

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
SGRC OFFICE • 1725 S. GEORGIA PARKWAY, WEST • WAYCROSS, GA
AUGUST 24, 2023
11:00 a.m.**

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

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Gowen asked James Everett to give the invocation, and then he led those present in 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"/> Taylor, Larry	<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"/> Griner, Robert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harris, Skipper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Folsom, Patrick
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brown, Travis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maefield, Barbara	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Morgan, Don
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smart, Lisa	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deshazior, 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"/> Steen, Ted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gowen, Lee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hardee, Willie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paulk, Tony
Vacant	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Adam
<u>Cook County</u>	<u>Echols County</u>	<u>Irwin County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robinson-McKenna, Debra	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corbett, Stanley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver, Scott
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Duke, Buddy		Vacant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bennett, Derry	<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, Steven
<u>Tift County</u>	<u>Turner County</u>	<u>Ware County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McBrayer, Tony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whiddon, Dana	<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

Cribb, Lisa
 Fowler, Megan
 Hobbs, Kimberly
 Horton, James
 Lovett, Roberta
 Taylor, Shawn
 Strom, Chris
 Vining, Kim

Guests Present

Culberson, Mae
 Ponsell, Gary
 Rayford, Ulysses

INSTALLATION OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBER: Chair Gowen invited the new SGRC council member, Kevin Ellis, to come forward and take his oath as an incoming new member. Kevin Ellis was installed as a new member and the Bacon County Private Sector appointment.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 22, 2023 COUNCIL MEETING:

Chair Gowen reminded those present that the June 22, 2023 council meeting minutes were emailed to members for their review (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Barbara Maefield made a motion to accept the minutes, and Robert Griner seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF PRELIMINARY JUNE 2023 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORT:

Chair Gowen reminded those present that a copy of the Preliminary June 2023 Revenue and Expenditure Report had been emailed to members (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Barbara Maefield made a motion to accept the Preliminary June 2023 Revenue and Expenditure Report. Vivian Miller-Cody seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

AGING PROGRAM FARMERS' MARKETS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Chair Gowen introduced SGRC Assistant Director of Aging Shawn Taylor to the council to present on the Aging Program, Farmers' Markets, and Community Outreach. During the presentation, Ms. Taylor shared valuable information about the Georgia Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), which is a partnership between the GA Department of Public Health (GDPH) and the SGRC's Area Agency on Aging (SGRC-AAA). This program aims to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables to eligible low-income seniors aged 60 and above across the Region through vouchers that can be utilized at local farmers' market events. These vouchers are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis until all are distributed.

Food insecurity is a pressing concern for many seniors, impacting their health, well-being, and quality of life. The SFMNP has played a pivotal role in addressing this issue by facilitating access to nutritious produce for seniors and promoting healthier dietary habits. Ms. Taylor proudly

shared that since 2020, SGRC-AAA has ranked first in the state in terms of serving seniors, with plans to serve an impressive 5,500 individuals through this program this year, representing an increase of 2,100 compared to the previous year.

Ms. Taylor continued with an overview of the community outreach efforts in which SGRC-AAA actively participates. She reported that last year witnessed a total of 140 outreach events, 90 community collaborative meetings, and 50 community health fairs and festivals. So far this year, 91 outreach events, 51 community collaborative meetings, and 40 health fairs and festivals have occurred. She highlighted that SGRC-AAA frequently collaborates with organizations like Unison Behavioral Health and Legacy Behavioral Health on outreach events. Recently, Ms. Taylor mentioned that SGRC-AAA engaged in strategic planning with the Family Justice Center, a local, state-funded collaborative initiative designed to pool resources for families and domestic violence survivors. SGRC-AAA is actively expanding its network by fostering relationships with contractors and community partners who contribute to serving seniors. The agency works closely with its contractors, such as Action Pact, Diversified Resources, and senior centers, to participate in events within their respective communities. After answering questions from the audience, Ms. Taylor concluded her presentation by emphasizing that outreach remains a primary goal for SGRC-AAA to keep businesses and their employees informed about the services offered through the agency.

TIA 2 UPDATE: Chair Gowen called SGRC Deputy Executive Director of Governmental Services Kimberly Hobbs to share a TIA 2 update with the council. Ms. Hobbs stated that work had been underway on compiling the project list for the proposed referendum, which is anticipated to be on the May 2024 ballot. She stated that a portal had been set up that allowed local governments to enter their projects. She stated that most of the local governments in the Region had entered projects before the portal closed in July. That list was passed on to the GDOT, Transportation Roundtable, and Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has met twice, once on August 9th and again on August 22nd, where cities and counties made presentations on up to ten top priority projects they entered into the portal. As of the council meeting, 12 counties and 24 cities had presented. Ms. Hobbs shared that there had been 611 projects presented to the Executive Committee for a total of \$772M. Another meeting is scheduled for August 31st, where six counties and 11 municipalities will make their presentations. The Executive Committee will then be tasked with constraining the project list to meet the GDOT projected revenue of \$467M. Once the Executive Committee and GDOT have trimmed the project list within the projected revenue, the regional roundtables will begin discussing how best that list will serve the Region and every local government within the Region. Ms. Hobbs then answered questions from the audience.

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS FOR FY25 FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION 5303 AND 5304 GRANT APPLICATIONS: Chair Gowen asked SGRC Deputy Executive Director of Governmental Services Kimberly Hobbs to present the Resolutions for FY25 Federal Transit Administration 5303 and 5304 Grant Applications. Ms. Hobbs referred those present to copies of the 5303 and 5304 grant application resolutions in their council packets (copies attached and made a part of these minutes). She explained that Section 5303 funds are Federally designated for metropolitan planning funding, and Section 5304 funds are for rural planning funding. The regional commission has received these funds in the past to do

transit planning for the Valdosta urbanized area and the rural planning area in the other 17 regional counties. She then asked the council if they had questions about the 5303 or 5304 transportation resolution. There being none, she noted that each resolution would need separate council approvals.

Chair Gowen then called for action on the FTA Section 5303 Grant Application resolution. Matt Seale made a motion to adopt the FY25 Federal Transit Administration Section 5303 Grant Application Resolution. Buddy Duke seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair Gowen then called for action on the FTA Section 5304 Grant Application resolution. Matt Seale made a motion to adopt the FY25 Federal Transit Administration Section 5304 Grant Application Resolution. Vivian Miller-Cody seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION FOR REGIONAL TRANSIT FY25 GRANT APPLICATION (5311): Chair Gowen called on SGRC Regional Transit Program Manager Megan Fowler to present the Resolution for Regional Transit FY25 Grant Administration (5311). Ms. Fowler referred those present to a copy of the 5311 resolution in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Fowler explained that the Federal Transit Administration 5311 Rural Mass Transit resolution is to submit the grant application to fund rural public transit operations. Chair Gowen called for action on the FTA Section 5311 Grant Application resolution. Matt Seale made a motion to adopt the FY2025 Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 Grant Application Resolution. Vivian Miller-Cody seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE REVISED SGRC DBE PLAN: Chair Gowen asked SGRC Regional Transit Program Manager Megan Fowler to continue presenting the next resolution to approve the Revised SGRC DBE Plan. Ms. Fowler referred those present to the resolution handout in their meeting packet (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). She explained that the revision to the plan was to update the DBE Liaison Officer to SGRC Deputy Executive Director of Human Services Roberta Lovett. The change can be seen on page five of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program located in the meeting packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Fowler then asked if there were any questions. There being none, Matt Seale made a motion to approve the Revised SGRC DBE Plan. Don Morgan seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT REGIONAL PLAN: Chair Gowen called SGRC Planning Director James Horton to introduce the resolution to Adopt the Regional Plan. Mr. Horton referred those present to a copy of a resolution in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes) to adopt the Regional Plan. Mr. Horton shared a PowerPoint that highlighted some of the key objectives of the Regional Plan. The Regional Plan serves as a visionary blueprint or roadmap for the Region's future, created with input from community leaders and stakeholders. The plan includes what the Region envisions for the future, what it needs and how to make it happen. Mr. Horton also stated that the Department of Community Affairs approved the 2023 full update for the Regional Plan on August 9, 2023. He then answered questions from the audience and thanked them for their time. Chair Gowen asked for action on the Regional Plan resolution. Vivian Miller-Cody made a motion to adopt the Regional Plan. Barbara King seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION:

SGRC Assistant Executive Director Chris Strom shared the results of the Annual Performance Evaluation with the council. He reminded council members that the evaluation was emailed and that all council members were asked to participate. Mr. Strom directed the council to a copy of the results from the performance evaluation located in their packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). The results were separated to show the council members' responses and the city/county managers' responses. Mr. Strom stated that 34 council members and 12 city/county managers had completed the survey. A positive response was given for the Regional Commission and the Executive Director. Mr. Strom asked if there were any questions. There being none, Neal Bennett made a motion to accept the Annual Performance Evaluation Results, and Barbara Maefield seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES/UPDATES:

Grants: SGRC Deputy Director of Governmental Services Kimberly Hobbs referred those present to a copy of the project status list included in their member packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Hobbs stated that the project status list shows funded projects and projects that have been applied for in our Region, grouped by county. She shared that CDBG grant announcements had not been made yet but are anticipated to be released in the next week or two. Ms. Hobbs stated that DCA has planned a fall conference and recipients workshop for the fourth week in October to be held in Augusta. She advised those present to contact SGRC Community and Economic Development staff regarding projects listed in their packet or any potential projects they may be interested in for their communities.

Planning: SGRC Planning Director James Horton referred those present to the handout listing the various plans that local governments are required to submit and the deadlines for submission (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). He encouraged council members to review the schedule for upcoming deadlines for their communities and contact SGRC Planning staff with any questions.

Division Reports: SGRC Executive Director Lisa Cribb referred those present to the division reports in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Cribb asked those present to review the reports to see what the RC is doing in the Region each month.

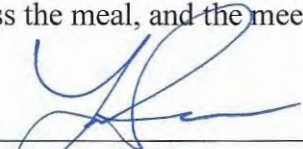
QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- 1.) **Recognition of Representation:** Chair Gowen recognized Bacon, Charlton, Clinch and Lowndes counties for having 100% representation at the council meeting.
- 2.) **ACCG Update:** James Everett stated that the 2023 Legislative Leadership Conference would be held October 11-13, 2023 at the Jekyll Island Convention Center.
- 3.) **GMA Update:** Barbara Maefield shared with the council that the GMA Fall District 11 Meeting would be held on October 17, 2023 at the Grand Theatre in Fitzgerald, GA.


- 4.) **Area Officials Appreciation Evening:** SGRC Executive Director reminded those present that the Annual Area Officials Appreciation Evening would occur on Wednesday, October 18, 2023. The event will begin at The Farm in Adel, GA, at 5:00 pm.

- 5.) **GARC Annual Conference:** SGRC Executive Director Lisa Cribb shared that the 2023 GARC Annual Conference would be held November 8-10, 2023 at the King and Prince Resort on St. Simons Island (flyer included in council packets). She stated that, as usual, the SGRC would cover the registration fee for any council member and the registration fee plus lodging for any executive committee member. Ms. Cribb asked anyone interested in attending the GARC Annual Conference to contact Kim Vining.

ADJOURN: As there was no further business to conduct, Chair Gowen asked Willie Hardee to bless the meal, and the meeting adjourned.



Lee Gowen, Chair



Keith Stone, Secretary