

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 28, 2024**

**MINUTES**

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission Council met on Thursday, March 28, 2024, at 11:00 am at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in Waycross, Georgia.

**Atkinson County**

- Liles, Parker
- Robert Johnson
- Stone, Robbie

**Brantley County**

- Harris, Skipper
- Lee, Marty
- Vacant

**Coffee County**

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

**Lanier County**

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

**Turner County**

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

**Speaker's Office**

- Seale, Matt

**Staff Present**

- Bennett, Savannah
- Hobbs, Kimberly
- New, Jennifer

**Bacon County**

- Taylor, Shane
- Larry Taylor
- Ellis, Kevin

**Brooks County**

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

**Cook County**

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

**Lowndes County**

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

**Ware County**

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

**Ben Hill County**

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

**Charlton County**

- Everett, James
- Gowen, Lee
- Vacant

**Echols County**

- Corbett, Stanley
- Garner, Cheryl

**Pierce County**

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

**Governor's Office**

- Vacant
- Vacant
- Vacant

**Berrien County**

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

**Clinch County**

- Moylan, Henry
- Kennedy, Thomas
- Hardee, Willie

**Irwin County**

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

**Tift County**

- McBrayer, Tony
- Smith, Julie
- Vacant

**Lt. Governor's Office**

- Stone, Keith

- Fowler, Megan
- Lovett, Roberta
- Taylor, Shawn

- Hendricks, Tonia
- Martin, Amy
- Vining, Kim

**Guests Present**

Culberson, Mae  
Wirth, Tom

James, Jaclyn

Kinnon, Tim

Ponsell, Gary

**Installation of New Council Members**

Chair Gowen invited Thomas Kennedy, Mayor of Homerville, and Melvin Harper, Mayor of Ocilla to come forward and be sworn in as new members of the SGRC Council. Chair Gowen, officially inducting Mayors Kennedy and Harper into their positions, administered the oath of office. Mayors Kennedy and Harper then took their seats among the council members and participated in the meeting.

**Review and Approval of the February 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Gowen reminded those present that a copy of the February 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. Michael-Angelo James made a motion to approve with a second from Barbara King. The motion carried unanimously.

**Review and Acceptance of the February 2024 Preliminary Review and Expenditure Report**

Chair Gowen called on SGRC Assistant Finance Director Jennifer New to review the February 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 four months of the fiscal year remaining, we are on track with both revenues and expenditures. After 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. Matt Seale made a motion to accept with a second from Michael-Angelo James. The motion carried unanimously.

**Presentation on the SGRC Area Agency on Aging Plan Update**

Chair Gowen called on SGRC Assistant Aging Director Shawn Taylor to present the Aging Plan Update. Shawn referred those present to the PowerPoint and handouts and stated that the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is the single point of entry for aging and disability services, resources and programs to help people live at home and live there for as long as possible. AAAs receive funding from various federal, state and local monies with a large portion of the federal funding coming from the Older Americans Act which was implemented in 1965. The AAA Plan is developed by analyzing and describing the roles and responsibilities of the AAA, and how those duties are executed throughout the aging network. The purpose of the Aging Area Plan is to: review and describe current aging services; needs assessment of older adults and individuals with disabilities; define and measure goals to help guide the agency to meet the needs of those in the region; alignment of goals with State Unit on Aging – Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services. The goals of the Aging Area Plan will cover four years, FY2025 – FY 2028, designed by the State Division of Aging Services to meet Administration for Community Living (ACL) Focus Areas and will be measured annually

through updates to the area plan and meet SMART goal guidelines. The SMART acronym stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-Based.

Shawn stated that some of the goals for the SGRC's Aging Area Plan for FY 2025-2028 include:

- increasing the number of clients who receive options counseling by 5% each year,
- developing a more dementia-capable aging network,
- increasing food security through the provision of meal services,
- decreasing the number of participants who are re-institutionalized in the nursing home transitions program each year,
- reducing social isolation of clients,
- increasing the length of time older adults remain in their homes while receiving services
- and increasing the number of ADRC first-time contacts by 5% each year.

Shawn continued her presentation on the Aging Area Plan including detailed charts and demographics on the aging community in the region. She then answered questions from the audience and thanked the council for the opportunity to speak and give an update on the AAA.

### **Program Activities and Updates**

#### **1. Community & Economic Development (CED)**

SGRC Community and Economic Development Director Tonia Hendricks directed council members to the project status list in their packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). Tonia stated that CED staff were currently working on Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications, which are due by April 5, 2024. She shared that the 2024 CDBG Summit would be held in Athens, GA October 7-10<sup>th</sup> and mentioned that a flyer was included in the council packets with the registration link. 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 Transportation Director Amy Martin reminded those present that the TSPLOST referendum would be on the May 21, 2024 ballot and that early voting will begin on April 29, 2024.

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 also congratulated Lanier County for their recent Georgia Outdoors Program award from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Lanier County was one of twelve projects awarded throughout the state.

**Questions, Comments and Announcements**

1. Recognition of Representation

Chair Gowen recognized Berrien, Charlton, Clinch, Lowndes and Ware counties for having 100% representation at the council meeting.

2. ACCG Update

James Everett shared that the 2024 ACCG Annual Conference would be held April 25 – 28, 2024, in Savannah, GA.

3. GMA Update

Vivian Miller-Cody shared that the GMA's Spring District 11 meeting would be held on April 16, 2024, in Fitzgerald. She also stated that registration had opened for the GMA Annual Convention, which would be held June 21 – 25, 2024 in Savannah, GA.

4. Upcoming SGRC Council Meeting

Chair Gowen announced that the next SGRC Council meeting would be held on Tuesday, April 23, 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 Michael-Angelo James to bless the meal, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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Lee Gowen  
Chairman, SGRC Council

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Keith Stone  
Secretary, SGRC Council