



www.rivervalleyrc.org

Columbus Office

710 Front Avenue, Suite A
Columbus, GA 31901
Phone (706) 256-2910
Fax (706) 256-2908
TDY (706)256-2944

Americus Office

228 West Lamar Street
Americus, GA 31709
Phone (706)256-2910
Fax (229) 931-2745
Fax (229) 931-2917

Toll Free (877)819-6348

RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

Buena Vista, GA

February 22, 2023

10:30 A.M.

Meeting Minutes

Council Members (Counties Represented: 15)

Albert King, Vienna
Bill McClellan, Schley
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe
Chip Jones, Stewart
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC Secretary
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee
Darrell Holbrook, Webster
Doug Ethridge, Harris
Greg Dominey, Schley
James Davenport, Clay
Jayson Griffin, Macon
Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee, RVRC Chair
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart

Joshua Deriso, Cordele
Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines
Larry Sparks, Talbot County
Lee Kinnamon, Americus
Melvin Crimes, Webster
Maggie McGruther, Sumter
Ransom Farley, Hamilton
Rebecca White, Randolph
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair
Terrell Hudson, Dooly
Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee
Tom Queen, Taylor
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

Members Not Attending

Barry Whitley, Butler
Carl Oliver, Macon
Eugene Cason, Dooly
J.R. Dowdy, Crisp
Jeff McCarter, Randolph
Jessie Smith, Sumter
Jimmy Babb, Lumpkin

Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Matt Gunnels, Marion
Randy Howard, Sumter
Richard McCorkle, Marion
Rob Grant, Harris
Tony Lamar, Talbotton

Others Present

Natalie Bradley, Flint Energies
Tom Horn, Columbus Water Works
Kelvin Lewis, Macon
Mary Stevens, Talbot
Nicole Acree, Taylor
Pamela Shaw, Nurse Practitioner
Deborah Jones, Nurse Practitioner
Connie Harris, Marion

Clark Harrell, Crisp
Tammye P. Jones, Sanford Bishop’s Office
Toya Tucker, Columbus
Rayetta Volley, Sumter
Scott Jones, Utility Solutions & Automation
Brenda Williams, Raphael Warnock’s Office

RVRC Staff Attending

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Mariyana Kostov, GIS Manager
Katie Howard, AAA Director
Rick Morris, Planning Director
Janice West, WIOA Director

Camille Bielby, Regional Planner
Merri Spence, Executive Secretary
Gerald Mixon, Planning Director
Tammy Collins, Finance Officer

WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Muscogee, RVRC Chair, brought the meeting to order and welcomed visitors. Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC Secretary led the council in prayer and Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES*

The council reviewed the January 25, 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 January minutes. The motion was made by Terrell Hudson, Dooly County and seconded by Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe. The motion passed with no opposition.

RURAL HEALTH CARE AND NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Chair Barnes introduced Dr. Pamela Shaw-Grant and Deborah Jones, Nurse Practitioners for New Horizon. Dr. Shaw-Grant spoke about what Nurse Practitioners do and their certifications. She explained she works with patients with mental health issues but also physical health problems. Dr. Shaw-Grant added that Nurse Practitioners in the state of Georgia currently are able to treat patients and complete paperwork for patients, but they are unable to sign the paperwork. The supervising physician must sign the documents. This creates a hardship and there is a Bill going before legislature asking to allow Nurse Practitioners the authority to sign these forms and to sign prescriptions for schedule 2 drugs. This is important to be able to extend the reach of healthcare in rural areas.

Deborah Jones discussed the pending legislation that is being considered at the state capital and suggested contacting your local Senator or representative to help Dr. Shaw and other Nurse Practitioners provide care to the community.

NEW WATER METER AND READING TECHNOLOGIES

Scott Jones with Utility Solutions & Automation spoke about new water meter technology. Mr Jones explained that electronic meters have no moving parts so there’s less wear and virtually no maintenance on the meters therefore they have 20-year warranties. The mechanical meter has a 5-year warranty, less accuracy and more moving parts that will wear out over time. Jones said that with the electronic water meter, there’s improved utility revenue and better data collection; disconnects and reconnects can be done from the office which is a savings on labor costs. Jones asked that anyone needing more information to please contact him.

FY24 AREA AAA PLAN

The FY24 Area Aging Plan was reviewed and discussed by the group. Because of an approximately \$100,000 cut in funding, AAA is using the ARPA funding to offset these cuts for 2024. Eventually the region will have to cut services unless additional funding is secured. A bilingual staff volunteer was certified as a Dementia Friends Champion. The Elder Rights team in Columbus is working on an agreement to create a multi-disciplinary team to assist in criminal investigations of possible elder abuse. The AAA is maintaining a database of resources to share with seniors, the disabled and caregivers. The database has been at 100% for the

[Chattahoochee](#) | [Clay](#) | [Crisp](#) | [Dooly](#) | [Harris](#) | [Macon](#) | [Marion](#) | [Muscogee](#)
[Quitman](#) | [Randolph](#) | [Schley](#) | [Stewart](#) | [Sumter](#) | [Talbot](#) | [Taylor](#) | [Webster](#)

past six months. The AAA is also required to expand healthcare partnerships and will be working to partner with St. Francis Hospital in Columbus as well as Phoebe Sumter in Americus and Crisp Regional in Cordele. AAA has already established a good partnership with Columbus Piedmont. The River Valley Region became designated as Age Friendly by AARP and satisfied a goal for AAA. Chair Barnes asked for a motion to approve the FY24 AAA Area Plan. The motion was made by Ransom Farley, Hamilton and seconded by Charles Coffee, Chattahoochee County. The motion passed with no opposition.

STAFF REPORTS

Katie Howard, AAA Director reviewed the Waiting List and the availability of both Respite Care and the Caregiver Time Out Program. A Matter of Balance Class will be starting next month and held at the Columbus Piedmont Hospital. A Tai Chi class is being formed in Quitman County.

Tammy Collins, Finance Officer reported through the first half of FY23 the Regional Commission has an increase in General Fund balance of \$142,310. Operating expenditure was about 49% of the budgeted amount at the end of December. The Enterprise Funds have an increase of about \$13k through December 31. The General Fund has an unassigned fund balance of about \$1.18 million. The total net position of the proprietary funds was approximately \$2,068,000 and cash on hand available for loans was \$1,151,000.

Janice West, WIOA Director reported that WIOA currently has 90 individuals enrolled in various training programs. Enrollments into training services will continue through June 30, 2023. In-School Services is working with several county school districts. Out of School (OSY) services are ongoing in the region. The local WIOA area has received a grant for \$75,000 to assist with Rapid Response events that occur in the area. Rapid Response services are to assist individuals (Dislocated Workers) who are laid-off from their employment through no fault of their own due to employer lay-offs, business closures, or reduction in labor force. WIOA Staff will work with the State Rapid Response team to coordinate and assist with any local business closure of lay-offs. The unemployment rate for the region is currently 4.1% as of the November reporting period. WIOA training enrollments are expected to increase as the Spring 2023 semester begins in January for colleges, technical colleges, and universities. On-The-Job Training (OJT) activities have been working with several area employers that are hiring. Youth services will be ramping up for the In-School Youth (ISY) services with participating schools. Out of School (OSY) services are ongoing for GED remediation, Career Pathways and Work Experience activities.

Gerald Mixon, Planning Director reported that Randolph County, Cuthbert and Shellman are adopting their joint comprehensive plans. The cooperative study with Ft. Benning continues addressing long term interaction between the military community and the surrounding civilian community. The update of the regional plan continues and a draft will be presented next month for council authorization to submit for state and regional review. With that action the plan can be adopted at the June meeting. Zoning Technical assistance continues. Revised labor match documentation requirements are delaying close-out of three pre-disaster mitigation plans. The update of property tax boundary maps continues as parcel splits and consolidations are recorded. More information has been collected with which to update DOT roadway databases. Progress continues with our EPA Brownfield grant. More sites are progressing through the environmental assessment protocol that hopefully results in enhanced marketability of many of these properties.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Jim Livingston, Executive Director announced the February retirement of Planning Director Gerald Mixon after 47 years of service.

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.

March 22, 2023

Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Chair

Carvel Lewis, Secretary