

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES**

**SGRC OFFICE • 1725 S. GEORGIA PARKWAY, WEST • WAYCROSS, GA 31503
JANUARY 25, 2024
11:00 A.M.**

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME: Chair Lee Gowen called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests, he then asked Barbara King to give the invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

<u>Atkinson County</u>	<u>Bacon County</u>	<u>Ben Hill County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liles, Parker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Taylor, Shane	<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"/> Ellis, Kevin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dunn, Jason
<u>Berrien County</u>	<u>Brantley County</u>	<u>Brooks County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gaskins, Ronnie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harris, Skipper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Folsom, Patrick
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brown, Travis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lee, Marty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Morgan, Don
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smart, Lisa	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deshazor, Zurich
<u>Charlton County</u>	<u>Clinch County</u>	<u>Coffee County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Everett, James	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moylan, Henry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kitchens, Jimmy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gowen, Lee	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paulk, Tony
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hardee, Willie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Adam
<u>Cook County</u>	<u>Echols County</u>	<u>Irwin County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parrish, Lindsay	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corbett, Stanley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver, Scott
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Duke, Buddy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harper, Melvin
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Key, Nyisha	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Garner, Cheryl	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MacKenzie, Mona
<u>Lanier County</u>	<u>Lowndes County</u>	<u>Pierce County</u>
<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
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Barnes, James	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payton, Anthony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul, Stephen
<u>Tift County</u>	<u>Turner County</u>	<u>Ware County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McBrayer, Tony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Denham, Nick	<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>
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone, Keith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seale, Matt
Vacant		
Vacant		

Staff Present

Bennett, Savannah
Courson, Scott
Hendricks, Tonia
Hobbs, Kimberly
Horton, James
Lovett, Roberta
Strom, Chris
Strom, Rachel
Vining, Kim

Guests Present

Crawford, Mary
Culberson, Mae
Kinnon, Tim
James, Jaclyn
Ponsell, Gary
Walton, Claire
Wirth, Tom

INSTALLATION OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS: Chair Gowen invited the four new members in attendance to come forward and take their oaths as incoming SGRC council members. The four new members installed were: Marty Lee, Mayor of Nahunta; Ronnie Gaskins, Berrien County Chairman; Jimmy Kitchens, Coffee County Chairman; and Nick Denham, Turner County Chairman.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 7, 2023 MEETING MINUTES: Chair Gowen reminded those present that a copy of the December minutes had been emailed to members and included in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Don Morgan made a motion to approve the December meeting minutes. Barbara King seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2023 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS: Chair Gowen called on SGRC Assistant Finance Director Jennifer New to review the November and December 2023 Revenue and Expenditure Reports. Ms. New referred those present to the Revenue and Expenditure Reports pages in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). She explained the revenues and expenditures reports for November and December 2023 and answered questions from the audience.

ACCEPTANCE OF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2023 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS: Chair Gowen called for action on the November and December 2023 Revenue and Expenditure reports. Anthony Payton made a motion to accept the November and December 2023 financial reports. Zurich Deshazior seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

GIRLS ON THE RUN SOUTH GEORGIA PRESENTATION: SGRC Executive Director introduced Mary Crawford, Executive Director of Girls on the Run South Georgia, and Claire Walton, Founder of Girls on the Run South Georgia (GOTR), and thanked them both for bringing information about their program to the council. Ms. Crawford stated that Claire Walton was the person with the idea to bring Girls on the Run to South Georgia. Ms. Walton said they currently serve eight counties with the potential of adding another in the coming season. She stated that was the reason for their presentation to the SGRC Council. She explained the curriculum of the program, the ages of the participants, and the importance of inspiring girls to be joyful, healthy and confident. Ms. Walton shared the expected outcome for girls participating in GOTR and stressed the efforts to reinforce and inspire young girls to define their own lives on their own terms, make new friends, build confidence, and celebrate all that makes them unique. She

continued with an in-depth discussion on how communities can start GOTR teams across all of South Georgia. Ms. Walton answered questions from the audience and asked anyone interested in bringing GOTR to their communities to contact her at mary.crawford@girlsontherun.org or (229) 234-7425.

APPROVAL OF AGING AREA SUBMISSION SFY2025 - 2028: Chair Gowen called SGRC Aging Director Scott Courson to present the Aging Area Plan Submission SFY2025 - 2028 to the council. Mr. Courson explained that the Aging Division had received their FY 2025 planning allocation and it was approximately \$5.1 million. He stated that he was seeking the council's approval to submit the annual Aging Area Plan due March 1, 2024 (a copy of the letter is attached and made a part of these minutes). The funding is from the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services, and would begin on July 1, 2024. The Aging Area Plan is a four-year plan for delivering aging services and adheres to all requirements of the Older Americans Act, the State of Georgia, and other federal and state programs as appropriate. Mr. Courson asked if there were any questions. There being none, Chair Gowen called for a motion. Joyce Evans made a motion to approve the Aging Area Plan Submission SFY2025 - 2028. Zurich Deshazior seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORT OF STAFF DISCLOSURES AS REQUIRED BY STATE LAW: Chair Gowen called upon SGRC Executive Director Kimberly Hobbs to present the Report of Staff Disclosures as Required by State Law. Ms. Hobbs referred those present to a copy of O.C.G.A 50-8-63 included in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). She explained that this law requires the SGRC to annually report to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the council whether any Regional Commission employees transacted business with any local government during the previous calendar year. Ms. Hobbs stated that for calendar year 2023, no Southern Georgia Regional Commission employees reported transacting business with any local governments. Barbara King made a motion to accept the Report of Staff Disclosures. Zurich Deshazior seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF COUNCIL ATTENDANCE: SGRC Executive Director Kimberly Hobbs referred those present to a copy of the council member meeting attendance report included in their member packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Hobbs reminded the council that the SGRC By-Laws state that a notice shall be mailed to any council member who misses three consecutive meetings during the fiscal year. For the private sector appointments, letters will be sent to the appointing officials as well as to the member. Ms. Hobbs then stated that since March 2020, when COVID started, the meeting schedules were irregular due to the restrictions on social distancing, and the council at the time suspended the requirement for letters to be mailed about missing meetings. The missing meeting letters have not been mailed to individuals who have missed three or more consecutively since March 2020. She stated that to comply, she was asking the council to reinstate and start enforcing letters being mailed to the appointing authority as stated in the SGRC Council By-laws. She stated that an attendance report is included in their meeting packet at each meeting and encouraged members to attend council meetings regularly. Chair Gowen asked for a motion. Don Morgan made a motion to reinstate the Council Attendance missed meeting letters to be mailed when members miss three or more consecutive meetings. Travis Brown seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

SGRC COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE (UPDATE): SGRC Executive Director Kimberly Hobbs shared an updated council meeting schedule with those present (copy attached and

made a part of these minutes). She stated that since the schedule was given to members in December, some changes have been made. Ms. Hobbs shared that the April meeting had been moved to Tuesday, April 23rd to accommodate those members who will be attending the ACCG Annual Conference which would be April 24th – 26th. She stated that as in the past, there would not be a meeting in July, but she requested that the council consider a meeting being held in November on the 21st to shorten the gap between September and December. Instead of having a December meeting, she requested the council consider the December gathering to be an annual meeting to recognize council accomplishments throughout the year. She suggested that the December meeting be held on the 12th at 6:00 PM at the Train Depot in Homerville. After a short discussion about the schedule, Chair Gowen asked if there were any questions, there being none, he called for a motion. Stephen Paul made a motion to accept the SGRC Council Meeting Schedule Update for 2024. Anthony Payton seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES/UPDATES:

Community & Economic Development (CED): SGRC CED Director Tonia Hendricks directed council members to the project status list in their packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). Ms. Hendricks stated that the list includes the status of current projects the Community & Economic Development department has in progress. She stated that CED staff was currently working on Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications that are due on April 5, 2024. She 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 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). Mr. Horton encouraged council members to review the upcoming deadlines for their communities and contact SGRC Planning staff with any questions.

Transportation/VLMPO: SGRC Deputy Executive Director Roberta Lovett reminded those present that advertising for the TSPLOST would need to run in the local newspapers. The TSPLOST/TIA election ad must run on time in every county newspaper, and it has to be 90 days prior to the election. She asked those with questions to contact SGRC Transportation Director Amy Martin at amartin@sgrc.us or at (229) 333-5277.

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). Ms. Hobbs 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 Representation:** Chair Gowen recognized Bacon, Berrien, Charlton, Clinch, Lowndes and Pierce counties for having 100% at the council meeting.
- 2) **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.
- 3) **GMA Update:** Vivian Miller-Cody shared that the 2024 Cities United Summit would be held January 26 – 29, 2024 in Atlanta.

- 4) **SGRC 101:** SGRC Executive Director Kimberly Hobbs shared that SGRC would host an SGRC 101 orientation for the region on Thursday, February 22, 2024 (after the February Council meeting) at the SGRC office in Valdosta from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM. She encouraged any council member or elected official interested in learning about the programs and services the SGRC offers to its local governments to attend the session.
- 5) **Meeting Notice:** Chair Gowen announced that the next SGRC Council meeting would be held on Thursday, February 22, 2024 at the SGRC office in Valdosta.

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



Lee Gowen, Chair

Keith Stone, Secretary