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RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

Marion County Commission Office and On-line

November 27, 2021

10:30 A.M.

Minutes Summary

Council Members

(Counties Represented: 15)

Albert King, Vienna
Bryon Hickey, Muscogee
Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC
Secretary
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee
Chip Jones, Stewart
Darrell Holbrook, Webster
Doug Etheridge, Harris
Dr. Edward Lee, Chattahoochee
Greg Dominy, Schley
Jayson Griffin, Macon
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee, RVRC Chair

Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Matt Gunnels, Marion
Melvin Crimes, Webster
Mickey George, Macon
Pam Jordan, Talbot
Randy Howard, Sumter
Rebecca White, Randolph
Rob Grant, Harris
Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair
Terrell Hudson, Dooly
Wesley Williams, Randolph

Members Not Attending

A.J. Rivers, Crisp
Barry Whitley, Butler
Bill McClellan, Schley
Damon Hoyte, Chattahoochee
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman
Eddie Moore, Georgetown-Quitman
Eugene Cason, Dooly
James Davenport, Clay
James R. "Bump" Welch, Marion
Jeanie Bartelee, Cordele
Jimmy Babb, Lumpkin
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart

Julie Brown, Hamilton
Maggie McGruther, Sumter
Mark Waddell, Sumter
Nelson Brown, Americus
Patrick Shivers, Clay
Richard McCorkle, Marion
Sam Farrow, Crisp
Sher'Londa Walker, Talbot County
Skip Henderson, Muscogee
Steve Whatley, Cuthbert
Tom Queen, Taylor
Tony Lamar, Talbotton

Others Attending

Alan Harkness, Director of Chattahoochee Valley Libraries

Anne Isbell, Director of Lake Blackshear Regional Libraries

Staff

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Katie Howard, AAA Director
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer
Rick Morris, Planning
Janice West, WIOA
Mariyana Kostov, GIS Planner

John Morgan, Bike-Ped Planner
Sarah Wall, Asst. Executive Director
Merri Spence, Executive Secretary
Gerald Mixon, Planning
Kat Mournighan, H.R.

WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Chair, brought the River Valley Regional Commission council meeting to order at 10:30 A.M. Chair Barnes welcomed visitors Alan Harkness and Anne Isbell with the Regional Library Systems.

Carvel Lewis, Secretary, then gave the Invocation and Tameka Harris, Vice-Chair, led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 27, 2021 MINUTES*

Council reviewed the October 27, 2021 meeting minutes which were emailed to council members the previous week for their review. The minutes were also included in the council packets that were available at the meeting.

There being no additions or changes, Pops Barnes, Chair, requested a motion to approve the October 27, 2021 council minutes as presented.

Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County, made the motion to approve the October 27, 2021 minutes as presented; Darrell Holbrook, Webster County, seconded the motion. The motion passed with no opposition.

REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEMS IN THE RIVER VALLEY

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, introduced Alan Harkness, Director of the Chattahoochee Valley Libraries and Anne Isbell, Director of the Lake Blackshear Regional Libraries.

Anne Isbell said that the Lake Blackshear Regional Libraries is based in Americus and serves four counties including Sumter, Schley, Dooly and Crisp counties, they serve a population of about 70,000.

Alan Harkness shared that the Chattahoochee Valley Libraries also serves four counties including Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Marion and Stewart Counties.

Mr. Harkness said that years ago people would have to have a membership and pay to use the library but then Andrew Carnegie started opening libraries throughout the United States with locals helping finance

their libraries. In the 1940s the state started getting federal help for larger units of service. Multi-county systems exist because the state gives incentives to make regional partnerships. Ms. Isbell noted that the Code of Georgia requires a library in every county in the state.

The two directors explained the many benefits of the library. For example, the library offers large print books for the elderly; a program for disabled individuals; computer access; and can offer assistance for job-seekers with navigating a computer to email and apply for jobs. The library has internet and many individuals use the WIFI in the parking lot. There is also a great program that sends books to children's homes.

Directors Isbell and Harkness said they are always looking for partners in the region and invited everyone to come in and get your library card if you don't have one.

STAFF REPORTS

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer, reported through the first quarter of FY22, the fund balance in the Operating Funds (General Fund and Internal Service Fund) has increased by \$19,553. Both revenues and expenditures in these funds are around 22% of the budgeted amounts, just slightly below the 25% target for the first quarter. General Fund cash on hand on September 30 was \$765,000 and Unassigned Fund Balance was \$929,880.

In the Enterprise Funds there is an increase of about \$2,600 in net position, for a balance of \$1.2 million of net position that is restricted for small business loans in those funds.

The FY21 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report is almost complete and will be presented to the full Council in January.

Jim Livingston, on behalf of Katie Howard who is out sick, asked Council members to fill out the survey located on www.rivervalleyaging.org. The survey is designed to assist the AAA with prioritizing additional federal funding.

Sarah Walls, Assistant Executive Director, reported to the RVRC Council the status of the EDA COVID-19 RLF. There is approximately \$170,000 uncommitted at this time but work is being done with a bank in Columbus on a possible project that we will be able to use the funds. She also reported that the original USDA IRP RLF Loan (#1) in the amount of \$1,000,000 will be paid in full with the last payment due the first week in December; the other USDA IRP RLF Loan (#2 in the amount of \$750,000) is approximately 20 years old and still has active loans which are all performing with regular payments. There is also the original EDA RLF (grant funds) that was received several years ago and there continues to be active loans in that fund.

Rick Morris, Planning Director, discussed comprehensive plan activity in Stewart and Randolph Counties. Clay County has contracted with the RVRC to do zoning and subdivision work.

The RVRC area is seeing development activity in Muscogee, Harris, Chattahoochee Counties and Americus.

Staff is also active in pre-disaster mitigation plan development in Schley County, Brownfield and stream monitoring, Board of Historic & Architectural Review cases in Columbus, TIA Development, Bike and Pedestrian activities and the establishment of mobility management (5311) progress.

Janice West, WIOA Director, reported the Regional Unemployment rates for September 2021 was 3.4%. The Unemployment rates for September 2020 was 6.7%. Unemployment rates are decreasing in the region.

WIOA final performance outcomes for PY 2020 show the area “exceeding” 11 of the 12 federal WIOA performance measures. The local area is proud of the performance achievement as COVID continues to have impacts on WIOA services in the region.

State of Georgia has processed 5,121,175 million Unemployment Insurance claims from March 2020 – October 28, 2021. Western Counties of the region has had 121,547 claims filed and the eastern counties has had 50,327 claims filed.

WIOA enrollments are slowly increasing each month. Enrollments in various WIOA funded activities totaled 71 individuals receiving services as of November 12, 2021.

ADJOURN

As there was not further business, Mr. Barnes requested a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Motion made by Darrell Holbrook, seconded by Terrell Hudson. The meeting was adjourned.

January 26, 2022

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Chair

Carvel Lewis, Secretary