

Minutes  
Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Meeting  
January 27, 2011

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) held its Council meeting, Thursday, January 27, 2011, at the RC Offices in Camilla, Georgia. Chairman Jack Powell chaired the meeting, with the following council members present: Mr. John Gaines, Mr. John Spann, Mr. Eddie Hopkins, Mr. Charlie Williams, Mr. Ferrell Ruis, Mr. Henry Crumley, Jr., Dr. C. T. Stafford, Ms. Gloria Gaines, Mr. Christopher Pike, Mr. Stephen Kaplan, Mr. Raymond Breaux, Mr. Al Hutchins, Mr. Billy Poitevint, Mr. Jim Sellers, Mr. Joe Walden, Mr. Vincent Cutts, Ms. Glenda Battle, Mr. Jimmy Haywood, Mr. Carlos Williams, Mr. Ben Hayward, Mr. David Sullivan, Ms. Brenda Peterson, Mr. Charles Barineau, Ms. Brenda Broome, Mr. Lucius Holloway, Ms. Elaine Mays, Mr. Howard Floyd and Mr. Courtney Brinson.

Those Council members calling to report conflicts were Mr. Ernie Feille, Mr. Gean Hendrix, Mr. Richard Ward, Ms. Christie Haynes, Mr. Ed Duffy, Mr. Luther Clearman, Mr. W.D. Palmer, III, Mr. Matt Medders, Mr. William Yearta, Ms. Karen Rackley and Mr. David Maschke.

Council members absent were Ms. Benny Jones, Mr. Johnny Harden, Ms. Janice Baty, Ms. Jenny Crisp, Ms. Camille Payne, Ms. Elizabeth Millsaps and Mr. Mills Herndon.

Staff members present were Executive Director Dan Bollinger, Sr., Executive Secretary Anna Singletary, Finance Director Suzanne Angell, Planning Director Paul Forgey, Transportation Director Robert McDaniel, Workforce Investment Board (WIB) Director Charles Williams, Economic Developer Robert McDonald, Planner Steve O'Neil, Planner Shane Kelsey, WIB Office Manager Gabrielle West, Transportation Planner Gerald Goosby, and Call Center Supervisor Sonja Maxwell. Guests attending the meeting were Mr. Joe Burke, Mr. Richard West, Mrs. Emma Holloway, Mr. John Peterson, Ms. Mary Jo Haywood, Mr. Mike Tabb and Mrs. Alice Hutchins.

Chairman Jack Powell called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. and called on Mr. Dan Bollinger for the Attendance Report. Mr. Bollinger reported that there were 28 members present representing thirteen counties and a quorum was present. He noted that Baker, Dougherty, Grady, Seminole and Terrell Counties had 100% representation and then gave introductions of the Council guests and new Council members. After a brief review of the Agenda, last month's Minutes and Financial Statements, Ms. Elaine Mays moved the approval of the consent agenda, seconded by Ms. Brenda Broome. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman Powell called on Ms. Glenda Battle for the Transportation Committee Report. Ms. Battle presented the Council with a Resolution for the RC to continue the Department of Human Services (DHS) contract providing transportation services for the DHS Region 10. Ms. Battle noted that the adoption of the Resolution was a contractual formality of the transportation program. Mr. Courtney Brinson moved the adoption of the Resolution as presented, seconded by Ms. Elaine Mays. The motion was unanimously approved.

Chairman Powell then called on Ms. Elaine Mays for the Nominating Committee Report. Ms. Mays reported that the committee met prior to the Council meeting and presented the Council with a slate of officers for nomination: Mr. Jack Powell, Chair; Ms. Gloria Gaines, Vice Chair; Mr. Ben Hayward, Treasurer; Ernie Feille, Luther Clearman, Danny Palmer and Brenda Broome as Executive Committee members. With no nominations made from the floor, Ms. Mays recommended that the officers and Executive Committee members be adopted at the next council meeting.

Mr. Ben Hayward was called for the Retirement Trustees report. Mr. Hayward reported that the Trustees had met January 18, 2011 with all Trustees present. He reported that all stocks and bonds are at the level recommended by the federal government and that the Trustees restated the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Retirement Plan. Mr. Bollinger noted that the plan included two key revisions in that the benefit factor of 1.6 was increased to 2.0 and a retirement vesting credit be given to military personnel; and further noted that the said plan was available for review upon request. At the recommendation of the trustees, Chairman Powell appointed RC Human Resources Coordinator, Sherry Knighten, as a RC Retirement Trustee.

Mr. Robert McDonald gave the Economic Developer's report stating that the City of Albany's Urban Redevelopment Plan was approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and noted that with this approval, an area located within a City district was designated and approved as an Opportunity Zone. He reported that in December, he had also submitted an application for a business in Grady County located within an Enterprise Zone. Mr. McDonald reported that he submitted an Equity Fund application to the Economic Development Administration on behalf of Decatur County for 1.7 million to improve the water and waste water system at the industrial park and that a pre-award letter for the project had been received. Mr. McDonald reminded the Council of the Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP) Conference at Albany Technical College and noted that Commissioner Ron Jackson would be in attendance. He encouraged all members to join the "Southwest Georgia Event." Lastly, Mr. McDonald reported that the Revolving Loan Fund program currently had three loans with one current and the other two in default and that a loan application had been submitted to the RC for review. Chairman Powell then charged Mr. McDonald with researching the status of the GA Work Ready program.

Mr. Charles Williams gave the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) report introducing the new Board Chairman, Mike Tabb and WIB Office Manager Gabby West. He noted that WIB staff was conducting On-the-Job-Training (OJT) and Workforce Experience workshops in all 14 counties, and that the workshops were giving participants the necessary soft skills and job skills to be productive in the workforce. He further noted that through other WIB programs, staff was successfully placing participants with employers. Mr. Williams reported that a WIB Board retreat was scheduled for Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> and that Consultant Mary Ann Lawrence and USDOL Employment Training Administrator Susie Lockett, would be in attendance. He then gave an explanation of how the RC and WIB work together in such areas as the GA Work Ready program. WIB Chairman Mr. Tabb commented that having the RC as the fiscal agent was a good fit in that both entities had common regional boundaries, goals and objectives and commended the service provided by the RC and WIB staff thus far.

Mr. Robert McDaniel gave the Non-Emergency Transportation (NET) report stating that for the month of December the RC Call Center received 11,887 phone calls and scheduled 74,905 trips with 82.13% being ambulatory, 15.34% being wheelchair and 2.53% being stretcher, costing a total of \$914,626. Mr. McDaniel noted that the current contract would expire June 30<sup>th</sup> and that the new contract Request for Proposal (RFP) was expected to be issued in February. He then explained the RFP process that would be, most likely, due in June to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Transportation Planner Gerald Goosby reported that Chairman Jeff "Bodine" Sinyard had called the first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Transportation Investment Act of 2010 (HB277) Regional Roundtable to be held February 15<sup>th</sup>; and that all members of the Roundtable were invited and encouraged to attend. He noted that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the unconstrained project submittal process delivered by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT); and that these submittals would be given to the RC for quality assurance and then forwarded to the GDOT Director of Planning, Todd Long for review. Mr. Goosby then reported that the first quarterly meeting of the transportation providers was held to review the GDOT reimbursement process and the drug and alcohol testing policies. He noted that all providers are now required to have telephone numbers visibly listed on the vehicles. Mr. Goosby

reported that the City of Cairo, Miller County, the City of Leesburg and Lee County had all submitted Transportation Enhancement grants.

Ms. Suzanne Angell gave the Finance Director's report reporting that the NET finances had a surplus of \$121,000 in November and a \$65,000 surplus in December. She noted that in December, after the accident of a volunteer transit vehicle that resulted in a fatality, ACCG insurance premiums significantly increased. Mr. McDaniel noted that volunteer drivers had been required to increase their amount of liability insurance coverage, in which the NET program has incurred a loss of volunteer service. Ms. Angell noted that a lawsuit has not been filed as of yet and that the preliminary investigation had ruled the incident as an accident. She reported that the accounting staff was working on end of year reporting and that vehicle bids had been received for additional vehicles. Ms. Angell further reported that the GDOT would be conducting a performance audit in the coming months and that GPS components for transit vehicles had been put on hold. She then explained the new GDOT reimbursement process.

Mr. Paul Forgey gave the Planning Director's report stating that the Regional Plan was due in October with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) approving the Regional Assessment portion of the plan. He noted that staff was embarking on the public involvement portion of the plan by holding public participation meetings and presenting Performance Standards on display boards in every County for comments. Mr. Forgey reported that the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Homeless Count was being conducted and noted that the RC region was the only region conducting the count on a regional level. He further reported that planning staff was helping communities with zoning ordinances and holding planning and zoning workshops. Further discussion was held regarding the Homeless Count process.

Mr. Dan Bollinger gave the Executive Director's report commending the Retirement Trustees for the work efforts put in reviewing and revising the RC retirement program and noted that investments had done well above average. He further reported that the WIB program was progress and that he would be attending the WIB Broad retreat, focusing his efforts on shaping the WIB By-law, policies and procedures. Mr. Bollinger noted that in regards to the earlier referenced NET-RFP, the RFP was to be issued in January, but as of yet, it had not issued. He stated that he had recommended to the agency to wait in issuing the proposal until the contract was closer to expiration and to see how the new healthcare reform would affect transportation and state budgets. He recommended to the Council that with all the uncertainties, a consultant be employed to assist with the answering of the RFP when it was finally issued.

Mr. Bollinger reported that the new administration had reappointed Mike Beatty, DCA Commissioner and Todd Long, GDOT Director of Planning; and that there were new commissioners of the Department of Community Health and Workforce Investment. He noted that these were positive appointments for the Regional Commission. Mr. Bollinger further noted that in the last three years of the budgeting crisis, the RC had not received cuts in funding. However, he reported that this year there was a budget cut in the amount of \$40,000 in the DCA and Historic Preservation funding; but that finance staff was reviewing the RC budget to find a resolution and would bring a recommendation to the Council in the near future. Mr. Bollinger then gave a brief explanation of the budgeting and funding process of the RC Council.

In other business, Mr. Bollinger stated that the RC had accepted by donation the "Newsome Building" next door to the RC building with the understanding that the building was salvageable, but that after process of renovation had begun, it was found the work was going to be extensive and not doable under RC auspices. He noted that the building had then been contracted to be demolished, but Mr. Hal Carter, Contractor, had approached the RC to renovate the building of his own accord with the RC committing to lease the first floor. Mr. Bollinger stated that because the building was literally falling down rapidly with each storm, swift action was taken by the RC Executive Committee to move forward with Mr. Carter's proposal before it would be past the point of renovating. Further discussion was held as to the particulars of the contract with Mr. Carter, the Camilla Downtown Development Authority and the history of the building. Mr. Bollinger

assured the Council that they would be informed with each phase of the renovation and lease agreement as the particulars were formulated and noted and addressed further concerns of some of the Council members. Ms. Elaine Mays moved to ratify the “Newsome Building” decision made by the Executive Committee, seconded by Ms. Brenda Broome. The motion was approved, with one member opposing. Mr. John Gaines moved to transfer the building to the necessary party for liability concerns, seconded by Ms. Glenda Battle. The motion was approved, with one member opposing. Mr. Jim Sellers noted the concern of the method for transferring ownership of the building. Mr. Bollinger commented that the RC attorney would review the process and that Mr. Bollinger would report to Council the attorney’s recommendation.

Mr. Courtney Brinson gave an update of the bee pollination and invited the members to attend the Bee Keeper meetings in the region. With there being no further business, Mr. Courtney Brinson moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Steve Kaplan. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

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Jack Powell, Chairman

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Dan Bollinger, Sr., Secretary