



www.rivervalleyrc.org

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RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

100 East Burkhalter Avenue
Buena Vista, Georgia

Minutes

March 23, 2016
10:30 a.m.

Members Attending/Representing (Representing 16 Counties)

Bruce Hill, City of Oglethorpe
Carlton Wilson, City of Ellaville
Clark Henderson, Crisp County
David Kinsey, Georgetown-Quitman County
Debbie Stone, Stewart County
Doug Etheridge, Harris County
Dr. Carole Rutland, Muscogee County
Edward Lee, Cusseta-Chatahoochee County
Evelyn Turner-Pugh, Muscogee County
George Moore, Webster County
Harry Lange, Harris County
Jason Hoch, Schley County
Hobby Stripling, Vienna
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion County
James Morton, Cusseta-Chatahoochee County
Jeanie Bartee, City of Cordele
Jimmy Bradley, Randolph County
Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Melvin Crimes, Webster County
Mickey George, Macon County
Mike Speight, Crisp County, RVRC Secretary
Pam Jordan, Talbot County
Ralph Brown, City of Buena Vista
Randy Howard, Sumter County
Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Richard Morris, Georgetown-Quitman County, RVRC Vice-Chair
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
Tom Queen, Taylor County
Tommy Mckenzie, Macon County
Wally Summers, Sumter County

Members Not Present

Barry Whitley, City of Butler
Clinton Perry, Jr., Taylor County, RVRC Chair
Chip Jones, Stewart County

Cecil "Butch" McMickle, Marion County
Greg Bartneau, Schley County
Fred Gordon, Muscogee County
Freeman Montgomery, Talbot County
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee County
Jim Lawrence, Cusseta-Chatahoochee County
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County
Lawrence Young, Stewart County
Lee Hubbard, Clay County
Nelson Brown, City of Americus
Patricia Goodman, Randolph County
Rebecca Chambers, City of Hamilton
Steven F. Martin, City of Ft. Gaines
Steve Whatley, City of Cuthbert

Others Present

Dr. John Wafford, President, South Georgia Technical College
Mr. Ed Lee, Community Involvement Specialist, Hearts for Families
Annie Leggett, Middle Flint Behavioral Health Manager
Jason Tinsley, County Manager, Marion County
A. J. Rivers, City of Cordele
John Brent, Harris County
Elaine Gillespie, Senator Bishop's Representative
Senator Johnny Isakson's Representative
Jo Childers, Department of Community Affairs
Candice Head, Georgia Department of Labor
Edwina Turner, Stewart County Family Connections

Staff Present

Patti Cullen, Executive Director
Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director
Rick Morris, Planning Director, Columbus Office
Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, Americus Office
Janice West, WIOA Director
Jim Livingston, Community and Economic Development Director
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer
Becky Holmes, Office Manager

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Quitman | Randolph | Schley | Stewart | Sumter | Talbot | Taylor | Webster

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WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Richard Morris, Vice Chair, brought the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jason Tinsley who is the new County Manager for Marion County. Mike Speight, Secretary, then led the council in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES*

Richard Morris, Vice Chair, requested council approval of the February 24, 2016 council meeting minutes which were mailed or email to each council member the previous week for their review.

Harry Lange made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; Evelyn Turner-Pugh seconded the motion. By unanimous consent the motion carried.

SOUTH GEORGIA TECHNICAL COLLEGE INITIATIVES

Wally Summers, Sumter County, introduced Dr. John Watford, South Georgia Technical College's (SGTC) new President. Dr. Watford explained that the college serves Crisp, Macon, Marion, Schley, Sumter, and Webster counties.

He said workforce education is the goal of South Georgia Technical College. The "High School Move On Ready" program has almost 500 students enrolled. Students in these classes are able to take some college core classes while in high school and will receive credits that will be accepted in college. He explained that the college partners with some businesses such as John Deer, Kaufman Tire and Caterpillar to train their employees which creates more opportunities for the community. Not only is SGTC involved with existing businesses and industries, but they also work with local community and economic development initiatives to create jobs which helps the local communities. SGTC encourages people that do not have a high school education to enroll in the GED program that the college offers which will help them get prepared for the workforce. He said eighty percent of all jobs require a high school diploma. Dr. Watford said he was excited about this new position and working with the RVRC.

GEORGIA'S ALCOHOL ABUSE PROGRAM FOR THE RVRC REGION

Ed Lee, Community Involvement Specialist for the Hearts of Families organization, gave an informative PowerPoint presentation focusing on the dangers of alcohol abuse, especially in the 21 and under age group, and the negative impact it can have not only on their health but also their future. He explained that according to a national survey twenty-three percent of Georgia's youth consume alcohol before the age of thirteen and twenty-two percent of high school students engaged in binge drinking in the month prior to the survey. Underage drinking is a factor in almost half of all teen automobile crashes and contributes to suicides, homicides and fatal injuries. Twenty-five percent of high school students admitted to riding in a car with someone that had been drinking. Alcohol abuse is also linked to as many as two-thirds of all sexual assaults and date rapes of teens and college students.

Mr. Lee introduced Annie Leggett, Manager for Middle Flint Behavioral Health, who explained the activities that are ongoing in Americus and Cordele to educate youth about the dangers of alcohol. She explained that one goal of Middle Flint Behavioral Health is to inform not only children and teenagers but also parents of the dangers of drinking and their child's health. Ms. Leggett said that the brain continues to develop into the mid-20's and that alcohol abuse at a young age could lead to brain damage, memory problems and harm to other major organs. Underage drinkers are 5 times more likely to become an alcoholic or abuse alcohol than if they wait until the age of 21. Fifty-eight percent of prisoners say they were drinking when they committed the crime they were incarcerated for. Mr. Lee and Ms. Leggett had several brochures available.

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REVIEW (AND APPROVAL) OF THE REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director, said staff began updating the Regional Work Program two months earlier and had incorporated suggestions into the plan from the RVRRC region. A copy of the River Valley Regional Work Program 2016-2020 was included in the council packet. He explained that it is a requirement that the work program be submitted to DCA by the end of the month. It was brought to his attention that Keep Columbus Beautiful has a recycling program in Columbus and the City of Americus also recycles. Richard Morris then requested council approval of the transmittal resolution for the Annual Update of the Regional Work Program 2016-2020 with the above mentioned additions. George Moore made a motion to approve the resolution; Harry Lange seconded the motion. Motion passed with 100 percent approval.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TO FILE A GRANT APPLICATION, UNDER TITLE 49C, SECTION

5304

Gerald Mixon also requested authorization to file a grant application to apply for funding under Title 49C, Section 5304 thru the Georgia Department of Transportation. Funds will be used to prepare a bicycle and pedestrian plan for the City of Americus. Clark Henderson made a motion to approve authorization to apply; Harry Lange seconded the motion. Motion passed with 100 percent approval.

STAFF REPORTS

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, said the financial report was included in the council packets and that there had been a fund balance increase. She explained that the regional commission had received the EDA award contract for the next 3 years and said that the Federal mileage rate had dropped to .54 cents in January. If anyone had questions they were asked to contact her at the office.

Rick Morris, Planning Director, stated that staff had completed the Cusseta-Chattahoochee County Comprehensive Plan and that it was adopted by the county commission. Staff continues to work on the comprehensive plans for Macon and Schley Counties. Draft updates to the Georgetown-Quitman Manufactured Housing Ordinance have been completed and submitted to the planning commission. The regional commission received notification that the Pataula Creek 319 (h) grant application was approved. Historic preservation staff reviewed four cases for Columbus Board of Historic Architecture Review (BHAR). Rick reminded everyone of all the upcoming bike ride events and encouraged everyone to attend.

Jim Livingston, Community & Economic Development Director, said that staff has been working diligently to complete 14 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications before the Department of Community Affairs' submittal deadline of April 1st. Staff is currently administering twenty-four (24) CDBG projects and three economic development projects. Jim announced that a Camera Ready training and strategic visioning session will be held on April 19th from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm in the Columbus MakesIt space in Columbus. All Camera Ready representatives have been invited to attend. Jim said the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions has requested help with a joint trails project for the state. He requested help in locating trails in all of the RC counties and cities such as biking trails, walking trails, etc.

Janice West, WIOA Director, announced that during the period from July 1, 2015 thru March 15, 2016 two hundred twenty-three people were enrolled for various training programs. Janice also noted that the unemployment rate for both the eastern and western RVRRC counties had decreased. The second quarter, WIOA Performance Report for the River Valley eastern region showed the region exceeding seven of the performance measures, meeting one measure and one measure did not meet the performance standards.

OTHER BUSINESS


Patti Cullen, Executive Director, updated the council on Clinton Perry's health. She stated that Chair Perry was still home recovering from the car accident that he was involved in and that it would be several weeks before he could put pressure on his leg. Patti also announced that Debbie Stone will now be on the council representing the City of Lumpkin.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the council the meeting was adjourned.

April 27, 2016
DATE


Richard Morris, RVRC Vice-Chair


Mike Speight, Secretary