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**RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Buena Vista, GA**  
**December 7, 2022**  
**10:30 A.M.**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Council Members**

**(Counties Represented: 11)**

Albert King, Vienna  
Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe  
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC  
Secretary  
Chip Jones, Stewart  
James Davenport, Clay  
Jayson Griffin, Macon  
Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee, RVRC Chair  
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart  
Joshua Deriso, Cordele

Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines  
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista  
Matt Gunnels, Marion  
Ransom Farley, Hamilton  
Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair  
Terrell Hudson, Dooly  
Tom Queen, Taylor  
Tony Lamar, Talbotton  
Wesley Williams, Randolph

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**Members Not Attending**

Barry Whitley, Butler  
Bill McClellan, Schley  
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert  
Byron Hickey, Columbus  
Carl Oliver, Macon  
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee  
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman  
Darrell Holbrook, Webster  
Doug Ethridge, Harris  
Eugene Cason, Dooly  
Greg Dominy, Schley  
J.R. Dowdy, Crisp  
James R. “Bump” Welch, Marion

Jimmy Babb, Lumpkin  
Lee Kinnamon, Americus  
Maggie McGruther, Sumter  
Mark Waddell, Sumter  
Melvin Crimes, Webster  
Pam Jordan, Talbot  
Randy Howard, Sumter  
Rebecca White, Randolph  
Richard McCorkle, Marion  
Rob Grant, Harris  
Sher’Londa Walker, Talbot  
Skip Henderson, Columbus  
Tim Biddle, Chattahoochee

**Others Present**

David McCoy, McNair, McLemore,  
Middlebrooks & Co.  
Ben Moser, United Way of the Chattahoochee  
Valley

Saralyn Stafford, UGA Carl Vincent Inst.  
Natalie Bradley, DCA

### **RVRC Staff Attending**

Jim Livingston, Executive Director  
Mariyana Kostov, GIS Manager  
Katie Howard, AAA Director  
Rick Morris, Planning Director  
Camille Bielby, Regional Planner  
Merri Spence, Executive Secretary

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director  
Emily Chambers, Finance Officer  
John Morgan, Bike & Pedestrian Planner  
SheKella Prince, Financial Assistant  
Tammy Collins, Finance Officer

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

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Chair, brought the meeting to order, welcomed visitors and led the council in prayer. Vice-Chair Tameka Harris led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES\***

Council reviewed the October 26, 2022 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 December minutes. The motion was made by Albert King, Vienna, and seconded by James Davenport, Clay County. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **APPROVE FINANCIAL AUDIT\***

Chair Barnes introduced the RVRC Auditor, David McCoy with McNair, McLemore, Middlebrooks & Co., LLC. Mr. McCoy presented the FY22 Audit Report to the Council and noted that it was another clean audit with an unmodified opinion from the audit firm. A full review of the audit with Mr. McCoy was conducted by the Executive Committee and it was presented to the council with their recommendation for approval.

A link to this report can be found at [Microsoft Word - {665334A8-DE68-47A6-9B06-DB6555EB07AA}](https://www.rivervalleyrc.org/~/media/665334A8-DE68-47A6-9B06-DB6555EB07AA)  
([rivervalleyrc.org](https://www.rivervalleyrc.org))

Chair Barnes asked for a motion to approve the Audit Review. The motion was made by Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe and seconded by Tom Queen, Taylor County. The motion was passed with no opposition.

### **UNITED WAY OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY**

Chair Barnes introduced the President and CEO of United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley, Ben Moser. Mr. Moser shared that in the Chattahoochee Valley all money is raised locally and deployed locally. United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley is a franchise in the United Way system but not part of the large global organization. The agency covers ten counties, nine in Georgia and one in Alabama. They cover Harris, Talbot, Taylor, Marion, Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Stewart, Quitman, Clay, and Russell counties and raise about seven and one half million dollars per year. Last year United Way funded 26 agencies and over 40 programs.

Mr. Moser went on to share the United Way’s impressive impact report from last year. He spoke about the many resources United Way offers. He shared data on homelessness in the region and pointed out homelessness has been reduced since the pandemic. He shared information about poverty in the area and ways they are working to solve this problem. Mr. Moser spoke about the CHIPS for America Act of 2022 and how the Chattahoochee Valley would be a good area for manufacturing these CHIPS and would be a great opportunity to help reduce the poverty rates in the region.

### **APPROVE EMPLOYEE MANUAL\***

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, reviewed the changes being made to the Employee Manual for 2023. Those changes included an adjustment to the Work from Home Policy, a change in the holiday schedule, adding Juneteenth and taking away the Columbus Day holiday and an adjustment to the procurement policy. The Executive Committee had reviewed each of the changes in detail and had no issues with the proposed changes. Any changes to the Employee Manual must be approved by the council.

Chair Barnes asked for a motion to approve the changes to the Employee Manual. The motion was made by Terrell Hudson, Dooly County and seconded by Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **AREA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – UNADILLA HOUSE SALE\***

Jim Livingston explained the separate agenda for the Area Development Corporation (ADC). Everyone who is a member of the Council is also a member of the ADC. Mr. Livingston said once the council meeting is adjourned we will open a meeting with the ADC.

Mr. Livingston explained the Area Development Corporation owns a house in Unadilla, Georgia that has been rented for a number of years. Dooly County wants to purchase the house for their EMS Service. The ADC must approve the sale of the house.

Chair Barnes asked for a motion to suspend the RVRC Council Meeting. The motion was made by Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County and seconded by Tameka Harris, Taylor County. The motion was passed with no opposition.

Once the work of the ADC was concluded, Chair Barnes asked for a motion to go back into the River Valley Regional Commission Meeting. A motion was made by James Davenport, Clay County and seconded by Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE INITIATIVE**

Jim Livingston spoke about the Regional Transportation Alliance Initiative and is a potential approach for applying for Federal Funds. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also known as IIJA Funding (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) is substantial. One of the requirements for the funding is a local match and our region has the match through the Transportation Investment Act. This is federal highway funding and we need to, as a region, find a way to access this funding once the River Valley Commission meeting is over.

### **APPROVAL OF JOB DESCRIPTION – DEMENTIA CARE SPECIALIST\***

Katie Howard, AAA Director shared that the General Assembly has funded a Dementia Care Specialist in each of the 12 Area Agency on Aging agencies. Ms. Howard requested approval of the job description since it is a new position. Chair Barnes asked for a motion to approve the job description. A motion was made by Tameka Harris, Taylor County and seconded by Ransom Farley, Hamilton. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

**Katie Howard, AAA Director** shared that the Public Hearing for the FY24 Area Plan will be on Thursday, Dec. 8 and will be a hybrid allowing for both virtual or in person attendance. She also distributed copies of the survey being used to determine priorities for FY25 services. A 2023 calendar was available for anyone who wanted.

**Emily Chambers, Finance Officer** reported through the end of the first quarter of FY23, we have an increase in Fund Balance in the General Fund of \$116,340, giving us Unassigned Fund Balance in the General Fund of \$1,088,000. At the end of September, there was Cash on Hand of \$651,000 in the General Fund. In the Proprietary Funds, we had an increase in Net Position of about \$12,000 for a total Net Position of just over \$3 million.

**Gerald Mixon, Planning Director** reported that since the last council meeting Dooly County and cities have adopted their joint comprehensive plan. The Randolph County plan will be submitted in the next few days. The RVRC will be starting two new comprehensive plans early in the new year with two more in the spring.

Zoning technical assistance continues. The most unique of the services at present is addressing Talbot County's interest in a tiny house subdivision. The RVRC is in the process of submitting closeout paperwork for three pre-disaster mitigation plans and Friday morning will be holding the kick-off hearing to start updating Quitman County's plan. The RVRC continues to work on the DOT contract identifying and mapping roadway features such as bicycle lanes, crosswalks, shoulder types, sidewalks and the like. Two applications have been submitted to DOT to continue providing transportation services for another year.

Active involvement in area bicycle and pedestrian activities continue; attended the Georgia Bike Walk Summit in Columbus, Sumter Cycle and Bicycle Columbus events and provided complete streets training for the City of Americus. This training promotes more comprehensive use of the city street network, such as addressing cycling, pedestrian and handicap needs whenever the more common street and drainage improvements are made. Water quality monitoring continues and assistance with implementation of the best management practices indicated from results of the monitoring. Staff reviewed another dozen proposed property renovations to ensure compliance with Columbus' historic preservation ordinance

### **ADJOURN**

As there was no further business, Chair Barnes requested a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Motion was made by Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe, and seconded by Terrell Hudson, Dooly County. Meeting was adjourned.

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January 24, 2023

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Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Chair

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Carvel Lewis, Secretary