

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 27, 2024**

**MINUTES**

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission Council met on Thursday, June 27, 2024 at 11:00am at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in Valdosta, 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

**Guests Present**

- Flythe, John
- Reid, Toni

**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

Moore, Darrell

Ponsell, Gary

Lane, Kelly  
Westberry, Diane

**Staff Present**

Courson, Scott	Danforth, Lu	Daniels, Kelsey	Fowler, Megan
Hendricks, Tonia	Hobbs, Kimberly	Horton, James	Leasure, Colter
Lovett, Roberta	Martin, Amy	McConico, Marcus	Nazworth, Greg
New, Jennifer	Ryan, Jacob	Schultz, Kelly	Singletery, Ben
Strom, Chris	Strom, Rachel	Vining, Kim	

**Review and Approval of the May 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

Chair Gowen reminded those present that a copy of the May 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. Larry Taylor made a motion to approve with a second from Zurich DeShazor. The motion carried unanimously.

**Review and Acceptance of the May 2024 Preliminary Revenue and Expenditure Report**

Chair Gowen called on SGRC Assistant Finance Director Jennifer New to review the May 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 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. Travis Brown made a motion to accept the revenue report with a second from Kevin Ellis. The motion carried unanimously.

**It's Hurricane Season. GIS Can Help!**

SGRC GIS Director Rachel Strom introduced SGRC GIS Analyst Ben Singletary who gave an overview of the RC's GIS services including severe weather support options for the 2024 hurricane season. Ben discussed how the RC's GIS team utilize flood maps, wind maps and drone flights to help during a storm event.

Key GIS services covered include:

1. Pre-Event Planning:
  - Flood and Wind Maps: Customized maps for vulnerable areas, storms shelters and sandbag distribution points.
  - Road and Custom Maps: Maps for pre-event planning, including online and printed versions.
2. During and Post-Event Services:
  - Real-Time Mapping: Communities can input real-time data during events, such as damaged homes or downed power lines, which are immediately updated on shared maps.

- Drone Flights: Post-Event drone flights provide aerial images of damage, which can be overlaid on maps and used in both printed and online formats.
3. Applications and Examples:
- Regional Emergency Center Map: A free tool for communities to map points of interest, like damaged infrastructure, in real-time.
  - Hurricane Idalia Case Study: A dashboard created for Hurricane Idalia allowed for real-time mapping of incidents like road closures and utilized by FEMA for post-event processes.
4. Future GIS Initiatives:
- 911 Collaboration: Ongoing collaboration with 911 services to enhance real-time mapping and disaster relief efforts.
  - Advanced Drone Capabilities: Plans include using thermal imagery and video for search and rescue operations, identifying power line hazards, gas leaks, and other critical issues.

Ben answered questions from those present, and concluded his presentation by sharing future steps and opportunities for further integration of GIS services with emergency response efforts.

#### **Review and Adoption of Southern Georgia RC FY 2025 Work Program Resolution**

SGRC Deputy Executive Director Roberta Lovett referred council members to their packet materials detailing the proposed FY2025 Work Program and the resolution for adoption (copies attached and made part of these minutes). She reminded council members that a copy of the FY2025 Work Program was shared at the May 2024 council meeting. Roberta explained that no changes had been proposed or made since the introduction in May. She stated that the Work Program represents a list of the SGRC's priorities and items that the RC will focus on for the coming fiscal year. Roberta shared that the Executive Committee reviewed the draft work program at their meeting earlier that day in detail; she then asked council members if there were any questions. With no questions, Chair Gowen called for a motion to adopt the SGRC FY2025 Work Program. Travis Brown motioned to adopt the RC FY2025 Work Program with a second from Zurich DeShazor. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Review and Approval of Southern Georgia RC FY 2025 Budget**

SGRC Assistant Finance Director Jennifer New presented the proposed FY2025 budget. Jennifer shared that the proposed budget had been carefully analyzed and refined from a preliminary draft presented at the May 2025 council meeting. The proposed budget included a comparison with the approved FY2024 budget, showing an estimated excess revenue of \$62,523.

Jennifer covered the following highlights from the proposed FY 2025 Budget:

- **Revenue Changes:** The most significant change is a decrease of \$966,000 in funds from COVID-19-related sources, particularly in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and aging services. This reduction reflects the end of COVID-19 funding.
- **Transit Funding:** There is an increase of \$207,540 in pass-through transit funding, thanks to a shift to a non-match source, the Transit Trust Fund Program (TTFP) fund, which is seen as a favorable option as it does not require additional local funding.
- **Federal and State Funds:** A decrease of \$256,138 in federal and state funds, particularly in ARPA-related funding, which impacted provider costs, leading to a reduction in temporary staffing services funded by ARPA.
- **Expenditures:** Salaries are set to increase due to the addition of new staff, including a position funded by the TTFP. Health insurance costs are also rising significantly.

Chair Gowen asked if there were any questions on the FY2025 budget as presented, with no questions, he called for a motion. Bill Darsey motioned to approve the FY2025 Budget with a second from Travis Brown. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Initiation of Annual Performance Evaluation of the SGRC and the Executive Director**

SGRC Executive Director Kimberly Hobbs explained to council members that a copy of a performance evaluation was included in their meeting packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). As required by law, regional commissions must initiate annual performance evaluations of the commission and its Executive Director to be completed by their councils. Kimberly explained that the performance evaluation would be emailed to all council members for ease of responding. Members who prefer a hardcopy document should notify staff. She encouraged members to complete and return the evaluation and stated that the results of the performance evaluation would be presented at the August 2024 council meeting.

### **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). She reminded those present that the 2024 CDBG Summit would be held in Athens, GA October 7-10, 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 Transportation Director Amy Martin gave an update on the activities she and her staff have been conducting following the passage of TIA2. Amy shared that two grant opportunities had recently opened through the federal government and GDOT under the Transportation Alternatives Program. She encouraged any council member interested in the grant opportunities to contact her.

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.

**Questions, Comments and Announcements**

1. Recognition of Guests

Chair Gowen recognized Kelly Lane, DCA Region 11 Representative, and Darrell Moore, Executive Director of the Valdosta State University's Center for South Georgia Regional Impact, and thanked them for attending the SGRC council meeting.

2. Recognition of Representation

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

3. ACCG Update

James Everett shared that 2024 ACCG Lifelong Learning Academy Core Leadership Institute would be held August 15 – 16, 2024 at the Great Wolf Lodge in LaGrange, GA.

4. GMA Update

Travis Brown shared that GMA would be holding its inaugural class of the Georgia Mayors Leadership Academy at the Georgia Center for Continuing at UGA in Athens. The class will be held August 28 – 30, 2024.

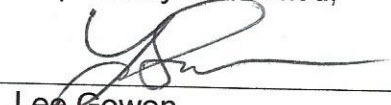
5. Upcoming SGRC Council Meeting

Chair Gowen announced that the next SGRC Council meeting would be held on Thursday, August 22, 2024, at the SGRC office in Waycross. He also reminded council members that there would not be a meeting in the month of July.

**Adjourn**

Chair Gowen asked if there were any other questions or announcements. With no further business to conduct, Chair Gowen asked Willie Hardee 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