

MINUTES

Southwest Georgia Regional Commission
Regional Council Meeting
Camilla, Georgia
March 25, 2021

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) held its Council meeting Thursday, March 25, 2021, at the Southwest Regional Commission building in Camilla, Georgia. Due to COVID19 social distancing orders from the Governor, a virtual meeting was held via ZOOM and telephone. Chairman Paul Nagy chaired the meeting and was present. The following council members were present via ZOOM:

John Spann, Eddie Hopkins, Charlie Williams, Deidra Evans-Severson, Benny Flowers, Johnsie Handfield, Barbara Grogan, Anthony Jones, Tammy McCrary, Raymond Breaux, Casawn Lhullier-Yheyeis, Charlie Sol, Al Hutchins Jr., Freddie Speight, Phillip Drew, Jim Sellers, Joe Walden, John Wheaton, Dwight Hickman, Glenda Battle, Ben Hayward, Nathaniel Keaton, Mitchell Blanks, Tracie Beard, Donnie Baggett, Wanda Warren, Al Bryan, Elaine Mays, and John McPhaul.

Council members calling to report conflicts were Brenda Peterson, Jack Powell, Rodney Prince, and Norma Gilpatrick.

Council members absent were Chris Moore, Ferrell Ruis, Steve Brock, Kregg Close, Revonn Miller, Billy Poppell, Jon Howard, Chad Griffin, Kregg Freeman, Carlos Williams, Jayme Smith, Danny Palmer, Ernest Johnson, Gregg Satterfield, E. Dice Roberts, and Christopher Wheeler.

Staff members present were Executive Director Suzanne Angell, Deputy Director Barbara Reddick, Finance Director Scott Stephenson, and Executive Assistant Heather White.

Chairman Nagy called the meeting to order at approximately 6:09p.m.

Chairman Nagy asked Heather White to take the roll call.

Executive Director Suzanne Angell gave the attendance report stating that there were 30 members present representing 11 counties and a quorum was present. Calhoun, Early, Grady and Thomas Counties had 100% representation.

Mr. Nagy asked for a motion that the February 25, 2021 meeting minutes to be approved. Elaine Mays made a motion to accept the minutes. Al Hutchins, Jr. seconded the motion; all agreed.

Chairman Nagy asked Deputy Director Barbara Reddick to give the Planning Report. She said that she needs a vote for approval to submit the Regional Work Program to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Elaine Mays made a motion to submit the Regional Work Program. Barbara Grogan seconded the motion; all agreed. Mrs. Reddick continued with her Planning Report. She said that they are preparing for the Community Development Block Grant Submissions that have a June 4th deadline. The Cities of Bronwood, Arlington, Blakely and Terrell County are being submitted. The Cities of Coolidge and Cairo are getting Zoning Reviews. Community Home Investment Program awards are expected soon. Seminole County was the only CHIP applicant this round. The Pre-Hazard Mitigation Plans are continuing for Seminole, Calhoun, Mitchell, Decatur, Worth and Thomas Counties. Miller County and Baker County have been approved for their Pre-Hazard Mitigation Plans. The planning department is working on Economic Development applications for Dougherty County and the City of Albany. Georgia Tech is assessing and compiling survey results for the EDA Planning Grant of \$400,000. We are still taking applications for the RLF program. Eighteen microloan (CARES) applications were reviewed with ten approved and one pending board review. Sixty-four percent of the funds have been approved for disbursement (\$320,000). Thirty-six percent of the funds are still available for lending. Meetings outside of the Regional Commission are still being held virtually due to the continued pandemic and extended restrictions from the

Governor's office. The Housing Task Force meeting will be held April 13, 2021. The virtual Housing Conference is still being planned for May 2021. The \$60,000 Brownfields Grant has been submitted. Members of the Brownfields Coalition are Leary, Arlington, Bainbridge Donalsonville, and Colquitt, Georgia. Announcements of awards are expected in April. A Plan First application is being prepared for the City of Camilla. An extension for the City of Albany and Dougherty County's Community Work Program and 5-Year Comprehensive Plan Update was applied for and granted. It will now be due in June. The Regional Work Program is in progress. Many more projects can be viewed on the March planning report that were included in the Council's packets.

Chairman Nagy asked Finance Director Scott Stephenson to present the Financial Reports for the period ending February 28, 2021. The General Fund had an excess of revenues over expenditures in the amount of \$30,399.29, bringing the ending fund balance to \$551,034.13. The Revolving Loan Fund had an excess of \$3,047.69, bringing the ending fund balance to \$301,995.69. The Regional Transportation Fund had an excess of revenues over expenditures of \$1,136,001.77, bringing the ending fund balance to \$1,454,976.56. The Regional Partner's Network has a deficit of \$85.00, bringing their fund balance to \$7,195.08. The Pension Trust Fund had a surplus of \$145,683.92, bringing the fund balance to \$1,006,085.89. Gain on investments in the Pension Fund year to date are \$143,991.56. Chairman Nagy asked for a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Donnie Baggett made a motion to accept the financial report. Al Hutchins, Jr. seconded the motion; all agreed.

Executive Director Suzanne Angell proceeded to give the Executive Director's report. Mrs. Angell expressed the great sadness that the SWGRC staff is feeling over the loss of co-worker and friend Shelby Rhymes. She asked for continued prayers for the family and the staff.


Mrs. Angell said Dougherty, Calhoun, Mitchell, Grady, Baker, Colquitt, Terrell, Seminole and Worth Counties have all signed resolutions to become part of the Regional AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) Age-Friendly and Livable Communities Program. The remaining counties will be visited at their commission meetings by Barbara Reddick or Suzanne Angell within the next month. This will be a pilot project and this region will be the first in the nation to be designated as an Age-Friendly and Livable Region. We will be able to list this as a Regional Success Story with DCA. The Revolving Loan Fund Loan Board has approved 10 out of 18 microloan applications that have been presented. There will probably be a resolution for the Defederalization of EDA (Economic Development Administration) RLF (Revolving Loan Fund) funds at the April meeting. New Council Member Training was held before the March Council Meeting. There was good attendance and very valuable information learned. This training is held annually. Last year it was cancelled because COVID-19 was forcing everyone into quarantine in March. Those that missed last year's training was invited to attend this year. Mrs. Angell said she is currently working on developing an "Annual Work Program" for the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission. This will be a comprehensive plan of objectives and goals of the SWGRC for each fiscal year.

Chairman Nagy asked the Council how they would like to proceed with the April meeting – if they would like to continue to hold virtual meetings or if they would like to come back in person or a hybrid of the two. Ms. Angell stated that so long as the Governor has declared an official state of emergency due to the pandemic, we were authorized to conduct official business virtually; however, when the state of emergency ends, we will then be required to meet in person. At that time, council members could attend virtually but would not be allowed to vote unless they attended in person. Ms. Grogan stated that she agreed with that assessment. Ms. Angell was asked to confirm with the RC attorney for clarity on the Open Meetings Act. After much discussion, the next meeting will be held virtually at 6 p.m. on April 29, 2021 via ZOOM.

Chairman Paul Nagy adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:10 p.m.



Paul Nagy, Chairman



Suzanne Angell, Executive Director