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**RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**

**Buena Vista, GA**

**January 25, 2023**

**10:30 A.M.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Council Members (Counties Represented: 13)**

Albert King, Vienna  
Barry Whitley, Butler  
Bill McClellan, Schley  
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert  
Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe  
Carl Oliver, Macon  
Chip Jones, Stewart  
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee  
Doug Ethridge, Harris  
Greg Dominey, Schley  
James Davenport, Clay  
Jayson Griffin, Macon  
Jeff McCarter, Randolph  
Jessie Smith, Sumter  
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart

Kevin Brown, Buena Vista  
Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines  
Lee Kinnamon, Americus  
Melvin Crimes, Webster  
Maggie McGruther, Sumter  
Ransom Farley, Hamilton  
Rebecca White, Randolph  
Richard McCorkle, Marion  
Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair  
Terrell Hudson, Dooly  
Tom Queen, Taylor  
Toyia Tucker, Columbus  
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

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**Members Not Attending**

Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC Secretary  
Darrell Holbrook, Webster  
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Muscogee, RVRC Chair  
Jimmy Babb, Lumpkin  
Joshua Deriso, Cordele  
Matt Gunnels, Marion

Randy Howard, Sumter  
Rob Grant, Harris  
Skip Henderson, Columbus  
Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee  
Tony Lamar, Talbotton

**Others Present**

Christy Bozeman Georgia Department of Economic  
Development  
Grant Bradley  
Natalie Bradley, Flint Energies  
David Gipson,  
Georgia Environmental Finance Authority  
Laura Gower, Congressman Drew Ferguson's Office  
Tom Horn, Columbus Water Works  
Michael K. Mixon  
Chris Kelley, Congressman Sanford Bishop's Office

Max Kirby, Office of Congressman Drew Ferguson  
Chloe Landreth  
Kelvin Lewis, Macon  
Mac Moye, Stewart  
Tammie P. Jones, Sanford Bishop's Office  
Kenny Riner, Chattahoochee  
Hunter Singleton, Clay  
Lynda Temples, Columbus  
Rayetta Volley, Sumter  
Vicki Wainwright, Butler

### **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  
Allison Slocum, Regional Planner

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

Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair, brought the meeting to order, welcomed visitors and led the council in the Pledge of Allegiance. Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe, led the council in prayer.

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

Council reviewed the December 7, 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, Vice-Chair Harris asked for a motion to approve the December minutes. The motion was made by Albert King, Vienna, and seconded by Tom Queen, Taylor County. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **GEORGIA ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE AUTHORITY**

Vice-Chair Harris introduced David Gipson, Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). Mr. Gipson presented an overview of GEFA's water resources division. He explained the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) funding opportunities that will be available in the near future to support critical water resources. Mr. Gipson also discussed a partnership with Georgia Rural Water Association (GRWA) for the mapping of public water systems and other technical assistance. This mapping project will be instrumental in identifying lead pipes in water systems which need to be removed.

### **GARC Planning Allocation Request\***

Jim Livingston shared with the council that all Regional Commissions in the state of Georgia are petitioning their regional state delegation to restore funding through the DCA Planning Grant to the levels received in 2008. This request would be shared with the River Valley state delegation through a letter signed by Chairman Pops Barnes.

Vice-Chair Harris asked for a motion to submit the letter to the River Valley state delegation. The motion to approve the resolution was made by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County and seconded by Lee Kinnamon, City of Americus. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **DCA FAMILY EMPLOYMENT DISCLOSURE\***

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, reviewed the Department of Community Affairs requirement for staff disclosure of employment with local governments. He noted that one employee was involved in a project with a land bank prior to hiring and would soon complete that project. Disclosure was made as required.

Vice-Chair Harris asked for a motion to accept the disclosure. The motion was made by Tom Queen, Taylor County and seconded by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **USAgging Grant Application\***

Katie Howard told the Council about a grant application which will increase the number of vaccinations in the region. This will be done in partnership with the West Central Georgia Health District. Because the RVRC would be the applicant, council approval is needed to apply.

Vice-Chair Harris asked for a motion to allow the RVRC to apply for the funds. The motion was made by James Davenport, Clay County and seconded by Melvin Crimes, Webster County. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

**Katie Howard, AAA Director** shared that the FY24 Area Plan was discussed including the Public Hearing and surveys which were used to determine the priorities for the region. The top three (3) priorities are home repairs, transportation, and in-home services. Ms. Howard also reminded the group that classes are forming now for the Evidence Based Programs and to please call if they were interested in hosting a class. A Tai Chi Class is being formed now in Quitman County.

**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 \$94,554, giving us Unassigned Fund Balance in the General Fund of \$1,069,950. All of that is in unassigned fund balance for our operating expenses is about 37% of budgeted total so that's a little low at the five-month stage, but is expected to level out over the rest of the year. Enterprise funds showed an increase in that position of about \$15,700 total net position. The Enterprise fund is approximately \$2 million dollars and \$1.3 million of that is cash available as of November 30<sup>th</sup>. She noted one loan of \$200,000 has been approved since the date of this report.

**WORKFORCE INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES** Jim Livingston, Executive Director reported on behalf of WIOA Director, Janice West. Enrollments for period from July 1, 2022 through January 5, 2022 in various WIOA funded training activities total is 81 individuals' being served. Enrollments will continue to increase over the program year.

WIOA training enrollments number are expected to increase as the Spring 2023 semester begins in January for area 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 area schools. Out of School (OSY) services are ongoing for GED remediation, Career Pathways and Work Experience activities.

The unemployment rate for November 2022 in the River Valley Region remained at 4.1 percent.

**Rick Morris, Planning Director** reported that since the last council meeting, the Dooly County Comprehensive Plan was approved and adopted and that DCA had returned the comments for the Randolph County Comprehensive Plan, which will be updated and resubmitted this week. The Regional Plan is 75% complete and the public adoption process will begin soon.

He reported that one zoning contract meeting was held in Vienna.

**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, Vice-Chair Harris requested a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Motion was made by Terrell Hudson, Dooly County and seconded by Albert King, Vienna. The meeting was adjourned.

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February 22, 2023

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Jerry “Pops” Barnes, Chair

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Carvel Lewis, Secretary