RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COUNCIL MEETING
Buena Vista, GA
June 25, 2025,
10:30 A.M.
Meeting Minutes

Council Members (Counties Represented: 12)

Albert King, Vienna
Bobby Jenkins, Cuthbert
Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, Chair
Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County
David Kinsley, Georgetown-Quitman County
J. R. Dowdy III, Crisp County
James Davenport, Clay County
Jayson Griffin, Macon County
Joe Lee Williams, Stewart County
Ken Chapman, Talbot County
Kenneth Sumpter, Ft. Gaines
Linda Barfield, Macon County
Melvin Crimes, Webster County
Randy Howard, Sumter County
Rob Grant, Harris County
Rob Marion, Chattahoochee County
Tameka Harris, Taylor County
Terrell Hudson, Dooly County
Timothy Biddle, Chattahoochee County
Tom Queen, Taylor County
Toyia Tucker, Columbus

Members Not Attending

Barry Whitley, Butler
Darrell Holbrook, Webster County
Dennis Thomas, Lumpkin
Doug Ethridge, Harris County
Eugene Cason, Dooly County
Jack Clark, Schley County
Jeffrey McCarter, Randolph County
Jim Reid, Sumter County
Jimmy Daniels, Oglethorpe
Joshua Deriso, Cordele
Lee Kinnamon, Americus
Maggie McGruther, Sumter County
Patrick Whearley, Hamilton
Richard McCorkle, Marion County
Shane Tondee, Ellaville
Skip Henderson, Columbus
Tony Lamar, Talbotton
Xavier McCaskey, Columbus

Others Present

Andy Hilmes, Choose Cloumbus
Angie Peaster, Downtown Montezuma
Bobbie Boynton, Richland
Charles Auer, Fort Benning
Chirsty Bozeman, GA DEcD
Christoper Drake, Congressman Bishop Office
Chris Kelley, Congressman Bishop Office
Clark Harrell, Harris Co. Manager
Connie Harris, Marion Co. Manager
Greg Grant, Harris County Commissioner
Greg Panzer, Harris Co. Dev. Authority
Kirk Holcombe, Access 2 Independence
Mandy White, Randolph Co. Dev. Authority
Mary Stevens, Talbot Co. Chamber
Michelle Phillips, Choose Columbus
Mike Dunnavant, Crisp County Interim Manager
Mike Dempsey, Fort Benning
Mike Craig, Columbus
Missy Kendrick, Choose Columbus
Natalie Bradley, Flint EMC
Nicole Acree, Taylor Dev. Authority
Rebecca White, DCA
Rhett Wade, Hamilton Manager
Rosita Farley, Access 2 Independence
Scotty Mashburn, Dooly County Eco. Dev.
Susan Andrews, Harris County Commissioner
Vicki Wainwright, Butler City Clerk

RVRC Staff

Jim Livingston, Executive Director
Katie Howard, Director of Area Agency on Aging
Addis Bugg, Administration
Allison Slocum, Assistant Director of Planning
Blaine Hoskins, Regional Planner
Grant Richardson, Assist. Director of Community Dev.
Mariyana Kostov, GIS Specialist
Michael Murray, Mobility Manager
Janice West, Director of WIOA
Tammy Collins, Finance Officer

Welcome and Recognition of Visitors

Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, brought the meeting to order and welcomed visitors. Tameka Harris, Taylor County, led the council in prayer and in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF APRIL MINUTES*

The council reviewed the April 23, 2025, 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, Georgetown-Quitman County, asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was made by Charles Coffey, Chattahoochee County, and seconded by Randy Howard, Sumter County. The motion passed with no opposition.

APPROVAL OF MAY MINUTES*

The council reviewed the May 22, 2025, 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, Georgetown-Quitman County, asked for a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was made by Charles Coffee, Chattahoochee County, and seconded by Rob Grant, Harris County. The motion passed with no opposition.

GA Rural Site Preparation Program

Jim Livingston, RVRC Executive Director, introduced Wylly Harrison, GDEcD Site Development Program Manager. Harrison spoke about the OneGeorgia Authority Program that assists local communities. He highlighted the GRAD certification (Georgia Ready for Acceleration Program) and Site Improvement Grant. Harrison discussed the five-step process of applying for applications as well as deadlines and funding for communities.

Nursing Homes Transition Program

Jim Livingston, RVRC Executive Director, introduced LaCarole Llyod, AAA MDS-Q Options Counselor, and Kirk Holcombe, Executive Director for Access 2 Independence. The presentation highlighted that while in a hospital nursing facility, residents can return home with assistance. After receiving referrals, Llyod meets with them face-to-face to discuss transition options and complete assessments. Based on their eligibility, they are then referred to Money Follows the Person or the Nursing Home Transitions program. Eligible participants are also referred to a Medicaid Waiver program to assist with their care. Holcombe spoke about individuals living in nursing homes and explained the challenges people face. The Access 2 Independence program provides housing and independent living skill training to individuals with disabilities.

RESOLUTION TO SUBMIT FY 2026 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SENIOR FARMERS' MARKET CONTRACT*

Katie Howard, Area Agency on Aging Director, addressed the council and informed them that River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) is requesting to accept funding from the GA Department of Public Health to support the Senior Farmers Markets within the region. Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, asked for a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was made by Charles Coffee, Chattahoochee County, and seconded by Albert King, Vienna. The motion passed with no opposition.

RESOLUTION TO SUBMIT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH FY 2026 TRANSIT CONTRACT*

Michael Murry, Regional Planner, addressed the council and informed them that the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) is requesting to continue its contract with the Department of Human Services (DHS). Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, asked for a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was made by Albert King, Vienna, and seconded by Melvin Crimes, Webster County. The motion passed with no opposition.

RESOLUTION TO SUBMIT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SAFE STREETS FOR ALL*

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, addressed the council and informed them that the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) is seeking to request acceptance of a planning grant for funding. Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, asked for a motion to approve the resolution. The motion was made by Charles Coffee, Chattahoochee County, and seconded by Randy Howard, Sumter County. The motion passed with no opposition.

Review and Approval of FY 2026 Calendar*

Jim Livingston, Executive Director, addressed the council and informed them of the RVRC FY 2026 calendar, requesting its approval. Carvel Lewis, Georgetown-Quitman County, asked for a motion to approve the calendar with the correction of April meeting date. The motion was made by Charles Coffee, Chattahoochee County, and seconded by Rob Grant, Harris County. The motion passed with no opposition.

FY 2026 PROPOSED BUDGET *

Tammy Collins, RVRC Finance Officer, shared a proposed budget for FY2026 that includes expected revenue and expenses for the year. She requested the council consideration budget, which includes an indirect rate of 46.8 % and an overall change in fund balance/net position of $ 45,000. Chairman had asked for a motion to approve the proposed FY 2026 budget. The motion was made by Charles Coffee, Chattahoochee County, and seconded by Melvin Crimes, Webster County. The motion passed.

STAFF REPORTS

Tammy Collins, RVRC Finance Officer, gave the council the April 2025 financial report. The January 2025 financial report includes a net decrease of $18,700 and fund balance in the general fund leaving a balance on April 30th of $1,144,772. Cash on hand in the general fund on April 30th was $926,077. The proprietary funds had an increase in net position of $2,300. Total net position in the loan funds is $1,873,974 with cash on hand of $1.4 million available for lending.

Allison Slocum, Assistant Planning Director, introduced the new staff report format. Along with the usual information, there are some new features to help council members find information more easily. These include an overall Table of Contents, and tables showing important timeframes and updates for Community Comprehensive Plans, Service Delivery Strategies, and Hazard Mitigation Plans.

Katie Howard, AAA Director, reported on an event held on June 20 in Columbus. The RVRC/AAA hosted a movie premier "Remember Me; Dementia in the African American Community" at the Columbus Museum. The event was targeted to the African American Community, but everyone was invited. A panel discussion of experts on Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease followed the movie. Approximately 150 people attended the event, which was supported by the community. She also shared information about Senior Farmers' Markets which continue through July. In 2024, almost 4,000 people were served by this program.

Janice West, WIOA Director, reported that a total of 112 individuals were served for the enrollment period from July 1, 2024, through June 15, 2025. Unemployment Rate for Georgia for April 2025 was 3.6%. The regional Unemployment Rate was 4.1%. WIOA staff are currently working on developing PY 2025 Provider contracts. WIOA services for PY 2025 include Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), One Stop Operator, On-The-Job Training (OJT), and Youth services. WIOA federal funding will have a decrease for PY 2025 of $113,584.00. WIOA has had annual federal funding cuts for the past 8 years.

ADJOURN*

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

August 27, 2025.

Carvel Lewis, Chairman

Tameka Harris, Secretary