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

Council Members (Counties Represented: 14)

Albert King, Vienna
Barbara Cullefer, Lumpkin
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, RVRC Chair
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County
Darrell Holbrook, Webster County
Eugene Cason, Dooly County
James Davenport, Clay County
Jayson Griffin, Macon County
Jimmy Daniels, Oglethorpe
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County
J.R. Dowdy, Crisp County, Vice-Chair
Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Larry Sparks, Talbot County
Leah Clark, Ellaville
Lee Kinnamon, Americus
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Melvin Crimes, Webster County
Shane Grier, Marion County
Tameka Harris, Taylor County, RVRC Secretary
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee County
Tom Queen, Taylor County
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

Members Not Attending

Barry Whitley, Butler
Bill McClellan, Schley County
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Carl Oliver, Macon County
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman County
Doug Ethridge, Harris County
Jeff McCarter, Randolph County
Jim Reid, Sumter County
Joshua Deriso, Cordele
Patrick Whearley, Hamilton
Randy Howard, Sumter County
Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Rob Grant, Harris County
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Tony Lamar, Talbotton
Toyia Tucker, Columbus

Others Present

Laura Gower, Congressman Ferguson's Office
Christopher Drake, Congressman Bishop's Office
Mandy White, Randolph Co. Dev. Authority
Natalie Bradley, Flint Energies
Rebecca White, DCA
Chloe Landreth, New Horizons
Tom Horn, Columbus Water Works
Mary Stevens, Talbot County Chamber of Commerce
Brandon Ona, State Office of Workforce Development
Feleshia Marshall, Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Development Board
Beverly Butcher, Americus
Carol Ison, Talbot County
Thomas Weaver, Chattahoochee County
Christy Bozeman, GA DEcD
Lt. Colonel Woods, Ft. Moore

RVRC Staff

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Tracie Hadaway, Director of Planning and Government Services
Katie Howard, Director of Area Agency on Aging
Mariyana Kostov, Planning
Naomi Masuoka, Planning
Destinee Williams, Planning
Merri Spence, Administration
Tammy Collins, Finance
Janice West, WIOA

WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Dick Dowdy, RVRC Vice-Chair, brought the meeting to order and welcomed visitors. Melvin Crimes, Webster County, led the council in prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MARCH MINUTES*

The council reviewed the March 27, 2024 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 Dowdy asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was made by Albert King, Vienna and seconded by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County. The motion passed with no opposition.

REGIONAL BUSINESS SERVICES

Brandon Ona, Director of Business Services at the Technical College System of Georgia Office of Workforce Development, discussed his efforts to develop Georgia's workforce as part of a state agency. The Technical College System of Georgia oversees all technical colleges in Georgia, provides economic development incentives, and administers employment and training programs through the Office of Workforce Development. The primary goal is to engage individuals that have left the workforce since the pandemic and provide training. The apprenticeship division promotes and expands registered apprenticeship programs through technical colleges. The employment services division trains on resume writing and interview skills, and they recently launched the WorkSource Georgia portal that provides job search resources to anyone in the state. WorkSource Georgia utilizes a team that makes referrals for individuals so that they can find workforce development areas in their community or partner agencies that can provide assistance beyond the scope of existing business services. The goal is to employ and retain Georgia workers and elevate the job quality, and in order to do so, local partnerships are a necessity. Local partners such as chambers, schools, industries, and community investment districts know their community best, and WorkSource Georgia collaborates with them in order to better serve businesses in a way that positively impacts the community, helping both the businesses recruit jobs and assist individuals in locating jobs and re-entering the workforce.

UPCOMING CHANGES TO ArcGIS DESKTOP

Mariyana Kostov, GIS Manager, provided an important update to changes in GIS software that the RVRC will be helping local communities adapt to soon. Beginning July 1, ArcGIS Desktop and its extensions will no longer be available for purchase. On March 1, 2026, ArcGIS Desktop will retire, and ArcGIS Pro will be the new software available with all the desktop capabilities and more. One option is to install and learn ArcGIS Pro, but there is a learning curve. The other option is to make all GIS data accessible through ArcGIS online applications and data hubs. The RVRC developed a GIS data hub for Harris County, and Mariyana provided a walkthrough of this online application. The hub is divided into logical data groups and contains the most updated information. Local communities can contact Mariyana for either training on ArcGIS Pro or assistance in developing an online application for them to share GIS data.

FY 2024 BUDGET AMENDMENT*

Tammy Collins, Finance Officer, presented a budget amendment for FY 2024. The change was previously discussed with the Executive Committee and comes to the council with their resolution of approval. The net effect is a $3,000 increase in the general fund. In the internal service fund, there were adjustments in line-item expenses, but there was no change in the fund. Carvel Lewis, Chairman, asked for a motion to approve the budget amendment. The motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Albert King, Vienna. The motion passed with no opposition.

GMA ORGANIZATION OF CIVILITY*

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, presented a model civility pledge in the form of a resolution for the council. The Georgia Municipal Association encourages communities to pledge and practice civility to assist in addressing everyday governmental challenges. As an organizational community, the RVRC has been asked to adopt a resolution to promote civility. If the RVRC's resolution is adopted, they will be recognized at the annual GMA conference. Chairman Lewis asked for a motion to adopt the resolution. The motion was made by Tom Queen, Taylor County and seconded by Larry Sparks, Talbot County. The motion passed with no opposition.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION TO USDOT*

Tracie Hadaway, Director of Planning and Government Services, presented a grant opportunity from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program is for trail development, whether it is for a feasibility study or construction down the road. The goal is to develop regional trails that connect counties, regions, and states. There are opportunities for the region to work with Alabama and Fort Moore to expand trails south, east, and north. There is a 20% match that can be in-kind. The application is due June 17. Chairman Lewis asked for a motion to adopt a resolution to apply. The motion was made by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County and seconded by Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County. The motion passed with no opposition.

RECOMPETE REVOLVING LOAN FUND*

Tracie Hadaway, Director of Planning and Government Services, presented another grant program that the RVRC has been working on with the United Way of Chattahoochee Valley. United Way is developing a ReCompete Pilot Program, and they were a finalist in Phase 1 of the application for their plan to address economic distress in the Columbus MSA. The Phase 2 application is being developed, and communities in the Columbus MSA provided support letters for these efforts. The goal is to remove barriers in the Prime Age Employment Gap, ages 25-54. The Columbus MSA has a historically higher gap. The RVRC has helped create the application and is expanding the Revolving Loan Fund to target the Columbus MSA. The RVRC is requesting $900,000 from the Recompete program and $100,000 in administrative funds. Chairman Lewis asked for a motion to approve completing the application and expand the Revolving Loan Fund. The motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Melvin Crimes, Webster County.

STAFF REPORTS

Tracie Hadaway, Director of Planning and Government Services reported that six CDBG applications were submitted on April 5. Staff is in the final draft phase for both the Crisp County Comprehensive Plan and the Harris County Comprehensive Plan. Comprehensive plans are also being developed for Quitman and Webster Counties. Letters will be sent mid-September for the communities that will have comprehensive plans to be updated in the next cycle. Staff is continuing to work with Fort Moore to implement the River Valley Compatible Development Plan. The Safe Streets for All grant deadlines are May 16 and August 29. There must be a safety plan developed to apply.

Katie Howard, AAA Director reported that the Senior Wellness Fair is at the Columbus Civic Center on May 3. The first 350 people will get a t-shirt. Lunch will be provided. The governor signed a law that requires safe rental housing in communities. The Chattahoochee Judicial District has created and adopted multi-disciplinary teams to investigate suspicious deaths of seniors. The bill has now been approved to be implemented in every judicial district.

Tammy Collins, Finance Officer reported that as of February 29, 2024, there was a net decrease in fund balance in the operating funds leaving an unassigned fund balance of $944,000 and cash on hand of $767,000. Enterprise funds had an increase in net position of $1,030 and a total net position of $2,000,000 with cash on hand of $1.2 million available for lending.

Janice West, WIOA Director reported that staff is working on the Local WIOA Plan, and it is due to the State Office of Workforce Development on June 30. The Regional WIOA Plan will be due on September 30. Enrollments for period from July 1, 2023 through April 10, 2024 in various WIOA funded training activities total is 117 individuals being served. The

final fourth quarter performance report should be available in the fall. The second quarter performance measures are on track with many measures being met and exceeded. The Georgia unemployment rate for February was 3.1%, and the regional unemployment rate was 3.9%.

ADJOURN

As there was no further business, Chairman Lewis requested a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. A motion was made by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County and seconded by Albert King, Vienna. The motion passed with no opposition. The meeting was adjourned.

_____
June 26, 2024

_____
Carvel Lewis, Chairman

_____
Tameka Harris, Secretary