



RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
John H. Pope Center, SGTC
May 24, 2023
10:30 A.M.
Meeting Minutes

Council Members

(Counties Represented: 13)

Barry Whitley, Butler
Bruce Hill, Oglethorpe
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman,
RVRC Secretary
Darrell Holbrook, Webster
Jayson Griffin, Macon
Joshua Deriso, Cordele
Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Larry Sparks, Talbot
Lee Kinnamon, Americus

Maggie McGruther, Sumter
Melvin Crimes, Webster
Randy Howard, Sumter
Ransom Farley, Hamilton
Rebecca White, Randolph
Richard Dowdy, Crisp
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Vice-Chair
Terrell Hudson, Dooly
Tony Lamar, Talbotton

Members Not Attending

Albert King, Vienna
Barbara Cullifer, Lumpkin
Bill McClellan, Schley
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Carl Oliver, Macon
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee
Chip Jones, Stewart
Doug Ethridge, Harris
Eugene Cason, Dooly
Greg Dominy, Schley
James Davenport, Clay

Jeff McCarter, Randolph
Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Columbus, RVRC Chair
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart
Richard McCorkle, Marion
Rob Grant, Harris
Shane Grier, Marion
Tim Biddle, Chattahoochee
Tom Queen, Taylor
Wesley Williams, Randolph
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

Others Present

County and City Representatives

Patty Bentley, Representative, GA House District 150

Debbie Buckner, Representative GA House District 137

Mike Cheokas, Representative GA House District 138

Gerald Greene, Representative, GA House District 154

Vance Smith, Representative, GA House District 138

Jody Redding; Office of Governor Brian Kemp

Ben Garcia, Office of the Lt. Governor

T.J. Hudson, Office of the Lt. Governor

Sharonda Hill, Deputy District Director for Congressman Sanford Bishop

Christopher Drake Office of Congressman Sanford D. Bishop

Adrian Rivers Office of Senator Raphael Warnock

Eboni Morris Key, Office of Senator John Ossoff

Alyse Wolf, Office of U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff

Charles White, Office of US Congressman Austin Scott

Sarahlyn Stafford, Rural Development Manager, Carl Vinson Institute of Government

River Valley RC Staff

Welcome and Recognition of Visitors

Carvel Lewis, RVRC Secretary brought the meeting to order. He welcomed council members, distinguished guests, and visitors.

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

Staff Recognition

Jim Livingston, RVRC Executive Director, recognized employees of the River Valley Regional Commission for Years of Service. Tammy Collins Financial Officer celebrated 30 years of service, while Williams Griggs and Laura Schneider, both Community Planners celebrated 5 years of service.

Legislator's Remarks

Secretary Lewis introduced field representatives from state and federally elected officials who updated the council and sent greetings from the elected officials.

Secretary Lewis then asked the state elected officials for updates from the most recently completed legislation session.

Representative Patty Bentley, District 150 welcomed the audience to Georgia House District 150 and South Georgia Technical College. Representative Bentley is vice-chair of the House Rural Development Council for the 2023-2024 Session.

Representative Debbie Buckner, District 137 serves as the vice chair of the House Rural Caucus. She is serving on a legislative committee which is conducting a review of all of Georgia's tax credits to make sure the various tax credits boost economic development and job creation and give taxpayers a good return on investment.

Representative Mike Cheokas, District 151 mentioned the Fiscal Year 2024 state budget included a \$5 million bond package to renovate Georgia Southwestern State University's James Earl Carter Library.

Representative Gerald Greene, District 154 is the Dean of the Georgia House of Representatives and gave an overview of his work as co-chair of the House Rural Development Council, which was established by the late Georgia House Speaker, David Ralston, and is charged with the study of services to individuals and businesses in the rural areas of the state focusing on health, social and economic opportunities. He noted the importance for rural communities to work together.

Secretary, Carvel Lewis gave the blessing. Lunch was then served.

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

June 28, 2023

Jerry "Pops" Barnes, Chair

Carvel Lewis, Secretary

Chattahoochee | Clay | Crisp | Dooly | Harris | Macon | Marion | Muscogee
Quitman | Randolph | Schley | Stewart | Sumter | Talbot | Taylor | Webster