

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION**  
**COUNCIL MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**SGRC OFFICE • 1937 CARLTON ADAMS DR • VALDOSTA, GA 31601**  
**DECEMBER 8, 2022**  
**11:00 A.M.**

**CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME:** Chair Joyce Evans called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Chair Evans called upon Scott Carver to give the invocation and he led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

<b><u>Atkinson County</u></b>	<b><u>Bacon County</u></b>	<b><u>Ben Hill County</u></b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Willis, Buddy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foskey, Richard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Taylor, Steve
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Johnson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry Taylor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Holt, Jason
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone, Robbie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coley, Lisa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dunn, Jason
<b><u>Berrien County</u></b>	<b><u>Brantley County</u></b>	<b><u>Brooks County</u></b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gaskins, Ronnie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harris, Skipper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Folsom, Patrick
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clayton, John	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maefield, Barbara	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Morgan, Don
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smart, Lisa	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deshazior, Zurich
<b><u>Charlton County</u></b>	<b><u>Clinch County</u></b>	<b><u>Coffee County</u></b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Everett, James	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metts, Roger	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dovers, AJ
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gowen, Lee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blitch, Brooks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paulk, Tony
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hardee, Willie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Adam
<b><u>Cook County</u></b>	<b><u>Echols County</u></b>	<b><u>Irwin County</u></b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Purvis, Dwight	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walker, Bobby	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver, Scott
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Duke, Buddy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hudgins, Horace
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bennett, Derry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Garner, Cheryl	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paulk, Mona
<b><u>Lanier County</u></b>	<b><u>Lowndes County</u></b>	<b><u>Pierce County</u></b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fender, Dennis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evans, Joyce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bennett, Neal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Darsey, Bill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Miller-Cody, Vivian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brooks, Keith
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payton, Anthony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul, Stephen
<b><u>Tift County</u></b>	<b><u>Turner County</u></b>	<b><u>Ware County</u></b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McBrayer, Tony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whiddon, Dana	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thrift, Elmer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Julie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lumpkin, Sandra	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James, Michael-Angelo
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Giddens, Brandi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> King, Barbara

<u>Governor's Office</u>	<u>Lt. Governor's Office</u>	<u>Speaker's Office</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lovein, Norman "Bo"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone, Keith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seale, Matt
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daughtrey, Guy		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jones, Johnathon		

**Staff Present**

Backe, Elizabeth  
 Courson, Scott  
 Cribb, Lisa  
 Hobbs, Kimberly  
 Schultz, Kelly  
 Strom, Chris  
 Vining, Kim  
 Wilcher, Lance

**Guests Present**

Frawley, Antonia  
 Goree, King  
 Lane, Kelly  
 Liles, Parker  
 Matheson, Scott  
 Mclean, Elizabeth  
 Redding, Jody  
 Valenti, Nick  
 Westberry, Diane  
 White, Charles

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 22, 2022 MEETING MINUTES:** Chair Evans reminded those present that a copy of the September minutes had been emailed to members and included in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Jason Holt made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. Steve Taylor seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2022**

**REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS:** Chair Evans reminded those present that a copy of the August, September and October 2022 Revenue and Expenditure Reports had been emailed to council members and included in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Julie Smith made a motion to accept the August, September and October financial reports. Scott Carver seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**PRESENTATION OF SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION ANNUAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2022:**

Chair Evans introduced Nick Valenti of Valenti, Rackley, and Associates, LLC. Mr. Valenti began with a brief overview of the Fiscal Year Ended 2022 Audit for the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Mr. Valenti stated that the audit was reviewed in depth during the Executive/Audit Committee meeting, which preceded the council meeting. Mr. Valenti noted that the financial statements are materially correct and are a reliable and fair representation of the financial position of the SGRC. Mr. Valenti also stated that a few hard copies of the audit were available at the sign-in table should any council member want to review it. Chair Evans asked for questions from the council; there being none, she called for a motion to accept the SGRC Annual Audit for the Year Ended June 30, 2022. Scott Carver made a motion to accept the annual audit. Ronnie Gaskins seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**GEDA's DEAL OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT – FITZGERALD AND BEN HILL COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:**

Chair Evans introduced Jason Dunn, Executive Director of the Fitzgerald and Ben Hill Development Authority, to speak to the council.



Mr. Dunn shared that the Georgia Economic Development Authority, GEDA, recently announced that Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County Development Authority and Polar Beverage were the 2022 winners of the GEDA Small Community Deal of the Year. “The GEDA Deal of the Year awards recognize outstanding achievement in the location or expansion of new businesses in the state of Georgia that meet community economic development goals and involve significant community program support, such as financial or permitting assistance, workforce development, state financial support, etc.” Mr. Dunn shared a PowerPoint detailing some of Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County’s past agricultural growth to the current Polar Beverage expansion that brought new jobs and construction to the area. Mr. Dunn also expressed his gratitude to the SGRC Community and Economic Development department for their help and participation in helping Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County.

**REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE UPDATED EDA REVOLVING LOAN FUND PLAN – EDA CARES ACT RLF:**

Chair Evans called on SGRC Lending Director Lance Wilcher to present the Resolution to Certify the Updated EDA Revolving Loan Fund Plan. Mr. Wilcher stated that a copy of the resolution and a description of the RLF changes, as required by the Economic Development Authority, EDA, were in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes.) He shared that in May 2020, the EDA reached out to the SGRC as a current EDA recipient to offer a supplemental award known now as the EDA CARES Act RLF in response to the COVID pandemic to help with the economic hardships faced by small businesses in the region. The supplemental award amount was \$750,000, which did not include administration costs. All supplemental award funds were disbursed as loans to small businesses in the region over the past two years, and those loans are now being paid back in monthly payments with interest. On June 30, 2022 the fund had a balance from payments and interest of \$224,000 available for re-lending. Mr. Wilcher then explained in detail the updates required by the EDA to ensure the EDA CARES Act RLF is consistent with and supportive of the area’s current economic adjustment strategy. After the presentation, Chair Evans asked for questions from the council. There being none, she asked for a motion. Steve Taylor made a motion to adopt the Resolution to Certify the Updated EDA Revolving Loan Fund Plan – EDA CARES Act RLF. Julie Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**PROGRAM ACTIVITIES/UPDATES:**

**Grants:** SGRC Deputy Executive Director of Government Services Kimberly Hobbs directed council members to the project status list in their packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). Ms. Hobbs stated that the list includes the status of current projects the Community & Economic Development department has in progress. She shared that CED staff had started to work on start-up activities for the eight CDBGs awarded earlier in the fall. Ms. Hobbs encouraged communities interested in applying for the 2023 CDBGs, to start immediately to meet all deadlines for required submissions. She stated that DCA would hold a CDBG Applicants’ Workshop in Columbus, GA January 17-18, 2023. Ms. Hobbs also advised those present to contact SGRC Community & Economic Development staff regarding projects listed on the status list or any potential projects they may be interested in for their communities.

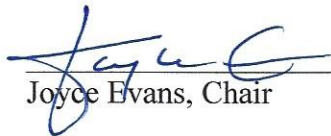
**Planning:** SGRC Planning Director Elizabeth Backe referred those present to a handout listing the various plans that local governments are required to submit, as well as the deadlines for submission (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Backe encouraged council members to review the upcoming deadlines for their communities and contact SGRC Planning staff with any questions.

**Division Reports:** SGRC Executive Director Lisa Cribb referred those present to the division reports in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Cribb asked those present to review the reports to see what the RC is doing in the region each month.

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- 1) **Recognition of Guests:** Chair Evans recognized the following guests: Jody Redding, Director of Field Operations for the Office of Governor Brian Kemp; Charles White from the Office of U.S. Congressman Austin Scott; Kelly Lane, DCA Region 11 Representative; and Elizabeth McLean from the Georgia Department of Economic Department and thanked them for attending the SGRC council meeting.
- 2) **Recognition of Representation:** Chair Evans recognized Ben Hill, Lanier, and Lowndes counties for having 100% at the council meeting.
- 3) **ACCG Update:** James Everett shared that ACCG Lifelong Learning Academy Kick Off Your Core Session I would be held on January 13, 2023 at the Central Georgia Tech – Macon Campus, and the Kick Off Your Core Session II would be held on January 27, 2023 at the UGA – Gwinnett County.
- 4) **GMA Update:** Julie Smith shared that GMA Cities United Summit would be held January 20-23, 2023 at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers
- 5) **GDEcD Update:** Elizabeth McLean shared that the 2023 Georgia Logistics Summit would be held on March 8, 2023 in Savannah, Ga. She stated that registration was currently open for those interested.
- 6) **Meeting Notice:** Chair Evans announced that the next SGRC Council meeting would be held on Thursday, January 26, 2023 at the SGRC office in Waycross.

**ADJOURN:** Chair Evans asked if there were any other questions or announcements. With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.

  
Joyce Evans, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keith Stone, Secretary