RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
Buena Vista, GA
February 26, 2025,
10:30 A.M.
Meeting Minutes

Council Members (Counties Represented: 14)

Albert King, Vienna
Barry Whitley, Butler
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, Chair
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County
Darrell Holbrook, Webster County
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
Lee Kinnamon, Americus
Melvin Crimes, Webster County
Randy Howard, Sumter County
Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Rob Grant, Harris County
Rob Marion, Chattahoochee County
Shane Grier, Marion County
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee County
Toyia Tucker, Columbus
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

Members Not Attending

Barbara Cullefer, Lumpkin
Bill McClellan, Schley County
Carl Oliver, Macon County
Danny Blackmon, Georgetown-Quitman County
Doug Ethridge, Harris County
Jeff McCarter, Randolph County
Jim Reid, Sumter County
Jimmy Daniels, Oglethorpe
Joshua Deriso, Cordele
Kenneth Sumpter, Fort. Gaines
Larry Sparks, Talbot County
Leah Clark, Ellaville
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Patrick Whearley, Hamilton
Tameka Harris, Taylor County, Secretary
Tom Queen, Taylor County Tony Lamar, Talbotton

Others Present

Allyson Drinnon, Congressman Bishop's Office
Anthony Couch, Tabolt County Commissioner
Carol Ison, Talbot County
Carolyn Parker, Talbot County Chamber
Chirsty Bozeman, GA. DEcD
Clark Harrell, Crisp County
David Kinsey, Georgetown-Quitman County
Dennis A. Thomas, Stewart County
Franklin Holmes, Talbot County Commissioner
Greg Panzer, Harris County
Kenneth Parker, Talbot County Chamber
Mandy White, Randolph Co. Dev. Authority
Mary Stevens, Talbot Co. Chamber of Commerce
MaryLea Boatwright Quinn, Director of Aging Services
Rebecca White, DCA
Rhett Wade, Hamilton City Manager
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
Addis Bugg, Administration
Blaine Hoskins, Planning
Destinee Williams, Planning
Mariyana Kostov, Planning
Michael Murray, Planning
Janice West, WIOA
Tammy Collins, Finance

WELCOME AND RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

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

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER MINUTES*

The council reviewed the December 11, 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, Carvel Lewis, RVRC Chairman, asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was made by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County, and seconded by Albert King, City of Vienna. The motion passed with no opposition.

AAA STATE UPDATE

MaryLea Boatwright Quinn, Director of Aging Services (DAS), presented the Area Agency on Aging State Update. DAS is the designated unit on aging and is required to do a multi-year state plan on aging. In response to the growing number of people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD), the Georgia General Assembly created the Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan Task Force (GARD) in 2013. With assistance from the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, the Department of Human Services' DAS has developed this report to fulfill the inaugural report required under H.B. 571. This report examines data and trends around ADRD in Georgia within the following three core areas: Risk Factors, Prevalence, and Mortality. Impact and Burden on Families and Caregivers, and Access to Care, the three primary risk factors for Alzheimer's and related dementias are non-modifiable: age, genetics, and family history. This risk factor is pertinent to Georgia because the sixty-five and older population is the fastest-growing age cohort in the state. This is especially prevalent in rural ga.

Sixty-five percent of ADRC counselors have their own health concerns. The average number of months older adults remaining in their homes for DAS is 42 months; however, 88% of the aging population prefers remaining at home. DAS receives 45,000 calls about elder abuse, and about 28,00 of those calls have led to investigation. Due to this, it is important that ADRC counselors are provided with resources to reduce elder abuse and create dementia-friendly communities.

APPROVAL OF FY26 AREA PLAN*

Katie Howard, AAA Director, reported that staff have begun work on the FY26 Area Plan for services for seniors in the River Valley Region. The Area Plan, a three-year plan, is due to the Division of Aging Services on March 1, 2025. Measurable goals and objectives that meet the Administration for Community Living's (ACL) focus areas include increasing the number of clients who receive Options Counseling (OC) services from certified Options Counseling staff by 5% each year, developing a more dementia capable aging network, reducing social isolation of HCBS clients in Georgia, increasing the "length of time (average number of months)" older adults remain in their homes by six months while receiving HCBS services. The current RVRC AAA average is 50 months. Chairman Lewis asked for a motion to approve the FY26 Area Plan. The motion was made by Albert King, City of Vienna, and seconded by Darrell Holbrook, Webster County. The motion passed with no opposition.

RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REGIONAL TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN*

Michael Murray, Transportation Planner, addressed the Council and informed them that the River Valley Regional Commission, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), has prepared the Regional Transit

Development Plan (TDP). The plan has completed a 30-day public review and comment period and received GDOT approval. Chairman Lewis asked for a motion to approve the authorizing resolution of adoption for the Regional Transit Development Plan (TDP). The motion was made by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County, and seconded by Rob Grant, Harris County. The motion passed with no opposition.

DCA EMPLOYEE FAMILY DISCLOSURE*

Tammy Collins, Financial Officer, reported that DCA requires the River Valley Regional Commission to report any transactions that fall under Georgia Code 50-8-63. Any employee, any member of such employee's family, or any business in which such employee or any member of his family has a substantial interest, individually or collectively, who transacts business with any local government shall disclose such transactions annually. The RVRC has no disclosures for the calendar year 2024. Chairman Lewis asked for a motion to approve the authorizing resolution for the annual update. The motion was made by Terrell Hudson, Dooly County, 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 have begun work on comprehensive plans for Talbot and Chattahoochee Counties. Staff have submitted 3 CHIP applications and will submit eight CDBG applications in the first week of April. Staff are also assisting with the Census 2025 Boundary and Annexation Survey submissions. Pre-hazardous Mitigation Plans are underway for several counties, and staff are working with the Area Agency on Aging to complete the plan. Four Transportation Alternatives Program applications will be submitted to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) on February 28th, 2025. The City of Buena Vista has begun working with the RVRC on the Land and Water Conservation Fund conversion process for the existing city park property.

Katie Howard, AAA Director, reported that work has begun on the FY26 Area Plan for services for seniors in the River Valley Region. The Area Plan is due to the Division of Aging Services on March 1, 2025. In January, the ADRC received 254 referrals from agencies requesting services and information for seniors and persons with disabilities. This is a 14% increase. The Caregiver Timeout program currently has a waiting list of zero. A Matter of Balance class is developing in Quitman County at the Public Library, while two Chronic Disease Self-Management Classes are being held at the Taylor County Senior Center until March 11, 2025. A Chronic Disease Self-Management Class (CDSMP) started on February 3, 2025, in Columbus, GA. Tai Chi classes will resume in July.

Janice West, WIOA Director, reported that a total of 104 individuals were served for the enrollment period from July 1, 2024, through February 12. 2025. Enrollments will continue to increase through June 30, 2025. Staff are beginning to plan for the next program year, which begins in July 2025. WIOA local area had the annual state monitoring the week of January 27-30, 2025. The monitoring went well. A written report on the monitoring will be provided to the local area within 30 days. The State of Georgia's unemployment rate for December 2024 was 3.4%, while for the region it was 4.1%. South Georgia Technical College is waiving the application fee in March and will host a Spring Takeoff in April to provide potential students with information about available programs.

Tammy Collins, Finance Officer, reported that the December 2024 financial reports include a net increase of $28,000 in fund balance in the general fund leaving a December 31st unassigned fund balance of $ 1,097,495. Cash on hand in the general Fund on December 31st was $ 466,943. The proprietary funds had an increase in net position of $ 6,149. Total net position in the loan funds is $ 2,081.000 with a cash on hand of $ 1.4million available for lending.

ADJOURN*

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

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March 26, 2025. Carvel Lewis, Chairman

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Tameka Harris, Secretary