RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
Buena Vista, GA
August 28, 2024
10:30 A.M.
Meeting Minutes

Council Members (Counties Represented: 15)

Albert King, Vienna
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, RVRC Chairmen
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County
Darrell Holbrook, Webster County
Doug Etheridge, Harris County
Eugene Carson, Dooly County
J.R. Dowdy II, Crisp County, Vice-Chair
James Davenport, Clay County
Jayson Griffin, Macon County
Jim Reid, Sumter County
Jimmy Daniels, Oglethorpe
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Melvin Crimes. Webster County
Randy Howard, Sumter County
Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Rob Grant, Harris County
Shane Grier, Marion County
Tameka Harris, Taylor County, RVRC Secretary
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
Toyia Tucker, Columbus
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

Members Not Attending

Barbara Cullefer, Lumpkin
Barry Whitley, Butler
Bill McClellan, Schley County
Carl Oliver, Macon County
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman County
Jeffery McCarter, Randolph County
Jousha Deriso, Cordele
Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines
Larry Sparks, Talbot County
Leah Clark, Ellaville
Lee Kinnamon, Americus
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Patrick Whearley, Hamilton
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee County
Tom Queen, Taylor County
Tony Lamar, Talbotton

Others Present

Carol Ison, Talbot County
Charles Gower, Ft. Moore
Christopher Drake, Congressman Bishop's Office
Clark Harrell, Crisp County
Diadra Powell, Americus City Manager
Jeremy Cummings, Columbus Water Works
Josh Beard, Columbus
LaKaren Rickman, New Horizons Behavioral Health
Mandy White, Randolph Co. Dev. Authority
Matt Laverne, Randolph County
Michael Dempsey, Ft. Moore
Natalie Bradley, Flint Energies
Paul Farr, Director of Business Services, SGTC
Rebecca White, DCA
Susan Gallagher, New Horizons Behavioral Health
Thomas Weaver, Chattahoochee County
Tom Horn, Columbus Water Works

RVRC Staff

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Tracie Hadaway, Director of Planning and Govt. Services
Katie Howard, Director of Area Agency on Aging
Mariyana Kostov, Planning
Destinee Williams, Planning
Camille Bielby, Planning
Michael Murray, Planning
Naomi Masuoka, Aging
Charvetria Vann, Aging
Janice West, WIOA

WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Carvel Lewis, RVRC Chairman, brought the meeting to order and welcomed visitors. Tameka Harris, Secretary, led the council in prayer, and Dick Dowdy, Vice-Chair, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF JUNE MINUTES*

The council reviewed the June 26, 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, Chairman Lewis asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was made by Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County, and seconded by Albert King, City of Vienna. The motion passed with no opposition.

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Dr. LaKaren Rickman and Susan Gallagher with New Horizons Behavioral Health (NHBH) presented on Georgia's Certified Community Behavioral Health Center Initiative. New Horizons Behavioral Health serves eight counties in the River Valley region, including Harris, Talbot, Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Stewart, Quitman, Randolph, and Clay counties. In 2020, NHBH was selected to be one of four CCBHCs in the State of Georgia and is currently implementing a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) service delivery model. CCBHCs are designed to serve those in need of care, regardless of ability to pay.

As a CCBHC, the organization conducted a Community Mental Health Needs Assessment. The assessment revealed areas of concern, including barriers that limit access to services, stigma, and lack of knowledge of behavioral health in the community, relationships and collaborations with law enforcement, and transportation barriers. Based on these areas of concern, New Horizons identified the following priorities for FY2024-FY2027: advance workforce development initiatives that support our community's need for more behavioral health professionals, enhance and expand NHBH levels of care, access, and scope of services in the community, and empower NHBH service area, families, and individuals through mental health education, access, and stigma reduction.

CWW & EPA SERVICE LINE SURVEY UPDATE

Jeremy Cummings, New President of Columbus Water Works presented on the CWW & EPA Service Line Survey Updates. Mr. Cummings reported that the Columbus Water Works found no lead or cooper in the Columbus.

RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR 5311, 5304 TRANSIT FUNDS*

Michael Murray, Transportation Planner, addressed the Council and informed them that the RVRC was in the process of applying for two grants from the Georgia Department of Transportation. The first being Title 49 U.S.C., Section 5311, and the second being Title 49 U.S.C., Section 5304. Mr. Murray asked the Council members to consider a vote to approve authorizing resolutions for the grant applications. The motion was made by Albert King, City of Vienna, and seconded by Randy Howard, Sumter County. The motion passed with no opposition.

RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR SAFE STREETS FOR ALL*

Tracie Hadaway, Director of Planning and Government Services presented the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant application. The Safe Streets and Roads for All grant program is a federal grant funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation. The goal is to develop a regional safety action plan that addresses transportation safety and mobility needs in the region, excluding the Columbus Consolidated Government, which received SS4A funding in FY22. The total local

match is $150,000, with $50,000 from locally raised Transportation Investment Act (TIA) administrative funds. Council approval is needed to apply. Chairman Lewis asked for a motion to adopt a resolution to apply. The motion was made by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County, and seconded by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County. The motion passed with no opposition.

STAFF REPORTS

Tracie Hadaway, Director of Planning and Government Services reported that three Community Development Block (CDBG) grants were selected for funding for FY24, including the cities of Montezuma, Reynolds, and Unadilla. CDBG interest letters will be sent out within the next few days for communities interested in receiving CDBG funding for FY25. The pre-application period for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants (LWCF) and Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grants closes this fall. Staff will submit a regional EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant application for FY25. Staff are working to put a coalition together and compile a list of priority sites for assessment to include in the application, which will be due in November. Staff will host Zoning 101 workshops. Staff received notice of GEMA approval of Quitman County's pre-disaster plan. Staff will be preparing the Hazard Mitigation Plan update for Randolph County.

Katie Howard, AAA Director reported that the AAA staff completed the annual farmers' markets, serving over 4,000 seniors with fresh produce in all 16 counties. The AAA has nearly 400 persons on the waiting list for services but expects to serve those on the list within a year. The Dementia Care Services coordinator continues to provide educational programs throughout the region and has formed a coalition in Clay and Quitman Counties to make these counties Dementia-friendly. Staff will be offering 5-day educational classes beginning in the fall.

Janice West, WIOA Director reported that WIOA started its program year (PY) on July 1st. Over 90 individuals were enrolled in various WIOA-funded training activities from July 1, 2024, through August 15, 2024. The local WIOA Plan was submitted and approved by the State Office of Workforce Development on June 30th. Staff have begun work on the WIOA Regional Plan. Regional WIOA Plans are due to the State Office of Workforce Development on September 1, 2024. The state unemployment rate was 3.3%, lower than the regional rate of 4.5%.

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.

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August 28, 2024 Carvel Lewis, Chairman

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Tameka Harris, Secretary