. Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims in the region is continuing to see a decrease in the number of weekly UI claims being filed. Regional unemployment rate for November 2021 was 2.9%. Rates show a decrease over the past 12 months when the rate was 6.0% in November 2020.

Gerald Mixon reported, staff is deeply involved with the final stages of three comprehensive plans and six pre-disaster mitigation plans, assisted seven jurisdictions with their post-2020 Census redistricting obligations, and continued historic preservation and transportation assistance programs assistance.

Like all member governments the regional commission must prepare a comprehensive, or regional, plan. Unlike the local governments the regional document requires an annual report. A copy of the staff's preliminary draft of that annual report was included in the February council packet Input will be solicited in March with the final draft presented at the Council's March meeting for approval and authorization for submission for state level review before formal adoption in June.

TIA-2 UPDATE

Carvel Lewis, TIA Roundtable Chair spoke briefly about the upcoming TSPOST Referendum on the May ballot. All election officials have been notified and publications in local newspapers have already begun. The Columbus Chamber is leading this charge on the ballot initiative.

ADJOURN

As there was no further business, Chair Barnes requested a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County. Meeting was adjourned.

March 23, 2022

Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Chair

Carvel Lewis, Secretary