

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
SGRC OFFICE • 1937 CARLTON ADAMS DRIVE • VALDOSTA, GA 31601
DECEMBER 7, 2023
10:00 A.M.**

Members in Attendance:

Bennett, Neal
Duke, Buddy
Dunn, Jason
Evans, Joyce
Fender, Dennis
Gowen, Lee
King, Barbara
Stone, Keith

Staff Present:

Cribb, Lisa
Hobbs, Kimberly
Schultz, Kelly
Strom, Chris

Guests:

Valenti, Nick

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME: Chair Lee Gowen called the meeting to order and welcomed Executive Committee members, staff and guests.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 22, 2023 EXECUTIVE

COMMITTEE MEETING: Chair Gowen reminded those present that the minutes of the June 22, 2023 Executive Committee meeting were emailed to members for their review (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Dennis Fender made a motion to accept the minutes, and Neal Bennett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.


REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION OF SGRC ANNUAL AUDIT: Chair Gowen introduced Nick Valenti of Valenti, Rackley and Associates, LLC, to review the SGRC's Annual Audit for the year ended June 30, 2023. Mr. Valenti referred those present to a copy of the completed audit (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). He stated that the financial statements are materially correct and are a reliable and fair representation of the financial position of the SGRC. Mr. Valenti said Valenti, Rackley and Associates provided a clean opinion of the financial statements. Mr. Valenti then gave a thorough report on the audit. He also shared that no difficulties, disagreements with management, findings, issues, or other matters were encountered during the audit. Chair Gowen thanked Mr. Valenti for presenting a thorough report on the audit and asked the committee for questions. There being no questions, Buddy Duke made a motion to recommend approval of the audit to the full council. Barbara King seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR COMPENSATION: Chair Gowen stated that Kimberly Hobbs will start in her new position as Executive Director of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission on January 1, 2024, and emphasized the need for the Executive Committee to review and approve her salary for the new position and responsibilities. Chair Gowen asked Kimberly Hobbs to step out of the meeting so that the committee could openly discuss the issue.

The average Executive Director salary for all Georgia regional commissions excluding the Atlanta Regional Commission is approximately \$154,124 based on FY22 records. Ms. Hobbs has 26 years of experience with the SGRC and has had an outstanding record as the Community and Economic Development Director. The committee engaged in a thorough discussion on the importance of retaining an experienced leader for the Executive Director role and the significance of having a qualified and knowledgeable candidate to guide the SGRC in the coming years.

Following the detailed deliberations, Chair Gowen sought a recommendation from the committee regarding the starting salary for the new Executive Director, effective January 1, 2024. Jason Dunn proposed a starting salary of \$151,468 for Ms. Hobbs, considering her current salary, extensive experience, exemplary record and the average salary for comparable positions in Georgia regional commissions. Buddy Duke made a motion to set the Executive Director's salary for Kimberly Hobbs at \$151,468, starting on January 1, 2024. Neal Bennett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN: With there being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.



Lee Gowen, Chair

Keith Stone, Secretary