RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
Buena Vista, GA
September 25,
2024, 10:30 A.M.
Meeting Minutes

Council Members (Counties Represented: 13)

Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, RVRC Chair
Eugene Cason, Dooly County
J.R. Dowdy II, Crisp County, Vice-Chair
James Davenport, Clay County
Jayson Griffin, Macon County
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County
Kevin Brown, Buena Vista
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Melvin Crimes, Webster County
Randy Howard, Sumter County
Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Rob Grant, Harris County
Rob Marion, Chattahoochee County
Tameka Harris, Taylor County, RVRC Secretary
Toyia Tucker, Columbus
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

Members Not Attending

Albert King, Vienna
Barbara Cullefer, Lumpkin
Barry Whitley, Butler
Bill McClellan, Schley County
Carl Oliver, Macon County
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman County
Darrell Holbrook, Webster County
Doug Etheridge, Harris County
Jeffery McCarter, Randolph County
Jim Reid, Sumter County
Jimmy Daniels, Oglethorpe
Joshua Deriso, Cordele
Kenneth Sumpter, Fort Gaines
Larry Sparks, Talbot County
Leah Clark, Ellaville
Lee Kinnamon, Americus
Patrick Whearley, Hamilton
Shane Grier, Marion County
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee County
Tom Queen, Taylor County
Tony Lamar, Talbotton

Others Present

Casie Dring
Charles Gower, Ft. Moore
Chris Kelley, Congressman Bishop's Office
Christopher Drake, Congressman Bishop's Office
Christy Bozeman. GA DEcD
Grace Barrett, Georgia Tech
Grant Buckley, Crisp Co. Dec. Authority
Greg Panzer, Harris County
Gregg Gantt, Harris County
Mandy White, Randolph Co. Dev. Authority
Marian McLemore, Flint Energies
Mary Stevens, Talbot Chamber of Commerce
Michael Dempsey, Ft. Moore
Rebecca White, DCA
Rhett Wade, Hamilton City Manager
Thomas Weaver, Chattahoochee County
Tom Horn, Columbus Water Works
Valerie Richardson, Flint Energies

RVRC Staff

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Tracie Hadaway, Director of Planning and Govt. Services
Katie Howard, Director of Area Agency on Aging
Allison Slocum, Asst. Director of Planning
Blaine Hoskins, Planning
Camille Bielby, Planning
Destinee Williams, Planning
Laura Schneider, Planning
Mariyana Kostov, Planning
Janice West, WIOA
Naomi Masuoka, Aging
Addis Bugg, Administration
Tammy Collins, Finance

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 August 28, 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 Toyia Tucker, City of Columbus, and seconded by Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County. The motion passed with no opposition.

FORT MORE UPDATE

Michael Dempsey, with the Maneuver Center of Excellence and Fort Moore, presented on Fort Moore's Inter-Governmental Support Agreements (IGSAs) and job opportunities. IGSAs are a cost-effective way for Fort Moore to acquire services from state or local governments while building stronger relationships with surrounding communities. Military services are authorized by federal law to enter into such agreements if they enhance mission readiness, increase efficiencies, or reduce costs. Current IGSA partners within the region include Chattahoochee, Harris, and Marion Counties. The next IGSA Symposium will be held February 2025 at Troy University.

GEORGIA AIM GRANT UPDATE

Grace Barrett, of Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute, provided the council with an update on the Georgia Artificial Intelligence in Manufacturing (AIM) Grant. The Georgia AIM grant seeks to revolutionize Georgia's industrial economy through the equitable development and deployment of talent and innovation in AI for all manufacturing sectors. The grant aims to activities through active engagement from underserved populations, innovation of efficient manufacturing and tech deployment with job creation, and sustainability and resilience.

As a part of this initiative, the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute conducted surveys from across the region, analyzed focus groups, identified potential pilot projects, and collaborated with key stakeholders. The survey revealed the strengths and threats of AI manufacturing within the region. Based on the results of the survey and focus group discussions, the Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute identified the following next steps for the Georgia AIM program:
Pilot project implementation, strategic planning, and learning exchanges.

RESOLUTION TO APPLY TO EPA BROWNFIELDS FUNDS*

Laura Schneider, Environmental Planner, addressed the Council and informed that the RVRC was in the process of applying to the Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant application for FY25, due in November. The grant provides funds for coalitions to develop inventories of brownfield sites, prioritize sites, conduct community involvement activities, develop reuse plans related to brownfield sites, and more. The RVRC will be the lead applicant. Chairman Lewis asked for a motion to approve authorizing resolutions for the grant applications. The motion was made by Toyia Tucker, City of Columbus, and seconded by Randy Howard, Sumter County. The motion passed with no opposition.

STAFF REPORTS

Tracie Hadaway, Director of Planning and Government Services reported that staff hosted Zoning 101 to provide training to the Quitman County Planning Commission on September 24th. Staff will also host region-wide Zoning 101 Training for Reynolds on October 16th and Cuthbert on October 30th. Staff plans to submit a regional EPA Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant application for FY25. Staff is working to assemble a coalition and compile a list of priority sites for assessment to include in the application, due November 14th. Staff also plans to submit an EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant application for the former Ideal School site, due November 14th.

Katie Howard, AAA Director reported that the AAA has nearly 400 persons on the waiting list for services but expects to serve those on the list within a year. However, respite services only have a waitlist of 3 counties, while CTO has a waitlist of 0. Staff continues the development of a Dementia Care coalition. The first coalition will be focused initially on Clay and Quitman counties, to begin efforts to begin the "Dementia Capable Community" pathway.

Janice West, WIOA Director reported that WIOA started its program year (PY) on July 1st. Over 110 individuals were enrolled in various WIOA-funded training activities from July 1, 2024, through August 15, 2024. The WIOA Regional Plan was submitted to the State TCSG Office of Workforce Development for review. The state unemployment rate was 3.9%, lower than the regional rate of 4.8%.

Tammy Collins, Finance Officer reported that the finance staff have been working to close FY2024 and getting the FY25 year started. The auditors were in the Columbus office last week for fieldwork testing and review of documents. The auditors will present the financial report to the council at the December 2024 meeting. There was a net increase in fund balance in the operating funds, leaving a June 30th unassigned fund balance of $ 1,063,348. Cash on hand in the General Fund on June 30th was $ 684,000. The enterprise funds had an increase in net position of $ 2,400 in June. Total net position in the loan funds is $ 2,077,000 with cash on hand of $ 1.3 million available for lending.

ADJOURN*

As there was no further business, Chairman Lewis requested a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. A motion was made by Toyia Tucker, City of Columbus, and seconded by Randy Howard, Sumter County. The motion passed with no opposition. The meeting was adjourned.

_____ _____

September 25, 2024 Carvel Lewis, Chairman

_____

Tameka Harris, Secretary