

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
ATHENS HOLIDAY INN  
OCTOBER 16, 2014  
NOON**

**MINUTES**

The October meeting of the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Council was held on Thursday, October 16, 2014 at the Athens Holiday Inn. Chairman Kevin Little called the meeting to order at 12:30 a.m.

**Members Present:**

Denson, Nancy  
Eisenman, Emily  
Houston, Lamar  
Lyon, Tommy  
Palmer, Bill  
Bullard, Ed  
Duvall, Valerie  
Plott, Roy  
Trammell, Gene  
Dyer, David  
Ainslie, Andy  
Bentley, David  
Ellis, Keith  
Roseberry, Jerry  
Turner, Frank  
Davis, Melvin  
Ivie, Charles  
Harden, Amrey  
Pittard, Billy  
Boggs, Ronnie  
Johnson, Jesse  
Little, Kevin  
Fordyce, Cary  
Roberts, Roy

**Members Absent:**

Graham, Pat  
Blechinger, Linda  
Graham, Ernie  
Guest, Larry  
Brock, Phil  
Crow, Tom  
Fenn, Josh  
Dove, Anthony  
Blackmon, Jody  
Gandy, Roy  
Perriman, Fred  
Thompson, Greg  
Knight, Harry

**Associate Members Present:**

Ouzts, Buddy  
Horton, Harold  
Crawford, Charlie  
Seymour, Joel

**Guests Present:**

Andrea Daniel  
Kathy Papa  
Craig Intro  
Bob Thomson  
Chuck Williams  
Paul Chambers  
Darlene Spears  
Nichole Hodge  
Vicki Steckel

**Staff Present:**

Jim Dove, Executive Director  
Mott Beck, Executive Assistant  
Evans Brinson, Comptroller  
Burke Walker, Director of Planning & Government Services  
Toshia Lewis, Gateway/ADRC Supervisor

## **CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Little called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He welcomed members, guests, and staff. He asked for a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. Such a motion was made by Commissioner Gene Trammell and seconded by Commissioner Tommy Lyon. The motion carried unanimously.

## **ITEMS OF LOCAL INTEREST**

**Barrow County:** No report.

**Clarke County:** Mayor Nancy Denson advised that the Athens-Clarke County Commission will have three new Commissioners, and she will serve another term as Mayor and did not have opposition. The Regents and UGA Medical Partnership recently graduated its first group of Doctors, and the new UGA Bolton Dining Hall has opened. It was with much sadness that Mayor Denson announced that Chief Jackie Lumpkin will be relocating to Savannah and serving as their Police Chief, and Mayor Denson's Assistant Mae Walter will be retiring at the end of the month. The Classic Center Ice Skating venue is now open for business, and a ribbon cutting ceremony was recently held for a new urgent care facility. Athens-Clarke County will not be hosting the group of refugees that were originally expected.

**Elbert County:** The County has passed a 1-mil property tax increase for one year to raise approximately \$500,000 to offset the Elberton Hospital's costs for indigent care. Without these funds, the 52-bed hospital would probably have to close its doors, which would have a severe impact on the rural economy in Elbert County. AnMed Hospital in Anderson, S.C. issued a credit line to the hospital until tax revenues are collected in December. The CSX Rail Line in Elbert County has a short line that travels 44 miles to Toccoa and connects with Norfolk Southern. Two Commissioners are up for re-election in November, and one has decided not to run. Chairman Lyon did not have opposition. The old school on Tate Street is being demolished, and the City of Elberton will be purchasing the property for a park. The State is threatening to close Bobby Brown State Park, and the County is exploring the economic impact related to same. The County will be featured in the December issue of **Georgia Trend Magazine**, and **USA Today** will be writing an article on small rural hospitals. The City has completed a small building behind the theatre that will house the Arts Council, and continues to explore multiple options regarding what to do with the old Samuel Elbert Hotel on the square that was purchased last year.

**Greene County:** The new St. Joseph's Hospital, a critical care facility, is doing very well; and specialty groups are expected to locate there in the future. The Golf Channel recently filmed the "Big Break" at Reynolds Plantation, and has indicated they will be returning over the next three years. Commissioner Bullard gave an in-depth report on the Charter School issue in Greene County. A new

economic development facility is under construction on Highway 44 in Greene County. This is a 6,000 sq. ft. building that will be completed next calendar year. A 1,800 acre mega site has been advertised along Interstate 20.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Audit & Finance:** The Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the financial statements for the three-month period ending September 30, 2014. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$2,062. Financial activity for the three-month period was approximately 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the annual 2015 Budget projections. A motion to approve the report as presented was made by Mr. Frank Turner and seconded by Commissioner Billy Pittard. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. Turner presented a resolution regarding the 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan; and if approved, would add the Franklin Templeton Fund as an additional investment tool to the present 403(b) Plan. A motion to adopt said Resolution was made by Mr. Turner and seconded by Mr. Jesse Johnson. The motion carried unanimously.

**Program of Work:** The Program of Work Committee met prior to the Council meeting to review the following technical assistance requests for the month.

1. **CITY OF JEFFERSON** – Assistance with update to the City's Historic Preservation Design Guidelines. This effort will be cost shared with the NEGRC's DCA Planning Contract with a local fee of \$1,500 and total project cost of \$5,000.
2. **CITY OF GREENSBORO** – Assistance in providing building survey and mapping fieldwork as part of a housing inventory. The fee for this assistance is \$1,000.

Based upon recommendation from the Executive Director, a motion to approve the technical assistance requests for the month to be added to the FY2015 Program of Work, effective October 16, 2014, was made by Commissioner Pittard and seconded by Mr. Ronnie Boggs. The motion carried unanimously.

**Planning & Government Services (PGS):** The Committee met prior to the Council and discussed several items of interest. The Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia will hold its annual membership meeting at the Regional Commission on October 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. The membership has also invited the five other non-member counties to attend as guests.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director Dove was invited to participate in design of a class facilitated by Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) and ACCG staff regarding improving City/County relations. Elbert County Chairman Tommy Lyon and Morgan County Manager Michael Lamar were others from the Northeast Georgia region that participated in the class design. The Lifelong Learning Academy offered by ACCG is a very valuable tool for elected officials and staff, and attendance is very high. CVIOG

staff, under the direction of Laura Meadows, is doing a tremendous job in enhancing training opportunities. Mara Register of the CVIOG staff will make a presentation to the Council at the November meeting regarding a myriad of opportunities.

PGS staff submitted four pre-applications to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) seeking Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) funds. Four of the Regional Commission counties, Barrow, Jackson, Elbert, and Madison, are part of the ARC region which extends into 13 states. The four applications were the City of Bowman, building rehabilitation; Barrow County, water lines to educational campus and related fire protection to the auditorium; City of Nicholson, construction of a sanitary sewer to existing businesses; and Madison County, building rehabilitation to historic courthouse.

Executive Director Dove and Executive Assistant Mott Beck will be attending the Fall District Conference on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Landing at Reynolds Plantation in Greene County. PGS Director Burke Walker will attend the GMA District Meeting in Nicholson the following day. Staff makes every effort to attend as many functions as possible hosted by the two local government associations.

PGS staff continues to work with local governments in updating their Comprehensive Plan. The plans for the cities of Arcade and Jefferson are either in progress or nearing completion. Staff expects to begin work on Elbert County's Plan in upcoming months. This service is part of the DCA contract.

### **NEGRC AREA AGENCY ON AGING FEE-FOR-SERVICE OPTIONS BUSINESS PLAN**

At this time, Gateway/ADRC Supervisor Toshia Lewis updated the Council on the Fee-For-Services Options Business Plan being developed by Area Agency on Aging (AAA) staff. As the senior populations grow, the types of care being provided are focusing less on institutional care to homes-based care. While all of these changes are taking effect, state budget cuts cannot keep up with the current need, much less the growing demands for aging and disability services. Meeting the aging services challenges in the future will require change. To prepare for this change, the AAA must look at new funding options and embrace the new rule of serving people of all ages, providing health-related services, and developing funding sources. NEGRC AAA, along with four other AAAs, agreed to partner with the Georgia Department of Human Services/Division of Aging Services, CVIOG, Fanning Institute, and X Factor Consulting to come up with a plan for long-range sustainability by implementing a fee-for-service plan that includes Options Counseling and Care Transition Services. AAA staff participated in four learning sessions that provided information on how to develop and use a business plan when considering the expansion and/or extension of current services as well as exploring new service and revenue options. Staff developed a business plan that is a tool that will be used as we go forward in working with people who are willing to pay for services. This revenue will allow for services to people that cannot afford to pay.

## **REPORT FROM THE CITY OF PORTERDALE: RECENT ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSES**

Porterdale City Manager Bob Thomson was introduced and gave an overview of that community. Porterdale is located in Newton County 35 miles east of Atlanta on the Yellow River. It is 640 acres (1 mile) in land area and has a population of 1,429. It has a Mayor and five Councilmembers and a staff of nine persons, not including the Police Department. The community has a very active Downtown Development Authority and Historic Preservation Commission. Porterdale is a typical historic mill town with a small town sense of togetherness and great pride in its past. In the 1970's, the mill closed and what followed was deterioration due to the sale of homes where many landlords allowed them to fall into decay. The old mill was purchased in 2006 and turned into lofts overlooking the Yellow River, and the revitalization of Porterdale began. People came to live in the lofts and a business community began to grow. A new Police Department strictly enforced the laws and cracked down on what had given the community a bad reputation. The long neglected river was cleaned up and is now part of the Georgia Rivers Network. A room in the old depot has been renovated and serves as a library, and new playgrounds have been built. The historic Porterdale Memorial Gym is being rehabilitated for use as an open air event center by retaining the original brick exterior. Its connection to the Yellow River and village character makes Porterdale a great community for the friendly and talented citizens who live there. It is a great place to visit and live. Citizens are striving to protect history and restore its former vibrancy by focusing on its strengths as a late 1800's mill town on the River.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

The next meeting will be held on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha J. Beck  
Executive Assistant