

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 24, 2024**

MINUTES

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission Council met on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 11:00am at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in Valdosta, Georgia.

Atkinson County

- Liles, Parker
- Robert Johnson
- Stone, Robbie

Bacon County

- Taylor, Shane
- Larry Taylor
- Ellis, Kevin

Ben Hill County

- Taylor, Steve
- Holt, Jason
- Dunn, Jason

Berrien County

- Gaskins, Ronnie
- Brown, Travis
- Smart, Lisa

Brantley County

- Harris, Skipper
- Lee, Marty
- Vacant

Brooks County

- Folsom, Patrick
- Morgan, Don
- Deshazior, Zurich

Charlton County

- Everett, James
- Gowen, Lee
- Vacant

Clinch County

- Moylan, Henry
- Vacant
- Hardee, Willie

Coffee County

- Kitchens, Jimmy
- Paulk, Tony
- Smith, Adam

Cook County

- Parrish, Lindsay
- Duke, Buddy
- Key, Nyisha

Echols County

- Corbett, Stanley
- Garner, Cheryl

Irwin County

- Carver, Scott
- Harper, Melvin
- MacKenzie, Mona

Lanier County

- Fender, Dennis
- Darsey, Bill
- Barnes, James

Lowndes County

- Evans, Joyce
- Miller-Cody, Vivian
- Payton, Anthony

Pierce County

- Bennett, Neal
- Brooks, Keith
- Paul, Stephen

Tift County

- McBrayer, Tony
- Smith, Julie
- Vacant

Turner County

- Denham, Nick
- Lumpkin, Sandra
- Giddens, Brandi

Ware County

- Thrift, Elmer
- James, Michael-Angelo
- King, Barbara

Governor's Office

- Vacant
- Vacant
- Vacant

Lt. Governor's Office

- Stone, Keith

Speaker's Office

- Seale, Matt

Staff Present

- Bennett, Savannah
- Hobbs, Kimberly
- Schultz, Kelly
- Vining, Kim

- Courson, Scott
- Horton, James
- Strom, Chris

- Fowler, Megan
- Lovett, Roberta
- Strom, Rachel

- Hendricks Tonia
- New, Jennifer
- Taylor, Shawn

Guests Present

Beaty, Dustin	Chancy, Austin	Gaddis, Daniel	Garcia, Dawn
Lane, Kelly	Peacock, Kelly	Ponsell, Gary	Westberry, Diane
White, Charles	Wirth, Tom	Yoder, Juli	

Installation of New Council Members

Chair Gowen invited Lindsey Parrish, Cook County Chairman to come forward and be sworn in as a new member of the SGRC Council. The oath of office was administered by Chair Gowen, officially inducting Chairman Lindsey Parrish into his position. Chairman Parrish then took his seat among the council members and participated in the meeting.

Review and Approval of the January 24, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Chair Gowen reminded those present that a copy of the January minutes had been emailed to members and included in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Chair Gowen asked if there were any questions or corrections to the minutes. With no questions or corrections, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Barbara King made a motion to approve with a second from Anthony Payton. The motion carried unanimously.

Review and Acceptance of the January 2024 Preliminary Review and Expenditure Report

Chair Gowen called on SGRC Assistant Finance Director Jennifer New to review the January 2024 Preliminary Revenue and Expenditure Report. Jennifer referred those present to the Revenue and Expenditure Report (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). She stated that with 42% of the fiscal year remaining we are on track with both revenues and expenditures. At the completion of her report, Jennifer asked if there were any questions. With no questions, Chair Gowen called for a motion to approve the Revenue and Expenditure Report. Anthony Payton made a motion to accept with a second from Barbara King. The motion carried unanimously.

Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) Program Presentation

Chair Gowen called on Kelly Lane, District Representative for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to introduce Austin Chancy, Senior Housing Policy Analyst with DCA. After introductions, Mr. Chancy provided an overview of the GICH program. He explained that the program was operated in partnership with the University of Georgia (UGA), Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and DCA. He stated that the program is partially funded with a USDA Rural Development RCDI grant.

Mr. Chancy stated the program began in 2004 with the objective to help communities create and implement a locally based plan to meet housing needs. He explained that the GICH is a three-year program where participating communities create a housing team, learn about housing resources and strategies, develop a housing plan, and implement the plan. GICH provides communities with technical assistance, training, facilitation, networking, and mentoring.

Mr. Chancy stated that since the beginning, ninety-four communities have participated in the program. At the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Chancy answered questions from the audience and encouraged those interested in the program to visit their website at <https://www.qcs.uga.edu/fhce/gich>.

Adoption of Resolution to Contract for FY2025 Department of Human Services (DHS) Coordinated Transportation Services

Chair Gowen called upon SGRC Transit Director Megan Fowler to present the Resolution to Contract for FY2025 DHS Coordinated Transportation Services. Megan referred those present to a copy of the resolution in their member packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Fowler explained that the proposed resolution was required to be submitted annually to allow the SGRC to contract with the Department of Human Services to provide coordinated transportation services across its eighteen counties. Chair Gowen asked if there were any questions. There being none, he called for a motion. Don Morgan made a motion to adopt with a second from Jason Holt. The motion carried unanimously.

Adoption of Organization of Civility Resolution

Chair Gowen called upon SGRC Assistant Executive Director Chris Strom to present the Organization of Civility Resolution to the council. Chris directed those present to a copy of the resolution in their meeting packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). He explained that the resolution he presented was to pledge that the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Council members would foster respect, kindness, and thoughtfulness between officials, avoiding personal ill will. In addition, members would set a positive example of conduct and promote thoughtful debate and discussion of issues, resulting in better public policy while also encouraging civil behavior between Council Members, staff and the community. Chris further stated that the resolution pledges that the council will ensure all people have the right to be treated with respect, courtesy, and openness. At the conclusion of the presentation, Chris asked if there were any questions. With no questions, Chair Gowen called for a motion to approve the resolution. Barbara King made a motion to adopt the resolution with a second from Anthony Payton. The motion carried unanimously.

Lead Pipe Inventory Assistance

Chair Gowen called upon SGRC GIS and IT Director Rachel Strom to share how the SGRC can assist with the Lead Pipe Inventory Assistance service survey required for each community. Rachel stated that the EPA published the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) on January 15, 2021. The revisions established requirements for all Community Water Systems (CWSs) and Non-Transient Non-Community Water Systems (NTNCWSs) to develop and maintain a complete Service Line Inventory (SLI). She explained that in August 2022 EPA released a guide for developing and maintaining service line inventory. Then in November 2023, the EPA announced the proposed lead and copper rule improvements which include the location of legacy pipes and a plan to replace them.

Rachel explained that the SGRC GIS department could assist communities with the inventory by combining GIS datasets from the tax assessor's office and overlaying them with water system data. This would help identify service lines and the properties with access to those lines. At the conclusion of her presentation, Rachel answered questions from those present and urged all communities interested in the GIS department's help to contact her or the GIS staff.

Program Activities and Updates

1. **Community & Economic Development (CED)**
SGRC Executive Director Kimberly Hobbs directed council members to the project status list in their packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). Kimberly stated that CED staff were currently working on Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications which

are due by April 5, 2024. She stated that if there were any questions regarding new or existing projects to reach out to the CED staff.

2. Planning

SGRC Planning Director James Horton 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). James encouraged council members to review the upcoming deadlines for their communities and contact SGRC Planning staff with any questions.

3. Transportation Planning/Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO)

SGRC Deputy Executive Director Roberta Lovett reviewed with members present the Phase 2 advertising requirements for the TSPLOST/TIA 2. She explained that the advertisements were required to be run in local newspapers once time per week for four weeks. Roberta stated that Transportation Planning staff would be working with communities to ensure that the advertising requirements were met.

Roberta reviewed the upcoming Transportation/VLMPO meeting: Citizens Advisory Committee, March 5, 2024, at 3:00 pm; Technical Advisory Committee, March 6, 2024, at 9:00 am; and the Policy Committee, March 6, 2024, at 10:30 am. All three meetings will be held at the SGRC office in Valdosta. Roberta encouraged anyone with questions to contact SGRC Transportation Director Amy Martin.

4. Division Reports

SGRC Executive Director Kimberly Hobbs referred those present to the division reports in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Kimberly stated that the reports provide an overview of the activities of each department within the SGRC.

Kimberly asked that the council please review Georgia House Bill 1253 (HB 1253). She explained that the bill had language regarding changing the composition of Regional Commission councils as well as training of members, terms of office, filling of vacancies, and appointment of successors. Kimberly encouraged members to review and if necessary, express their concerns to our legislators.

Questions, Comments and Announcements

1. Recognition of Representation

Chair Gowen recognized Charlton and Clinch counties for having 100% at the council meeting.

2. Recognition of Guests

Chair Gowen recognized Charles White, representing Congressman Austin Scott's office, Kelly Peacock representing Wiregrass Georgia Technical College and representatives from DCA: Kelly Lane, Juli Yoder, Daniel Gaddis and Austin Chancy. Chair Gowen thanked them for attending the SGRC Council and for their dedication to the region.

3. ACCG Update

James Everett shared that the ACCG Spring Lifelong Learning Academy would be held February 29 – March 1, 2024, at the UGA Tifton Campus. The 2024 ACCG Legislative Breakfast would be held on March 7, 2024, at the Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta.

4. GMA Update

Chair Gowen shared that the 2024 Cities United Summit would be held January 26 – 29, 2024, in Atlanta.

5. DCA Update

Daniel Gaddis shared that DCA would be hosting a webinar for new applicants for PlanFirst Communities on March 12, 2024, from 10:00 am – 11:00am. He explained that PlanFirst Communities is DCA's program to recognize and reward communities that clearly demonstrate an established pattern of successfully implementing their Local Comprehensive Plan.

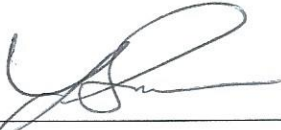
6. Upcoming SGRC Council Meeting

Chair Gowen announced that the next SGRC Council meeting would be held on Thursday, March 28, 2024, at the SGRC office in Waycross.

Adjourn

Chair Gowen asked if there were any other questions or announcements. With no further business to conduct, Chair Gowen asked Jason Holt to bless the meal, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lee Gowen
Chairman, SGRC Council



Keith Stone
Secretary, SGRC Council