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**RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING  
Marion County Commission Office  
August 28, 2019  
10:30 A.M.  
Minutes**

**Members Attending**

(Representing 16 Counties)

A.J. Rivers, Crisp County  
Barry Waters, City of Ft. Gaines  
Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe, RVRC Secretary  
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County  
Chip Jones, Stewart County  
Doug Etheridge, Harris County  
Dr. Edward Lee, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County  
Ernest Jenkins, Clay County  
Harry Lange, Harris County  
Hobby Stripling, City of Vienna  
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion County  
Jayson Griffin, Macon County

Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee Co., RVRC Vice Chair  
Jimmy Bradley, Randolph County  
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County  
Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton  
Matt Gunnels, Marion County  
Melvin Crimes, Webster County  
Pam Jordan, Talbot County  
Randy Howard, Sumter County, RVRC Chair  
Richard McCorkle, Marion County  
Tameka Harris, Taylor County  
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County  
Wally Summers, Sumter County  
Tony Kennedy, Webster County

**Members Not Present**

Barry Whitley, City of Butler  
Clay Jones, Sumter County  
Carlton Wilson, City of Ellaville  
Clinton Perry, Jr. Taylor County  
Damon Hoyte, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County  
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman County  
Dr. Carole Rutland, Muscogee County  
Evelyn Turner Pugh, Muscogee County  
Freeman Montgomery, Talbot County  
Greg Barineau, Schley County

James Morton, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County  
Jeanie Bartee, City of Cordele  
Jimmy Babb, City of Lumpkin  
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County  
Nelson Brown, City of Americus  
Mickey George, Macon County  
Ralph Brown, City of Buena Vista  
Rebecca Chambers, City of Hamilton  
Sam Farrow, Jr., Crisp County  
Steve Whatley, City of Cuthbert  
Tom Queen, Taylor County

**Others Present**

Brittney Hickom, Department of Community Affairs  
Deana Perry, Department of Community Affairs  
Casey Bean, Department of Community Affairs  
Chris Kelley, Field Rep. for Congressman Bishop  
Debbie Stone, City of Lumpkin  
Janet Joiner, Vienna, Community Development Director  
Janice Jarvis, Sumter County, Fiscal Administrator

Justin Strickland, Marion County  
Kathy Burns, Field Rep. for Senator Perdue  
Laura Gower, Field Rep. for Senator Johnny Isakson  
Laura Lee Berstein, Cusseta-Chatt. County Manager  
Lisa Goodwin, Columbus Consolidated Government  
Melissa Moody, AAA Advisory Council  
Rebecca White, Randolph Co. Chamber of Commerce  
Regina McDuffie, Macon Co., County Manager

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Roselle Moody, AAA Advisory Council  
Steve Sanders, Dooly County, County Administrator

Susan Gallagher, New Horizons Behavioral Health  
Tom Patton, Crisp County, County Administrator

**Staff Members**

Jim Livingston, Executive Director  
Sarah Walls, Assistant Director  
Katie Howard, AAA Director  
Rick Morris, Planning Director

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director  
Grant Richardson, Community Developer  
Allison Slocum, Senior Planner/Historic Preservation  
Becky Holmes, Office Manager

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**WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Randy Howard, RVRC Chair, brought the regular meeting of the River Valley Regional Council to order at 10:30 a.m. He welcomed council members and visitors. Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee County, RVRC Vice Chairman, gave the invocation and Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe, RVRC Secretary, led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES\***

Council reviewed the minutes of the June 26, 2019 council meeting which were either mailed or emailed to council members the previous week for their review. The minutes were also available in the council packet at the meeting.

One change was requested on the minutes under the staff reports, “The Regional Transportation Roundtable will be made up of 1 elected official from each county, **“the mayor of each city”**, and 2 elected officials from each consolidated government” should read “The Regional Transportation Roundtable will be made up of 1 elected official from each county, and **“one mayor elected by the mayors of the county”**. The Columbus Consolidated Government, the Unified Government of Cusseta-Chattahoochee County, the Unified Government of Georgetown-Quitman County, and the Unified Government of Webster County will choose a second elected member of the consolidated government to serve on the Regional Roundtable.

Randy Howard, RVRC Chair, requested a motion to approve the June 26, 2019 council minutes including the amendment of the make-up of the Regional Transportation Roundtable. Barry Waters, City of Ft. Gaines, made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented with the amendment; Melvin Crimes, Webster County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

**GEORGIA BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM**

Deana Perry, Executive Director of Broadband and Brittney Hickom, Broadband Program Manager, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, updated the council by presenting a PowerPoint explaining the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative Program. Ms. Perry explained the program is to promote and deploy Broadband services throughout the state to unserved areas with a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload speeds. She said Broadband has become essential to businesses, education, healthcare, agriculture, and overall quality of life but that high speed internet is not accessible to many of Georgia’s rural communities. The state has approved rules for a grant program but awaiting guidance from legislature on funding.

**REGIONAL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT ADOPTION RESOLUTION\***

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, requested approval of the Regional Plan Annual Report adoption resolution as required by the Department of Community Affairs.

Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to adopt the Regional Plan Annual Report resolution; seconded by Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County. The motion passed with no opposition.

Chattahoochee | Clay | Crisp | Dooly | Harris | Macon | Marion | Muscogee  
Quitman | Randolph | Schley | Stewart | Sumter | Talbot | Taylor | Webster

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## **TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT ACT (TIA) ROUNDTABLE PROCESS**

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, updated the council on the creation of the Transportation Roundtable. He said there are 4 steps: electing officers, setting guidelines, approve the executive committee nominees and discussing the criteria for the TIA projects. The first two items will be discussed at the first meeting of the TIA Roundtable on September 4 at the county commission office in Buena Vista. The second meeting (date and time to be announced) held will be to approve the executive committee and discuss criteria for TIA projects.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, reported for the Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act (WIOA) department. He explained that Janice West, WIOA Director, was unable to attend due to the annual State monitoring of the WIOA program. Compliance, financial and programmatic areas will be monitored and a report will be provided to the RVRC within 30 days.

Katie Howard, AAA Director, stated that the Senior Farmer's Market was a great success again this year. Twenty dollar vouchers were given to 1,450 seniors that they were able to buy fresh vegetables and fruits from local farmers at the Senior Farmer's Market. Katie announced that staff is available to speak about AAA subjects at meeting, clubs, churches, etc. If interested call the RVRC office at 706-256-2910.

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, reported the Comprehensive Plan for Clay County, Fort Gaines, Bluffton, and Crisp County were adopted in June. Staff gave a favorable review for the Love's Travel Stop and County Store, in Crisp County, as a potential Development of Regional Impact was released in July. Staff continues to provide technical assistance or zoning issues to Chattahoochee, Stewart, Talbot and Quitman Counties. The cities of Richland and Hamilton are being assisted on zoning and subdivision related matters. Pre-disaster Mitigation Plan updates are underway for Dooly, Marion, Crisp, Randolph, Stewart, Talbot and Webster Counties. Clay County's plan has been submitted to GEMA for approval. A Brownfield Assessment grant was awarded to the RVRC in the amount of \$600,000 to assess contaminated sites within Sumter, Crisp, Dooly and Macon Counties. Staff is monitoring 3 watersheds; Pataula Creek, Lone Cane Creek, and Mountain Oak Creek. Historic Preservation staff reviewed 9 applications in July and August for Certificates of Appropriateness for the Columbus Board of Historic & Architectural Review.

Grant Richardson, Community Development, reported that staff continues administer 15 Community Development Block Grants. The Immediate Threat and Danger Grant (ITAD) for the City of Bluffton closed out and the Reynolds ITAD is now in the Environmental Review process.

The Department of Community Affairs Annual Fall Conference will be held October 15-17 at the Great Wolf Lodge in LaGrange. Early registration before October 1 is only \$200. Hotel rooms are being held at a discounted rate.

Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director presented the Economic Development staff report. She reported that Broadband continues to be the focus of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Initiative but the committee will consider other items at the meeting in September. Staff is continuing to work with potential projects to help fund them through the Revolving Loan Fund program. Sarah requested if anyone knew of someone that is considering opening or expanding a business and needs funding to contact her at 706-256-2910.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, said counties and cities have received a list of addresses that have been rejected by the Census bureau. He explained that each address will need to be checked for accuracy to ensure all people are counted for the census.

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Susan Galliger, New Horizons Behavioral Health, announced New Horizons is presenting the Third Annual Children's Mental Health Symposium, September 13, 2019, at Piedmont Columbus Regional Conference Center in Columbus. She encouraged everyone to attend.

Chris Kelley will be the new field representative for Congressman Sanford Bishop due to the retirement of Elaine Gillispie.

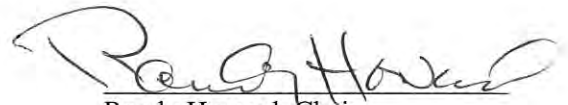
Casey Bean, Department of Community Affairs, announced the Georgia Academy for Economic Development will be holding a Spring 2020 class. Anyone interested in attending can contact Casey Bean at [casey.beane@dca.ga.gov](mailto:casey.beane@dca.ga.gov) for more information.

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, announce the Georgia Association of Regional Commission's Annual Meeting will be held November 6-8 at the King and Prince Beach and Golf Resort. He encouraged council members to attend if possible.

**ADJOURN**

Harry Lange, Harris County, made a motion to adjourn; Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

9/25/2019  
Date

  
Randy Howard, Chair

  
Bruce Hill, Secretary