

MINUTES

Southwest Georgia Regional Commission
Regional Council Meeting
Camilla, Georgia
March 31, 2022

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) held its Council meeting Thursday, March 31, 2022, at the Chamber of Commerce “Depot” in Camilla, Georgia. Due to COVID, the meeting was held in person with social distancing, via ZOOM and was also accessible by telephone. Present in person was John Spann, Eddie Hopkins, Charlie Williams, Darryl Warren, Paul Nagy, Ferrell Ruis, Johnsie Handfield, Barbara Grogan, Billy Poppell, Anthony Jones, Charlie Sol, Al Hutchins, Jr., Freddie Speight, Dwight Hickman, Jason Scott, Ben Hayward, Nathaniel Keaton, Mitchell Blanks, Donnie Baggett, Elaine Mays, and Melvin Harris.

Council members attending via ZOOM were Jon Howard, Dr. Charles Ochie, Sr., Raymond Breaux, Casawn-Lhuillier Yheyais, June Knight, Jim Sellers, Joe Walden, Danny Palmer, Tracie Beard, Doug Powell, and Kemp Willis.

Excused was Benny Flowers, Steve Brock, Carlos Williams, Brenda Peterson, and Scott Chastain

Council members absent were Chris Moore, Kregg Close, Revonn Miller, John Wheaton, Chad Griffin, Kregg Freeman, Jayme Smith, Ernest Johnson, Sondra Walker, Al Bryan, Christopher Wheeler, and Rodney Prince.

Guests present were Paul Tanner, Speaker, GDOT (Georgia Department of Transportation) REVAMP Liaison, Ilean Bady, Smithville Councilwoman, and Mrs. Katherine Speight.

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

Chairman Nagy called the meeting to order at approximately 7:08 p.m.

Executive Assistant Heather White gave the attendance report stating that there were 32 members present representing 13 counties and there was a quorum. Colquitt, Dougherty, Early, Grady and Mitchell Counties had 100% representation.

Mr. Nagy asked for a motion that the February 2022 meeting minutes be approved. Billy Poppell motioned the minutes be accepted and Al Hutchins, Jr. seconded the motion; all agreed.

Chairman Nagy introduced the guest speaker Mr. Paul Tanner, Georgia Department of Transportation REVAMP Liaison Paul Tanner. Mr. Tanner gave a presentation to the Council on Roadway Element Validation and Mapping Program, also known as REVAMP. He explained that this program is a reinvention/ modification of what the council knew formerly as MAP21. The REVAMP program is a partnership between GDOT, the Regional Commissions and the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government to improve existing data and capture road network changes from local governments.

Mr. Nagy asked Executive Director Suzanne Angell to give the Executive Committee Report. The first thing Mrs. Angell discussed was the suggestion of a council member to consider employee satisfaction surveys. After much discussion during the Committee meeting, the members of the Executive Committee decided that the survey was not needed at this time. One Executive Committee member offered a couple of suggestions such as an anonymous suggestion box for employees and exit interviews. The next discussion was a proposed revision to the SWGRC current Travel Policy. The revised policy would adopt the recent revisions to the GA statewide policy (so that the SWGRC travel policy is in concurrence) and would also revise the amount of time an employee would have to be on a non-overnight travel work assignment (from twelve (12) hours to six (6) hours) to be compensated for meals. The Executive Committee recommended this policy to be presented to the council for a vote. Elaine Mays made the motion to accept the amended travel policy. Billy Poppell seconded the motion; all agreed. The next item discussed at the committee meeting was the FY22 budget amendment. The Executive Committee had reviewed and recommended the proposed amended budget go to the full council for a vote; however, it was realized that the full

Council members had not received a copy of the proposed budget amendment. After discussion, the recommendation was tabled until the April 2022 Council meeting so the full Council would have time to review the proposed budget amendment.

Barbara Grogan, Chairman of the Planning & Community Development Committee was asked to give her report on their meeting that was held earlier. Ms. Grogan stated that at their meeting they discussed the upcoming update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2022. The committee members offered suggestions and opinions about the CEDS 2022 report. There were no action items at this time.

Chairman Nagy asked Deputy Director Barbara Reddick to present the Planning Report. She said she was going to keep her report brief and would take any questions or comments. The Council received the Planning report on the website, in their packets, and via email. The planners are working on a Redevelopment Fund Grand (RDF) for Colquitt. The City of Sylvester's Broadband Infrastructure Grant was submitted to the Department of Commerce in hopes of being awarded \$1.5 million. The Leesburg Recreational Trails was approved and has moved on to PHASE II. CHIP applications were submitted for Boston, Grady/Cairo, Doerun, and Seminole. There will be a Transit Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting on April 26th.

Director of Finance Traci Hall presented the Financial Report for the period ending February 28, 2022, for the Council's approval. The General Fund had a net surplus of revenues over expenditures of \$78,990.00 bringing the ending fund balance to \$644,384.41. The FY22 unassigned fund balance per policy is \$365,652.97. The actual unassigned fund balance in excess of the minimum is \$257,731.44. The Revolving Loan Fund had a surplus of revenues over expenditures of \$4,515.34 bringing the ending fund balance to \$620,053.74. The Regional Transportation Fund had a net surplus of revenues over expenditures of \$32,684.80 bringing the ending fund balance to \$2,815,683.88. The Pension Trust Fund had a deficit of \$230,995.93 bringing the fund balance to \$840,076.80. Chairman Nagy asked for a motion to accept the February 2022 Financial Report included in the meeting packets. Charlie Sol made a motion to accept the February 2022 financial reports. Donnie Baggett seconded the motion; all agreed.

Mrs. Angell proceeded to give the Executive Director's report. She welcomed new council members and introduced each of them. She said that new council member training was held earlier in the day and three out of nine new members attended the training. The RLF CARES program has disbursed nine microloans totaling \$345,000 of the \$500,000 fund. This is 69% of the fund that has been utilized. A \$40,000 loan was approved by the RLF Board this week. This will put us above the April 1st 75% threshold requirement by EDA and we will not have our fund reduced by 25%. The money generated from these loans will stay in our RLF program and will be available for future loans as these are paid. The FY22 Work Program Summary of Projects was mailed out in the Council packets. We are fully staffed at this time; however, Shane Kelsey, our part-time planner will be leaving us in May to move to Helen, GA and our Planning Administrative Assistant, Marcie Marshall, will be leaving us at the end of March to stay home and take care of her grandson. Included in the packets was the most recent weekly legislative report provided to us by the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) lobbyists, Mathews & Maxwell. House Bill 1180 that addresses the Regional Commissions and their Councils has been sent to the Senate and has been referred to the Government Oversight Committee. The annual indirect cost proposal, for final FY21 and provisional FY23, was successfully negotiated with the Department of the Interior, Indirect Cost Division, at the rate submitted in the proposal. We are continuing to work with GDOT and AECOM on the Regional Rural Transit Plan and have been providing information to them and having regular meetings. Our first Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting will be held April 26th. We are in the process of implementing our new payroll software and it is set to go live in April.

Chairman Nagy stated if there was no other business, the next meeting will be April 28, 2022, more than likely at the Camilla Chamber of Commerce. Paul Nagy adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:26 p.m.

Paul Nagy, Chairman

Suzanne Angell, Executive Director