

# MINUTES

Southwest Georgia Regional Commission  
Regional Council Meeting  
Camilla, Georgia  
April 29, 2021

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) held its Council meeting Thursday, April 29, 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. Elaine Mays and John Spann were also present. The following council members were present via ZOOM:

Eddie Hopkins, Charlie Williams, Deidra Evans-Severson, Benny Flowers, Johnsie Handfield, Barbara Grogan, Steve Brock, Anthony Jones, Jon Howard, Tammy McCrary, Raymond Breaux, Casawn Lhullier-Yheyeis, Charlie Sol, Al Hutchins Jr., Freddie Speight, Jim Sellers, Dwight Hickman, Glenda Battle, Carlos Williams, Ben Hayward, Danny Palmer, Nathaniel Keaton, Brenda Peterson, Tracie Beard, Donnie Baggett, Wanda Warren, Al Bryan, Christopher Wheeler, John McPhaul, and Norma Gilpatrick.

Council members calling to report conflicts were Ferrell Ruis, Billy Poppell, Chad Griffin, Mitchell Blanks, Jack Powell, and Rodney Prince.

Council members absent were Chris Moore, Kregg Close, Revonn Miller, Phillip Drew, Joe Walden, John Wheaton, Kregg Freeman, Jayme Smith, Ernest Johnson, Gregg Satterfield, and E. Dice Roberts.

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 6:10 p.m.

Chairman Nagy asked Heather White to take the roll call.

Executive Assistant Heather White gave the attendance report stating that there were 33 members present representing 13 counties and a quorum was present. Calhoun, Dougherty, Early, Mitchell and Thomas Counties had 100% representation.

Chairman Nagy asked for a motion that the March 25, 2021 meeting minutes to be approved. Al Hutchins, Jr. made a motion to accept the minutes. Donnie Baggett seconded the motion; all agreed.

Chairman Nagy asked for a motion to amend the agenda to include Paul Fryer, representing Congressman Sanford Bishop's office, so that he can give an update on the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. John Spann made the motion to amend the agenda. Donnie Baggett seconded the motion; all agreed.

Chairman Paul Nagy introduced Paul Fryer and asked him to address the Council. Mr. Fryer started by thanking the staff of the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission for providing so many resources to our local communities. He then discussed the American Rescue Act (ARA) of 2021 that was recently signed by the President. After Mr. Fryer's presentation he answered questions and provided the Council with his email and phone number. He also stated that additional guidance on the ARA should be released soon by the federal government.

Chairman Nagy told the Council that the Executive Committee met before the Council meeting to review the FY21 Amended Budget and they voted to recommend the amended budget to the full Council for approval. The Council received the information in their packets. Executive Director Suzanne Angell reviewed the amended budget with the Council and answered questions. Chairman Nagy asked for a motion to approve the FY 21 Amended Budget as presented. Elaine Mays made the motion. John Spann seconded the motion; all agreed.

Chairman Nagy invited SWGRC Economic Development & Transportation Planner Beka Shiver to make a presentation to the Council on the Overview of findings from GA Tech Economic Development Center's regional interviews for the economic recovery and resiliency plan that they are assisting the RC with. Mrs. Shiver explained that this was a project included under the EDA CARES Planning grant. Mrs. Shiver gave her presentation and answered questions. The Council will also receive her presentation via email after the meeting.

Chairman Nagy asked Deputy Director Barbara Reddick to give the Planning Report. She said that the Planning Report was included in the Council packets. Mrs. Reddick said they have been very busy writing, editing and submitting Hazard Mitigation Plans. She said they are just about half-way through the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) application process. Mrs. Reddick received an email from the Brownfields Consultant stating that we may hear something regarding our applications by next week. An AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) Age-Friendly Communities Grant was submitted. We have been granted the designation and there are communities that are seeking funding right away. The Planning Department is working on the 5-year updates for the Community Work Program for GA DCA (Department of Community Affairs).

Chairman Nagy asked Finance Director Scott Stephenson to present the Financial Reports for the period ending March 31, 2021. The General Fund had an excess of revenues over expenditures in the amount of \$40,382.99, bringing the ending fund balance to \$561,017.83. The Revolving Loan Fund had an excess of \$5,325.89, bringing the ending fund balance to \$529,273.89. The Regional Transportation Fund had an excess of revenues over expenditures of \$1,622,662.87, bringing the ending fund balance to \$1,941,637.66. 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 \$162,969.34, bringing the fund balance to \$1,023,371.31. Mr. Stephenson also reviewed the financial commentary with the Council to address any significant discrepancies between actual expenditures and the budget. Chairman Nagy asked for a motion to accept the financial report as presented. John Spann made a motion to accept the financial report. Al Hutchins, Jr. seconded the motion; all agreed.

Chairman Nagy asked Executive Director Suzanne Angell to present the resolution to defederalize the SWGRC Legacy RLF (Revolving Loan Fund). She mentioned that she presented information at the February Council meeting explaining that the EDA (Economic Development Administration) had sent a letter inviting those with successful and compliant RLF Programs to submit a request to defederalize that RLF Fund under the Reinvigorating Lending for the Future Act, if they so choose. Mrs. Angell further explained what this would mean for our RLF program and how defederalizing the program would benefit the RC by reducing the administrative burden and by having more local control over the program. She stated that if the Council would like to move forward with this, they would need to approve the resolution. Elaine Mays made the motion to approve the resolution to defederalize the SWGRC RLF program. Al Hutchins seconded the motion; all agreed.

Executive Director Suzanne Angell continued with her Executive Director's report. She said all 14 counties did pass a resolution of support for the AARP Age-Friendly and Livable Communities Program. There will be a celebratory roll out at the May 2021 Council Meeting. She said that there were two RLF loans scheduled to close in April and one pulled out at the last minute. Payroll training was attended today with the new time and attendance module. The Annual Work Program is still being worked on. The FY22 Budget will be presented at the May meeting to be tabled and voted on at the June 2021 Council meeting. Mrs. Angell said that there will be a GARC Conference held this year on St. Simons from November 3 – 5 and that more information would be distributed when we receive it.

Chairman Nagy asked the Council how they would like to proceed with the May 27<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. After some conversation, he stated as it stands now it will be a ZOOM meeting. Executive Director Suzanne Angell said that the attorney was contacted and said that when the Governor's State of Emergency ends the Council will be required to attend the meetings in person in order to vote, with the exception of two meetings per year, at which they are allowed to vote via ZOOM for reasons of being out of the region or illness. A discussion ensued about how many Council members may have had COVID vaccines and whether it is legal to ask them about their vaccination prior to in-person meetings.

Chairman Paul Nagy adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:40 p.m.

  
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Paul Nagy, Chairman

  
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Suzanne Angell, Executive Director