

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 23, 2024**

MINUTES

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission Council met on Thursday, May 23, 2024 at 11:00am 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
- Horton, James
- New, Jennifer
- Strom, Rachel

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
- Schultz, Kelly

- Hobbs, Kimberly
- Martin, Amy
- Strom, Chris

Guests Present

Culberson, Mae
Ponsell, Gary

Hancock, Hayden

Kinnon, Tim

Lane, Kelly

Review and Approval of the April 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Chair Gowen reminded those present that a copy of the April 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 called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Don Morgan made a motion to approve, seconded by Michael-Angelo James. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Chair Gowen called on SGRC Assistant Finance Director Jennifer New to review the April 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). At the conclusion of her report, Jennifer asked if there were any questions. With none raised, Chair Gowen called for a motion to approve the Revenue and Expenditure Report. Michael-Angelo James made a motion to accept, seconded by Vivian Miller-Cody. The motion carried unanimously.

Dementia Care Specialist Program and Dementia Overview

Chair Gowen called upon SGRC Dementia Care Specialist Christy Joyner to present on the Dementia Care Specialist Program. Christy referred those present to the handouts regarding the program (copies attached and made a part of these minutes). She outlined the program's mission to support individuals living with dementia and their caregivers, emphasizing community partnerships through outreach, education and awareness building. The program aims to create Dementia Friendly communities by educating local entities on effective communication and interaction with individuals with dementia. Christy fielded questions from council members regarding resource availability across different counties. She concluded by encouraging attendees to share the program materials in their packets with their communities, and to reach out to the SGRC AAA for further education opportunities.

Review of Preliminary Southern Georgia RC FY2025 Budget

Chair Gowen called on SGRC Assistant Finance Director Jennifer New to discuss the Preliminary FY2025 Budget. Jennifer directed council members to the budget summary pages in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). She explained that the document provides an overview of projected revenues and expenditures based on consultations with program directors. Jennifer highlighted that these projections include salary estimates across program areas and anticipated direct costs for the upcoming fiscal year, including pass-through funds. She informed the council that detailed line-item budgets would be developed in collaboration with program directors over the next month for review at the June meeting. Jennifer encouraged council members to review the preliminary budget thoroughly.

Review of Draft FY2025 Work Program

Chair Gowen called upon SGRC Deputy Executive Director Roberta Lovett to present the Draft FY2025 Work Program. Roberta reminded members that the draft had been circulated via email and included in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). The Work Program outlines departmental goals for the upcoming year, with a resolution for its approval slated for the June 2024 meeting. Roberta encouraged members with questions or proposed edits to contact RC program directors.

Resolution to Adopt SGRC Transit System Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy

Chair Gowen called upon Megan Fowler to introduce the Resolution for Adoption of the SGRC Transit System Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy. Megan explained that updated were necessary to align with new federal guidelines allowing oral testing in addition to urine testing. She clarified that the policy had been accordingly and required council approval to take effect. Megan fielded inquiries and, with no further questions, Chair Gowen called for a motion. Michael-Angelo James made a motion to Adopt the Resolution of the SGRC Transit System Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy. James Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Report of the Nomination Committee for Executive Committee Vacancy

Chair Gowen called on Joyce Evans to present the results from the Nomination Committee regarding the election to fill the Executive Committee Vacancy. Joyce informed the council that the Nomination Committee met on May 23, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. before the council meeting. She recommended Larry Taylor to fill the current Executive Committee Vacancy, and also presented the Nomination Committee's recommendation for the re-election of the current Executive Committee members to serve another two-year term. The current roster of Executive Committee members were listed as follow:

Lee Gowen, Chair	Neal Bennett, Vice Chair	Keith Stone, Secretary
Buddy Duke	Jason Dunn	Joyce Evans
Dennis Fender	Barbara King	Larry Taylor (recommended)

Chair Gowen asked if there were any questions from the council. With none raised, he called for a motion. Michael-Angelo James made a motion to approve the Nomination Committee's recommendations to elect Larry Taylor and re-elect the current roster of Executive Committee members. Neal Bennett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Program Activities and Updates

1. Community & Economic Development (CED)

SGRC Community and Economic Development Grants Specialist Lindsay Ray directed council members to the project status list in their packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). Lindsay shared that the CED department were administrating 60 active projects. She reminded those present that the 2024

CDBG Summit would take place in Athens, GA from October 7-10, 2024. Lindsay encouraged members to contact CED staff with any questions regarding new or ongoing projects.

2. Planning

SGRC Planning Director James Horton referred those present to a handout listing various plans that local governments are required to submit, and their respective submission deadlines (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). James shared that the Planning staff had submitted two PlanFirst applications; for Cook County and the City of Waycross. He urged council members to review upcoming deadlines for their communities and to reach out to SGRC Planning staff for assistance.

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

SGRC Transportation Director Amy Martin reported that the TSPLOST referendum had passed in the region. Amy provided a handout detailing the 2018 versus 2024 vote comparisons by county for analysis. She acknowledged the collaborative efforts that contributed to the success and thanked all involved, for their dedication. Amy emphasized the role of regional roundtables in guiding future project decisions.

4. Division Reports

SGRC Executive Director Kimberly Hobbs referred those present to the division reports included 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.

Questions, Comments and Announcements

1. Recognition of Guests

Chair Gowen recognized Kelly Lane, DCA Region 11 Representative, and expressed appreciation for her attendance at the SGRC council meeting.

2. Recognition of Representation

Chair Gowen acknowledged Charlton, Lowndes, Pierce and Ware counties for having 100% representation at the council meeting.

3. ACCG Update

James Everett announced that the ACCG Leadership Institute would be held on June 6 - 7, 2024, at the Union County Community Center.

4. GMA Update

Vivian Miller-Cody reminded those present to register for and attend the GMA Annual Convention, scheduled for June 21 – 25, 2024 in Savannah, GA. She noted that approximately 2,500 people from 151 GA cities had already registered for classes.

5. DCA Update

Kelly Lane reminded those present about the upcoming compliance workshop hosted by the Department of Community Affairs on June 4, 2024 at 10 AM at the SGRC office in Valdosta, GA.

6. Upcoming SGRC Council Meeting

Chair Gowen announced that the next SGRC Council meeting would be held on Thursday, June 27, 2024, at the SGRC office in Valdosta.

Adjourn

Chair Gowen asked if there were any further questions or announcements. With no additional business to address, Chair Gowen invited Willie Hardee to offer a meal blessing, and subsequently adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lee Gowen
Chairman, SGRC Council

Keith Stone
Secretary, SGRC Council