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**RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**

**River Valley Regional Commission, Columbus Office**

**January 27, 2021**

**10:30 A.M.**

**Minutes**

**Members Attending in Office**

Randy Howard, Sumter,  
RVRC Chairman

Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee,  
RVRC Vice Chairman

Darrell Holbrook, Webster  
Dr. Edward Lee, Chattahoochee  
Julie Brown, Harris  
Knox Blackmar, Talbotton

Melvin Crimes, Webster  
Tameka Harris, Taylor  
Tom Queen, Taylor  
Eugene Carson, Dooly

**Members Attending via Teleconference**

Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe, RVRC Secretary  
Carvel Lewis, Quitman  
Chip Jones, Stewart  
Damon Hoyte, Chattahoochee  
Danny Blackmon, Quitman  
Doug Etheridge, Harris

Greg Dominy, Ellaville  
Jayson Griffin, Macon  
Kenneth Sumter, Ft. Gaines  
Maggie McGruther, Sumter  
Matt Gunnels, Marion  
Mickey George, Macon

Richard McCorkle, Marion  
Sam Farrow, Crisp  
Sher'Londa Walker, Talbot  
Terrell Hudson  
Wesley Williams, Randolph  
Darrell Holbrook, Webster  
Gary Allen, for Skip Henderson

**Members Not Attending**

A.J. Rivers, Crisp  
Barry Whitley, Butler  
Eddie Daniels, Vienna  
Gerald Douglas, Chattahoochee  
James Davenport, Clay  
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion

Jeanie Bartee, Cordele  
Jimmy Babb, Lumpkin  
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart  
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista  
Nelson Brown, Americus  
Pam Jordan, Talbot

Steve Whatley, Cuthbert  
Rob Grant, Harris  
Bill McClellan, Schley  
Mark Waddell, Sumter

**Others Attending via Video Call**

Kristin Rowles, Speaker  
Janet Joiner, Vienna  
Diadra Powell, Americus  
Michael Bowens, Vienna  
Bill Twomey, ACCG

Susan Gallagher, New Horizons  
Casey Beane, Dept. of Community Affairs  
Saralyn Stafford, University of Georgia  
Mac Moye, Stewart  
Paul Farr, Southwest Georgia. Technical  
College

Janet Jarvis, Sumter  
Rebecca White, Randolph  
Tom Horn, Columbus Water Works  
Rachel Andrews  
Terrell Hudson, Dooly  
Clark Harrell, Crisp

**Staff Members**

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

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director  
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer  
Janice West, WIOA Director  
Allison Slocum, Senior Planner

John Morgan, Bicycle-Pedestrian Planner.  
Tammy Collins, Finance Officer  
Mariyana Kostov, GIS  
Becky Holmes, Office Manager

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### **WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Randy Howard, Chairman, brought the River Valley Regional Council meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. He thanked everyone for joining the meeting either in person or by teleconference. Those joining by tele-conference were able to ask questions by e-chat or by messaging Jim Livingston, Executive Director, on his telephone.

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Vice Chairman, then gave the invocation and Bruce Hill, Secretary, led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES\***

Council reviewed minutes of the November 18, 2020 council meeting which were either mailed or emailed to council members the previous week for their review. The minutes were also included in the council packets available at the meeting.

There being no additions or changes, Randy Howard, Chairman, requested a motion to approve the January 27, 2021 council minutes.

Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton, made a motion to approve the November 18, 2020 council minutes as presented; Carvel Lewis, Quitman County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **MIDDLE CHATTAHOOCHEE/UPPER FLINT REGIONAL WATER COUNCIL PRESENTATION**

Laura Schneider, GIS Department, introduced Kristin Rowles, of the Georgia Water Policy Center. Ms. Rowles gave a presentation explaining the importance of regional water planning in the region. She said the Middle Chattahoochee and Upper Flint Regional Water Council are on a 5-year planning cycle which is in the process of being updated now and explained that process. After taking questions she said she can be reached at [Knowles@h2opolicycenter.org](mailto:Knowles@h2opolicycenter.org) or for more information on Georgia Water Policies go to <http://epd.georgia.gov/updated-regional-water-plans>.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT\***

Vice Chairman Jerry “Pops” Barnes presented the Nominating Committee Report. He said the committee met and their recommendations for the Executive Committee were as follows:

- Carvel Lewis, Unified Government of Georgetown-Quitman County
- Tameka Harris, Taylor County
- Terrell Hudson, Private Industry, Dooly County

Randy Howard, Chairman, requested a motion to approve Executive Committee member nominees as presented by the Nominating Committee.

Melvin Crimes, Webster County, made the motion to approve Executive Committee member nominees; Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

Nominees to be considered for Private Industry council members were:

- Byron Hickey, Muscogee County
- Eddie Moore, Unified Government of Georgetown-Quitman County
- Patrick Shivers, Clay County
- Rebecca White, Randolph County
- Terrell Hudson, Dooly County

Randy Howard, Chairman, requested a motion approve Private Industry nominees as presented by the Nominating Committee.

Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton, made the motion to approve Private Industry nominees; Julie Brown, City of Hamilton, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) ANNUAL UPDATE AND RESOLUTION\***

Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director, presented the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Update and resolution. She explained that the EDA Planning Contract requires an annual update of the CEDS and that it had been reviewed and approved by the CEDS Committee.

She requested approval of the CEDS Annual Update Resolution.

Randy Howard, Chairman, requested a motion to approve the CEDS Annual Update and Resolution.

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee County, made the motion to approve the CEDS Annual Update and Resolution, as presented; Tom Queen, Taylor County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

**DISCLOSURE OF EMPLOYEE’S BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2020 (PER O.C.G.A. 50-8-63)\***

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, explained that every year the RVRC is required, by law, to disclose if any employee has had any business transactions with local governments within the region. After polling staff, it was determined that no staff member has conducted business with any of RVRC’s local governments.

Chairman Howard requested permission to notify the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) that there were no business transactions between RVRC employees and local governments.

Knox Blackmar, City of Talbotton, made a motion to approve the request to notify DCA of this information; Melvin Crimes, Webster County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

**STAFF REPORTS**

Finance Officer Emily Chambers reported through November revenues exceeded expenditures by \$69 in the Operating Funds (General Fund and Internal Service Fund). In the proprietary funds, we had an overall increase in net position of \$6,771. Cash on hand in the General Fund was \$947,000 at November 30th, and the Unassigned Fund Balance was \$782,203. The FY20 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report is complete and under review by the auditors who will present the final report at our February Council meeting.

AAA Director Katie Howard asked council members and guests to check out the AAA website. She noted that free Tai Chi lessons are available for anyone to use. Katie said that staff had identified 5 clients to be given tablets, with special software installed, to combat social isolation, using Federal CARES funding.

Assistant Executive Director Sarah Walls announced that through the \$1,000,100 Covid-19 Revolving Loan Fund a Columbus business has applied to borrow \$150,000 to build a new facility. Taylor Automobile Salvage Company has applied for a USDA IRP 2002 RLF in the amount of \$150,000.

Planning Director Gerald Mixon said that LMIG is now accepting applications. He noted that there is a required 10% cash match. If the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) was not in effect it would be a 30% match. Gerald discussed the status of the TIA Roundtable and noted that the project portal was now open. The voters of the region will be asked to vote on the proposed projects selected by the Roundtable in March, 2022. A vote of 50% is required to go forward.

Staff has begun work on an update of the comprehensive plan for Schley County/Ellaville. Talbot and Chattahoochee County’s comprehensive plans have been submitted for review by DCA. Marion County/Buena Vista’s comprehensive plan has been approved. Staff conducted a Zoning Training Class in Buena Vista and are working to compile data to update the city of Butler’s map booklet

WIOA Director Janice West said that 125 individuals have been served since July 1, 2020 for various WIOA training activities. Enrollments will continue through June 30, 2021. She requested that anyone who is interested in educational or training activities to contact the RVRC/WIOA office in Americus. Janice said the unemployment rate has risen from 3.5% to 6.2% in the region; mostly due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the council, Randy Howard, Vice Chair, requested a motion to adjourn.

Melvin Crimes, Webster County, made the motion to adjourn the meeting; Julie Brown, Harris County, seconded the motion. The meeting then adjourned.

January 27, 2021

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Randy Howard, RVRC Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Hill, RVRC Secretary

**NEW RVRC COUNCIL MEMBERS**

- Gerald Douglas, Chairman, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
- Eugene Carson, Vice Chairman, Dooly County
- Rob Grant, Vice Chairman, Harris County
- Wesley Williams, Chairman, Randolph County
- Bill McClellan, Chairman, Schley County
- Mark Waddell, Chairman, Sumter County
- Sher'Londa Walker, Chair, Talbot County
- Darrell Holbrook, Chairman, Webster County

**NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- Terrell Hudson, Dooly County, Private Industry
- Carvel Lewis, Chairman, Georgetown-Quitman County
- Tameka Harris, Commissioner, Taylor County

**NEW PRIVATE INDUSTRY MEMBERS**

- Rebecca White, Randolph County
- Patrick Shivers, Clay County
- Eddie Moore, Georgetown-Quitman County
- Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
- Byron Hickey, Muscogee County

**RVRC COUNCIL MEMBERS LEAVING COUNCIL**

- James Morton, Cusseta-Chattahoochee County
- Harry Lange, Harris County
- Tony Kennedy, Webster County
- Greg Barineau, Schley County
- Jimmy Bradley, Randolph County
- Clay Jones, Sumter County
- Freeman Montgomery, Talbot County (passed away)