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**River Valley Regional Commission
Legislative Meeting Minutes**

May 26, 2021

Council Members

Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe, RVRC Secretary
Carvel Lewis, Quitman
Damon Hoyte, Chattahoochee
Darrell Holbrook, Webster
Dr. Edward Lee, Chattahoochee
Eugene Cason, Dooly
Greg Dominy, Ellaville
Jayson Griffin, Macon
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee, RVRC Vice
Chairman
Julie Brown, Hamilton
Kenneth Sumter, Ft. Gaines

Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Maggie McGruther, Sumter
Mickey George, Macon
Pam Jordan, Talbot
Randy Howard, Sumter, RVRC Chairman
Rebecca White, Randolph
Sam Farrow, Crisp
Sher'Londa Walker, Talbot
Skip Henderson, Muscogee
Tameka Harris, Taylor

Members Not Attending

A.J. Rivers, Crisp
Barry Whitley, Butler
Bill McClellan, Schley
Bryon Hickey, Muscogee
Charles Coffee, Chattahoochee
Chip Jones, Stewart
Danny Blackmon, Quitman
Doug Etheridge, Harris
Eddie Daniels, Vienna
Eddie Moore, Quitman
James Davenport, Clay
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion

Jeanie Bartelee, Cordele
Jimmy Babb, Lumpkin
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart
Mark Waddell, Sumter
Matt Gunnels, Marion
Melvin Crimes, Webster
Nelson Brown, Americus
Richard McCorkle, Marion
Rob Grant, Harris
Steve Whatley, Cuthbert
Terrell Hudson, Dooly
Tom Queen, Taylor
Wesley Williams, Randolph

Others Attending

Clara Hall, Phoebe Putney Health System
Carol Lipscomb, AAA Advisory Committee
Caleb Mims, Eckerd Connects, Program Manager
Representative Calvin Smyre, District 135
Representative Carolyn Hugley, District 136
Casey Beane, Department of Community Affairs

Chandra Harris, Representative for Senator Jon
Ossoff
Cheryl Mayerik, Atlanta Regional Commission
Chris Kelly, Rep. for Congressman Bishop
Clara Hall, AAA Advisory Committee
Jerald Mitchell, Columbus Chamber

Representative Debbie Buckner, District 137
Grant Buckley, Crisp County Development Authority
Hannah Sloan, Flint Energies
Isaiah Hugley, City of Columbus
Janet Joiner, City of Vienna
James Loyd, Columbus Technical College
Janice Jarvis, Sumter County
Jarrod McCarthy, Taylor County
John Brent, Harris County
John House, Columbus City Council
Mac Moye, Stewart, County Manager
Mary Beth Brownlee, ACCG
Mayor Valery Davis, City of Marshallville
Michael Bowens, City of Vienna
Norman Graves, Middle Flint Council on Aging
Pam Hodge, City of Columbus
Paul Farr, South Georgia Tech
Rayetta Volley, Sumter County Manager

Kevin Lewis, Macon County Manager
Rick Jones, City of Columbus
Ronald Crozier, Clay County Manager
Carol Ison, Talbot County Manager
Sarah Lee Crumbs, Quitman County Family Connections
Saralyn Stafford, UGA, Rural Development Manager for Public Service & Outreach,
Scott Maxwell, Maxwell & Mathews Consultants
Scotty Mashburn, Dooly County Economic Development Council
Steve Sanders, Dooly County Manager
Susan Gallagher, New Horizons Behavioral Health
Terry Mathews, Maxwell & Mathews Consultants
Toyia Tucker, Columbus City Council
Representative Vance Smith, District 133
Mayor Walter Turner, Reynolds

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
Ronnie Graves, Finance Analyst

Allison Slocum, Senior Planner
John Morgan, Bike-Ped Planner
Mariyana Kostov, GIS
Laura Schneider, Regional Planner
Savannah Brown, Regional Planner
LaCarole Lloyd, AAA
Camille Bielby, Regional Planner
Tenisha Tookes, WIOA Specialist

This council meeting was held virtually as the RVRC's yearly Legislative Meeting.

WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Randy Howard, Chairman, brought the River Valley Regional Commission Legislative Meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. He thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee County, then gave the invocation and Bruce Hill, Secretary, led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, announced staff recognition for years of service with River Valley Regional Commission. They were Sarah Walls, 50 years; Katie Howard and Franetta Miles, 20 years; Kia Barrow and Mariyana Kostov, 15 years; and LaCarole Lloyd and Eboni Key, 5 years.

FEDERAL UPDATE

Senator Jon Ossoff, Georgia, said there is still much work to be done to overcome COVID-19 and offered any help needed through his office. He also thanked the River Valley staff for their work on Economic Development.

Senator Raphael Warnock, Georgia, said that the country continues work to overcome the COVID-19 crisis. Senator Warnock said he will continue to support the River Valley Regional Commission for their vital work.

Congressman Drew Ferguson, 3rd Georgia District, also thanked the Commission for all the programs staff works on and for making the region a better place to live. He noted his experience as a local official as mayor of West Point. Congressman Ferguson also stressed the need for better broadband in the rural counties.

Congressman Sanford Bishop, 2nd Georgia District, was represented by District Director Kenneth Cutts. Mr. Cutts said that Congressman Bishop sent his regards and regrets that he was unable to speak with the RVRC Commission and guest. He said that he commends the RVRC and Council for their work that has benefitted many citizens.

STATE OF GEORGIA UPDATE

Governor Brian Kemp, Georgia

Georgia Governor Brian Kemp said the state has faced great challenges during the last year because of the pandemic, civil unrest and other obstacles but the State of Georgia has worked to protect the lives and livelihood of the citizens of Georgia and make it a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Governor Kemp said that Georgia is open for business and has been named the top state to do business for the last 8 years.

RURAL DELEGATION

Representative Mike Cheokas, District 138
Representative Patty Bentley, District 139
Representative Noel Williams, District 148
Representative Gerald Greene, District 151
Representative Bill Yearta, District 152

The Rural Delegation Roundtable was moderated by Randy Howard, Sumter County and Carvel Lewis, Quitman County. Each representative introduced themselves, the district they serve, and the committees they are appointed to serve on. Their discussion focused on future legislation that would enable counties to share services, and what economic development efforts may be available to assist small business owners to have assistance with additional funding for their business.

COLUMBUS DELEGATION

Senator Randy Robertson, Georgia District 29
Representative Vance Smith, District 133
Representative Richard Smith, District 134
Representative Calvin Smyre, District 135
Representative Carolyn Hugley, District 136
Representative Debbie Buckner, District 137

The Columbus Delegation Roundtable was moderated by Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Columbus. Representative Smyre introduced all members of the Columbus Delegation who talked a little bit about the district they serve, and the committees they are appointed to serve on. The Columbus Delegation focused on the effects COVID-19 in the region, the expansion and support of broadband to the extent needed for the rural areas to be able to support tele-medicine in the region, and the impact the Mercer School of Medicine will have on Columbus. They also

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discussed the importance and impact to the state and region of having Sickle Cell research chair named for Representative Smyre.

Randy Howard, Chairman, thanked the senators, congressmen, representatives, governor, and RVRC staff for working together to make the meeting possible.

Chairman Howard announced that the June council meeting would be held virtual again and no meeting will be held in July. Beginning in August, council meeting will be held in Buena Vista again.

The meeting was then adjourned.

June 23, 2021

Date

Randy Howard, Chairman

Bruce Hill, Secretary

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