RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
Buena Vista, GA
April 26, 2023
10:30 A.M.
Meeting Minutes

Council Members (Counties Represented: 12)
Albert King, Vienna
Barbara Cullifer, Lumpkin
Barry Whitley, Butler
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee
Chip Jones, Stewart
Darrell Holbrook, Webster
Doug Ethridge, Harris
James Davenport, Clay
Jayson Griffin, Macon
Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee, RVRC Chair

Joe Lee Williams, Stewart
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Lee Kinnaman, Americus
Maggie McGruther, Sumter
Melvin Crimes, Webster
Randy Howard, Sumter
Ransom Farley, Hamilton
Richard McCorkle, Marion
Shane Grier, Marion
Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair
Terrell Hudson, Dooly
Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee

Members Not Attending
Bill McClellan, Schley
Carl Oliver, Macon
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC Secretary
Eugene Cason, Dooly
Greg Dominey, Schley
J.R. Dowdy, Crisp
Jessie Smith, Sumter
Joshua Deriso, Cordele
Jeff McCarter, Randolph

Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines
Larry Sparks, Talbot County
Rebecca White, Randolph
Rob Grant, Harris
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Tom Queen, Taylor
Tony Lamar, Talbotton
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

Others Present
Natalie Bradley, Flint Energies
Brenda Williams, Senator Warnock’s Office
Tom Horn, Columbus Water Works
Kelvin Lewis, Macon
Alyse Wolfe, Senator Ossoff’s Office
Rayetta Volley, Sumter
Vicki Wainwright, Butler
Mary Stevens, Talbot
Susan Gallagher, New Horizons Behavioral Health

Chloe Landreth, New Horizons Behavioral Health
Tammye Pettyjohn Jones, One Sumter Americus
Laura Gower, Congressman Ferguson’s Office
Christopher Drake, Congressman Bishop’s Office
Max Kirby, Congressman Ferguson’s Office
Saralyn Stafford, Carl Vinson UGA
Brandon Cockrell, Fort Benning
RVRC Staff Attending
Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Mariyana Kostov, GIS Manager
Katie Howard, AAA Director
Rick Morris, Director of Planning and Govt. Services
Janice West, WIOA Director
John Morgan, Regional Planner
Merri Spence, Executive Secretary
Tammy Collins, Finance Officer
Allison Slocum, Assistant Director of Planning
Kia Barrow, Assistant AAA Director
Kristal Blue, Financial Assistant

WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS
Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee, RVRC Chair, brought the meeting to order and welcomed visitors. Chair Barnes led the council in prayer and Vice-Chair Tameka Harris, Taylor County lead the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jim Livingston, Executive Director asked one of the visitors, Brandon Cockrell, Fort Benning to speak briefly about the transition from Ft. Benning to Ft. Moore. Mr. Cockrell explained who Hal and Julia Moore were and the things they did that benefited Ft. Benning. Ft. Moore will be the first facility to be named after a family. He explained there will be a ceremony to be held in two weeks to change the name to Ft. Moore.

APPROVAL OF APRIL MINUTES*
The council reviewed the April 26, 2023 meeting minutes which were emailed to 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, Chair Barnes asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was made by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County and seconded by Albert King, Vienna. The motion passed with no opposition.

ANNOUNCE THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE
Chair Barnes explained that it was time to select the Nominating Committee to elect officers for the Regional Commission and to select the Executive Committee for the Regional Commission. Mr. Barnes said Carvel Lewis, Vice-Chair will be calling individuals on the Council to ask them to serve on the Nominating Committee.

RIVER VALLEY COMMUNITY COMPATIBLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FT. MOORE/FT. BENNING
Saralyn Stafford, Carl Vinson Institute of Government at UGA, spoke about the River Valley Community Compatible Development Program. Ms. Stafford explained the partnership to develop plans and strategies to promote compatible land uses, natural resource protection and sustainable economic development in the region. This partnership is to help develop Economic Development plans for five counties in Georgia and one county in Alabama. The Army Compatible Use Buffer Advisory Council (ACUB) was formed in 2008 with two strategic initiatives: 1) Create a buffer around Fort Moore/Benning for both the military and the community, and 2) Initiate prescriptive burning in the buffer land. In 2019, ACUB added a third strategic initiative: 3) Identify the nexus between the ACUB initiatives and rural economic development.

Jim Livingston, RVRC Executive Director was approached by ACUB regarding the new third strategic initiative, and Saralyn Stafford with CVIOG was invited to meet with the Board to discuss possible collaborative planning efforts to meet the new objective. Ms. Stafford shared a very informative presentation that will be sent to all board members that explains the initiative.
STAFF REPORTS

Kia Barrow, Assistant AAA Director reported the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) and Options Counselors (OC) continue to facilitate outreach in the community and nursing homes. The ADRC/OC are also attending training classes. As a result, the ADRC/OC received 223 referrals in March, three clients were referred for respite, 16 clients for home delivered meals, 10 clients for homemaker and 8 clients for personal care assistance. Our annual Wellness Fair will be held on May 12th at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. The first 350 people will receive free T-shirts.

Emily Chambers, Finance Officer reported through February, the RC had an increase in fund balance in the Governmental Funds of about $102,000, leaving Unassigned Fund Balance of $1,085,000. Cash on hand in those funds was $525,000 at the end of February. The Enterprise Funds have an increase in net position of $16,000 for the year and a total net position of about $2 million, with $1 million cash available. The Finance Department is working on the FY24 budget and will present it at the June council meeting.

Janice West, WIOA Director reported as of April 17th WIOA has 110 individuals in various training activities. In-School Youth Services is working with Marion, Taylor and Webster County high school seniors with career pathways, work readiness and work experience services. Summer semester is coming for individuals attending college and universities. WIOA enrollment will be increasing as the summer semester begins. On-The-Job Training (OJT) services are increasing as several area employers are participating in OJT. WIOA staff has completed the current year monitoring of the WIOA service providers that administer WIOA training activities. Monitoring results identified minor observations and required actions. WIOA service providers are doing a good job for the region.

Rick Morris, Director of Planning and Govt. Services reported the Georgia Department of Community Affairs is getting to the end of the review of five regional plans in the state including ours. If you would like a copy of the plan, please call Allison Slocum. Our elected officials have been busy changing laws in zoning. Transit is helping out with a big event in Americus. The Middle Flint Senior Picnic is coming up and we’re accommodating 50 individuals with rides to the picnic but we need help in getting an additional 100 to the event. If you know of any church buses or vans that are willing to help please call Michael Murray in Transportation. John Morgan has a lot going on in Bike/Ped. Events coming up in Columbus are 1) Ride with the Mayor 2) Bike to Work Day 3) Ride of Silence and 4) Midtown Bike Around. The planning department is currently working on 25 different grants.

ADJOURN

As there was no further business, Chair Barnes requested a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Melvin Crimes, Webster County. The meeting was adjourned.

June 28, 2023

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Chair

Carvel Lewis, Secretary