

MINUTES

Southwest Georgia Regional Commission

Regional Council Meeting

Camilla, Georgia

December 16, 2021

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) held its Council meeting Thursday, December 16, 2021, at the Camilla Chamber of Commerce building in Camilla, Georgia. Due to COVID19 social distancing we offered a virtual meeting option by ZOOM. Chairman Paul Nagy chaired the meeting and was present. The following council members were present in person: John Spann, Eddie Hopkins, Charlie Williams, Benny Flowers, Ferrell Ruis, Johnsie Handfield, Kregg Close, Billy Poppell, Anthony Jones, Jon Howard, Casawn Lhuillier-Yheyeyis, Charlie Sol, Al Hutchins, Jr., Joe Walden, Dwight Hickman, Carlos Williams, Brenda Peterson, Mitchell Blanks, Donnie Baggett, Wanda Warren, Elaine Mays, Christopher Wheeler, and Rodney Prince. The following council members were present via Zoom: Jim Sellers, Danny Palmer and Al Bryan.

Council members calling to report conflicts were Steve Brock, Revonn Miller, Freddie Speight, Rozanne Braswell, Jayme Smith, Ben Hayward, Nathaniel Keaton, Jack Powell, and John McPhaul.

Council members absent were Chris Moore, Deidre Evans-Severson, Barbara Grogan, Tammy McCrary, Raymond Breaux, LaFaye Copeland, John Wheaton, Chad Griffin, Kregg Freeman, Tracie Beard, Ernest Johnson, and E. Dice Roberts.

Guests included Nick Valenti, of Valenti, Rackley and Associates, Harriet Walden, Deborah Jones, William Morton, Queenie Grimes, Tiffany Peterson, and Michael Bryant, representing Congressman Sanford Bishop's office.

Staff members present were Executive Director Suzanne Angell, Deputy Director Barbara Reddick, Director of Finance Traci Hall, Executive Assistant Heather White and Administrative Assistant, Harrison Edwards.

Chairman Nagy called the meeting to order at approximately 7:07 p.m.

Executive Director Suzanne Angell gave the attendance report stating that there were 27 members present representing 13 counties and a quorum was present. Thomas County had 100% representation.

Chairman Nagy asked for a motion that the October 2021 meeting minutes to be approved. Billy Poppell motioned the minutes be accepted and Charlie Sol seconded the motion; all agreed.

Chairman Nagy said that the Audit Committee met before the council meeting to review the Annual Audit Report presented by Valenti, Rackley & Associates. The Audit Committee voted to present the audit to the full council. Nick Valenti presented the audit to the Council. He said the audit was clean with no findings. There was no non-compliance or inefficiency in controls. Mr. Nagy asked for a motion to accept the Audit Report. Donnie Baggett made the motion to accept the annual audit as presented by Mr. Valenti. Dwight Hickman seconded the motion; all agreed.

Chairman Nagy asked Deputy Director Barbara Reddick to present the Planning Report. Mrs. Reddick began by asking the Council for a motion to approve the resolution for the annual CEDS update. John Spann made the motion to approve the resolution. Elaine Mays seconded the motion; all agreed. The Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) was awarded in the amount of \$100,000 to rehabilitate homes. The application for the Dougherty County and Feeding the Valley Food Bank CDBG Covid Relief funding has been submitted. The City of Sylvester's Broadband Infrastructure Grant has been submitted. American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARPA) are being worked on and submitted. The Recreational Trails application for Leesburg has been submitted. Lee County and the City of Arlington have made inquiries about zoning reviews. The City of Bronwood has been awarded a community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$749,510 for Street and Drainage improvements. Terrell County has also been awarded \$750,000 for Street and Drainage improvements. Pre-Hazard Mitigation plans for

Miller, Baker, and Thomas Counties have been approved. Seminole, Decatur, and Worth County's Pre-Hazard Mitigation Plans are in process. Calhoun and Mitchell County's Pre-Hazard Mitigation Plans have been submitted for review. Grady County is a new contract. The Planning Department has been very busy working on many other plans and contracts for the region. Deputy Director Reddick stated that everyone received a copy of the comprehensive planning report in their packets, and she is always available for any questions or comments anyone has.

Director of Finance Traci Hall presented the Financial Reports for the period ending October 31, 2021, for the Council's approval. The General Fund had a surplus of \$10,349.64 bringing the ending fund balance to \$575,744.05. The Revolving Loan Fund had a surplus of \$1,981.55 bringing the ending fund balance to \$577,519.95. The Regional Transportation Fund had a deficit of \$131,137.21 bringing the ending fund balance to \$2,651,861.87. The Regional Partner's Network surplus of \$1.00 bringing their fund balance to \$7,196.08 The Pension Trust Fund had a surplus of \$23,672.47 bringing the balance to \$1,094,745.20. Chairman Nagy asked for a motion to accept the Financial Report as presented. Elaine Mays made a motion to accept the financial report. Dwight Hickman seconded the motion; all agreed.

Mrs. Angell proceeded to give the Executive Director's report. Currently we have nine disbursed microloans totaling \$345,000, or 69% of the \$500,000 fund. We are also currently holding two incomplete applications. The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission was selected by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to receive assistance from GDOT to develop a regional transit development (TDP) plan. Eight Regional Commissions applied for this opportunity and two were selected. The request for defederalization of EDA RLF funds was approved by the Economic Development Authority (EDA). The agreement was signed in mid-November. Mrs. Angell asked the council to review the updated FY22 Work Program and Activities in their packets. She said that we expect awards to be announced soon for several grants that we have recently submitted. The SWGRC is currently assisting six local governments with redistricting. She asked the Council if their local government needs assistance with redistricting they can contact our GIS Manger, Heidi Penny. Ms. Angell stated that she had attended a meeting that day in Decatur County to discuss the lack of mental health facilities in our region and most specifically, the burden this crisis is putting on our county jail, hospitals and other agencies. After much discussion, Ms. Angell asked the Council members to contact their local legislators to see how they can assist. Mr. Michael Bryant said he would follow up on this issue to see how Congressman Sanford Bishop may be able to assist. Executive Director Angell concluded by letting the council know she is always available for questions.

Chairman Nagy announced his appointments for the 2021 Nominating Committee. They are as follows, Barbara Grogan as Chairman, Chad Griffin, Wanda Warren, Mitchell Blanks, and Charlie Sol. The Nominating Committee will meet prior to the January council meeting to choose a slate of officers for 2022 to recommend to the full Council. The Council will then be allowed to make other nominations and the vote will occur during the February council meeting since nominations are to be tabled for 30 days.

Chairman Nagy then read the names of those council members that achieved 100% attendance for the calendar year 2021. Those receiving recognition were Charlie Williams, Charlie Sol, Al Hutchins, Jr., Donnie Baggett, Wanda Warren, Al Bryan, and Elaine Mays. The Thomas County appointees were recognized for their 100% attendance for 2021.

Chairman Mays stated if there was no other business, the next meeting will be January 27, 2021. The place is to be determined. Donnie Baggett made a motion to adjourn. Benny Jones seconded the motion to adjourn; all agreed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:55 p.m.

Paul Nagy, Chairman

Suzanne Angell, Executive Director