

MINUTES

Southwest Georgia Regional Commission

Regional Council Meeting

Camilla, Georgia

April 28, 2022

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) held its Council meeting Thursday, April 28, 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, Benny Flowers, Ferrell Ruis, Barbara Grogan, Billy Poppell, Charlie Sol, Al Hutchins, Jr., Dwight Hickman, Donnie Baggett, Elaine Mays, Danny Palmer, and Melvin Harris.

Council members attending via ZOOM were Charlie Williams, Darryl Warren, Johnsie Handfield, Jon Howard, Dr. Charles Ochie, Sr., Raymond Breaux, Casawn-Lhuillier Yheyeis, June Knight, Jim Sellers, Joe Walden, Jason Scott, Mitchell Blanks, Tracie Beard, Doug Powell, Scott Chastain, Al Bryan, Kemp Willis, Christopher Wheeler, and Rodney Prince.

Excused were Chairman Paul Nagy, Steve Brock, Kregg Close, Anthony Jones, Freddie Speight, Jayme Smith, Ben Hayward, Nathaniel Keaton, and Brenda Peterson,

Council members absent were Chris Moore, Revonn Miller, John Wheaton, Chad Griffin, Kregg Freeman, Carlos Williams, Earnest Johnson, and Sondra Walker.

Guests present were Queenie Grimes, Patricia Williams, Paul Fryer (Sanford Bishop’s Office), and Charles Capps.

Staff members present were Executive Director Suzanne Angell, Deputy Director Barbara Reddick, Economic Development & Transportation Planner Beka Shiver, Grant Writer/Administrator Rhonda Tucker, Executive Assistant Heather White, and Receptionist Harrison Edwards.

Chairman Emeritus Elaine Mays called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 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. Calhoun, Grandy, Thomas, and Worth County had 100% representation.

Mrs. Mays asked for a motion that the March 2022 meeting minutes be approved. Al Hutchins motioned the minutes be accepted and John Spann seconded the motion; all agreed.

Mrs. Mays asked for a motion to pass the FY22 Budget Amendment that had been tabled from March meeting. Donnie Baggett made the motion to pass the FY22 Budget Amendment. Dwight Hickman seconded the motion; all agreed.

Chairman Emeritus Mays asked Deputy Director Barbara Reddick to present the Planning Report. Mrs. Reddick asked for the Council to approve a resolution to transmit a draft of the Regional Plan to the GA Department of Community Affairs. Ms. Mays asked for a motion from the floor. Donnie Baggett made a motion to approve the resolution to submit the draft. Dwight Hickman seconded the motion; all agreed. Four ARPA grants written and submitted by the SWGRC were awarded, as follows: City of Leary (\$4.4M), City of Attapulgus (\$1.15M), City of Coolidge (\$780K), and Terrell County (\$9.6M). City of Baconton is still awaiting an announcement. Leesburg recreational trails grant has been approved to move forward with PHASE II. Seminole and Grady County CHIP (Community HOME Investment Program) grants were awarded. A CDBG-DR (Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery) was submitted for the City of Albany. Pre-Hazard Mitigation Plans for Seminole and Decatur Counties are in progress, Calhoun County is under review with GEMA, Mitchell and Worth are complete

and approved and staff is beginning to work on Grady County. Mrs. Reddick introduced Beka Shiver, Economic Development & Transportation Planning staff member.

Executive Director Suzanne Angell presented the Financial Report for the period ending March 31, 2022, for the Council's approval. The General Fund had a net surplus of revenues over expenditures of \$106,192.85 bringing the ending fund balance to \$671,587.26. The FY22 unassigned fund balance per policy is \$365,652.97. The actual unassigned fund balance in excess of the minimum is \$305,934.29. The Revolving Loan Fund had a surplus of revenues over expenditures of \$5,098.52 bringing the ending fund balance to \$620,636.92. The Regional Transportation Fund had a deficit of \$30,850.38 bringing the ending fund balance to \$2,752,148.70. The Pension Trust Fund had a deficit of \$219,540.35 bringing the fund balance to \$851,532.38. Mrs. Mays asked for a motion to accept the March 2022 Financial Report included in the meeting packets. Billy Poppell made a motion to accept the March 2022 financial reports. Dwight Hickman seconded the motion; all agreed.

Mrs. Angell proceeded to give the Executive Director's Report. Mrs. Angell explained the meeting attendance was down this month due to ACCG (Association County Commissioners of Georgia) and GMA (Georgia Municipal Association) each having an event at the same time. She said the Council needs to appoint someone fill the Ethics Committee vacancy. This position was the position that Wanda Warren recently held and was the Council appointed committee member. Dwight Hickman volunteered to fill the vacancy on the Ethics Committee. Donnie Baggett made the motion to appoint Dwight Hickman as the council appointee on the Ethics Committee. Billy Poppell seconded the motion; all agreed. Ms. Mays asked for a motion to adopt the resolution to request re-certification in the GMA "City of Ethics" program for an additional four years. Donnie Baggett made the motion. Billy Poppell seconded the motion; all agreed. Mrs. Angell asked for a motion of approval for her to sign the MOA (Memorandum of Understanding) between the SWGRC and the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) as a community network for the Rural Partners Network program. The Southwest Georgia Region was one of three in the state chosen for this pilot program. The communities chosen for this program will collaborate with a USDA Liaison and other partners to increase public awareness and identify resources available from the federal and/or state government. Al Hutchins made the motion. Ferrell Ruis seconded the motion; all agreed. Mrs. Angell stated that everyone should have received their annual report in their packages. An additional Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) loan from the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) program was closed in April. Mrs. Angell introduced Rhonda Preston as the SWGRC's new Grant Writer/Administration staff member. The final legislative report was included in the packets. The legislation to change the composition of the regional commission councils died in the Senate. In May, GDOT and a consultation firm will have a public forum/ virtual platform to guide people through public input about the rural transit system.

Mrs. Mays stated if there was no other business, the next meeting will be May 26, 2022. Ms. Barbara Grogan said the Moultrie-Colquitt County Development Authority may be interested in hosting the next meeting in Moultrie. Mrs. Mays adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Paul Nagy, Chairman

Suzanne Angell, Executive Director