**RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**
**Buena Vista, GA**
**January 24, 2024**
**10:30 A.M.**
**Meeting Minutes**

**Council Members (Counties Represented: 16)**

Albert King, Vienna
Bill McClellan, Schley
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman, RVRC Chair
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee
Darrell Holbrook, Webster
Doug Ethridge, Harris
Eugene Cason, Dooly
J.R. Dowdy, Crisp, Vice-Chair
James Davenport, Clay
Jayson Griffin, Macon
Jimmy Daniels, Oglethorpe
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Larry Sparks, Talbot County
Lee Kinnamon, Americus
Maggie McGruther, Sumter
Melvin Crimes, Webster
Randy Howard, Sumter
Rob Grant, Harris
Terrell Hudson, Dooly
Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee
Tom Queen, Taylor
Tony Lamar, Talbotton
Toyia Tucker, Columbus
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

**Members Not Attending**

Barbara Cullefer, Lumpkin
Barry Witley, Butler
Carl Oliver, Macon
Chip Jones, Stewart
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman
Greg Dominey, Schley
Jeff McCarter, Randolph
Jessie Smith, Sumter
Joshua Deriso, Cordele
Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines
Patrick Whearley, Hamilton
Richard McCorkle, Marion
Shane Grier, Marion
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Tameka Harris, Taylor, RVRC Secretary

**Others Present**

Natalie Bradley, Flint Energies
Mandy White, Randolph Co. Dev. Authority
Christopher Drake, Congressman Bishop's office
Diadra Powell, Americus City Manager
Alex Johnson, U.S. Dept. of Commerce
Colin Martin, AT&T Area Manager
Brenda Williams, Senator Warnock's office
Chris Kelley, Congressman Bishop's office
Bill Twomey, ACCG
Chloe Landreth, New Horizons
Rhett Wade, Hamilton City Manager
Anthony Couch

**RVRC Staff**

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Mariyana Kostov, Planning
Tammy Collins, Finance
Rick Morris, Planning
Allison Slocum, Planning
Merri Spence, Administration
John Morgan, Planning
Kia Barrow, AAA
Naomi Masuoka, Planning
Janice West, WIOA

**WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Carvel Lewis, RVRC Chair, Georgetown-Quitman, brought the meeting to order and welcomed visitors. Chairman Lewis led the council in prayer and Vice-Chairman Dowdy lead the council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MINUTES***

The council reviewed the December 6, 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 Lewis asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was made by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County and seconded by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County. The motion was passed with no opposition.

**RURAL BROADBAND FEDERAL UPDATE**

Alex Johnson, U.S. Dept. of Commerce presented an informative presentation on Internet for All. NTIA (National Telecommunications and Information Administration) will administer around $48 Billion of funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The BEAD (Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program) grant has $42.45 Billion in the funding pool. The goal is to have every house and business in the United States of America access to high-speed internet. This Spring there will be a notice of opportunity of funding from NTIA to go out to local municipalities. This presentation was shared via email with the RVRC Council and other City and County representatives.

**REVOLVING LOAN FUND PLAN APPROVAL***

Jim Livingston presented the draft of the Revolving Loan Fund plan that needs to be submitted to the Economic Development Administration. There are two federal sources that we use to provide loans: USDA and EDA. This is a plan amendment based on new federal regulations. The draft plan has been tentatively approved by EDA but requires council action. Carvel Lewis asked for a motion to approve the draft of the Revolving Loan Fund plan. The motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County. The motion was passed with no opposition.

**APPROVAL OF FY25 AREA AGENCY ON AGING PROVIDERS***

Kia Barrow, Area Agency on Aging Assistant Director presented a list of providers for FY25 for approval. These providers were chosen from the recent RFP's. Chair Lewis asked for a motion to approve the list of providers. The motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Melvin Crimes, Webster County. The motion was passed with no opposition.

**DCA EMPLOYEE FAMILY DISCLOSURE***

Tammy Collins, Finance Officer reported to the council there were no Employee Family Disclosures to be reported to Georgia Department of Community Affairs for the calendar year 2023. Chair Lewis asked for a motion to approve. The motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Terrell Hudson, Dooly County. The motion was passed with no opposition.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**Tammy Collins, Finance Officer** reported that as of November 30, 2023, the fringe rate was 53.3% and the indirect rate was 46.2%. There was a net decrease in fund balance of $60,500 in the operating funds leaving a November 30, 2023

unassigned fund balance of $922,000 and cash on hand of $829,000. Enterprise funds had an increase in net position of $2,700 and a total net position of $2,042,000 with a cash on hand of $1.2 million available for lending.

**Kia Barrow, Assistant AAA Director** reported the aging staff continues to provide services to seniors and persons with disabilities. Public hearings were held in November and December 2023. Our largest waiting list right now is for home delivered meals and bathing assistance. Care-Net is continuing to communicate with members via email, telephone, and in-person meetings. Robbie Monfort presented Dementia Friends to the group in December. MDS-Q Options Counseling continues to provide Educational Sessions in our 16-county area regarding clients transitioning out of the nursing home and back to the community. If anyone is interested in our Evidenced Based Program, contact us in February because we are still recruiting lay leaders and coaches.

**Allison Slocum, Assistant Director of Planning** reported the Clay County Comp Plan has been submitted to DCA. Crisp and Harris Counties' Comp Plans are ongoing. Webster's Comp Plan will begin soon. The United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley is funding a housing study in each county within its footprint. These studies are being done by Georgia Tech. Muscogee County's study is underway and the other studies will begin soon. Twenty-five Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments have been completed in the region so far: eight in Crisp, seven in Dooly, two in Macon, and eight in Sumter. Fourteen of these will have Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessments completed. RVRC is participating with GDOT and the consulting firm Blue Cypress as they work on a Transit Development Plan for the region. Blue Cypress will be at the next council meeting to discuss their process. RVRC is also participating with GEMA and the consultant FCMC as they complete Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plans for Sumter and Crisp Counties. These are not part of the Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation process that our counties typically go through.

**Janice West, WIOA Director** reported that WIOA services had its annual state monitoring for Program Year 2022 the week of January 8-12, 2024. A team of state office staff conducted a detailed monitoring over the following areas; financial management of WIOA funds, programmatic reviews of participant services, compliance with state and federal regulations, and internal controls. The results from the monitoring visit were good and did not identify any findings or observations for the area. There were no corrective actions required. Spring semesters are beginning in January for area colleges and universities. New WIOA enrollments are expected to increase for the Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) services for the new semester. Georgia's Unemployment Rate for November 2023 was 3.4%. Regional Unemployment Rate was 3.7% for November 2023. Individual counties' Unemployment Rates are reported in the January staff activity report.

**ADJOURN**

As there was no further business, Chair Lewis requested a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. A motion was made by Tom Queen, Taylor County and seconded by Terrell Hudson, Dooly County. The motion was passed with no opposition. The meeting was adjourned.

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February 28, 2024 Carvel Lewis, Chair

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Tameka Harris, Secretary