

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
SPORTS COMPLEX AND CIVIC CENTER, PEARSON, GEORGIA
December 13, 2018
11:00 a.m.**

WELCOME MEMBERS AND GUESTS: Chair Joyce Evans called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Evans called upon James Everett to give the invocation and 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"/> Futch, Lace	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hutto, Andy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Taylor, Steve
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robert Johnson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Murphy, Peggy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Puckett, Jim
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McKinnon, Janice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coley, Lisa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dunn, Jason
<u>Berrien County</u>	<u>Brantley County</u>	<u>Brooks County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sumner, Doc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harris, Skipper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exum, Myra
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richbourg, Michael	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maefield, Barbara	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dennard, Nancy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smart, Lisa	Vacant	Vacant
<u>Charlton County</u>	<u>Clinch County</u>	<u>Coffee County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Everett, James	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McClaine, Kenton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dovers, AJ
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gowen, Lee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kennedy, Tom	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moore, Robert
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"/> Purvis, Dwight	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corbett, Stanley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whitley, Joey
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Duke, Buddy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seale, Matt
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bennett, Derry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Garner, Cheryl	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paulk, 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"/> Fitton, John	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payton, Anthony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brannen, Andy
<u>Tift County</u>	<u>Turner County</u>	<u>Ware County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thompson, Grady	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Denham, Nick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nelson, Carlos
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Julie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lumpkin, Sandra	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knox, John
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marlowe, Brian	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> King, Barbara

<u>Governor's Office</u>	<u>Lt. Governor's Office</u>	<u>Speaker's Office</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lovein, Norman "Bo"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone, Keith	Vacant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daughtrey, Guy		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jones, Johnathon		

Staff Present

Backe, Elizabeth
 Cribb, Lisa
 Dorsey, Rex
 Frey, Michelle
 Hobbs, Kimberly
 Lovett, Roberta
 Schultz, Kelly
 Strom, Chris
 Taft, Wanda
 Vining, Kim

Guests Present

Bennett, Latrice
 Christian, Paul
 Hudgins, Horace
 Jordan, Howard
 Lane, Kelly
 Lowman, Alan
 Norris, Tanita
 Raulerson, Hampton
 Shaw, Michelle
 Shields, Kelly
 Stevenson, Molly
 Valenti, Nick
 Westberry, Diane

INSTALLATION OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS: Chair Evans invited the newly appointed official to take her oath as a new SGRC council member. SGRC council member installed was Barbara Maefield, Mayor of Nahunta, representing Brantley County.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2018 MEETING MINUTES: Chair Evans reminded those present that a copy of the September minutes had been emailed to members (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Barbara King made a motion to approve the minutes. Vivian Miller-Cody seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2018 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORT: Chair Evans reminded those present that a copy of the September and October Revenue and Expenditure Reports had been emailed to council members and included in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Janice McKinnon made a motion to accept the September and October financial reports. Vivian Miller-Cody seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION OF SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION ANNUAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2018: Chair Evans introduced Nick Valenti, of Valenti, Rackley, and Associates, LLC. Mr. Valenti began with a brief overview of the Fiscal Year Ended 2018 audit for the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Mr. Valenti stated that the audit was reviewed in depth during the Executive/Audit Committee meeting which preceded the council meeting. Mr. Valenti told the council members that the highlights of the report were that his firm issued an unqualified or "clean" opinion. He stated that the financial statements are a reliable and fair representation of the financial position of the SGRC. He went on to address one finding by his firm, and it was an internal control issue. He continued by adding that the finding did not affect grant reporting or compliance. Mr. Valenti said that SGRC management is aware of the issue, and has taken steps

to keep it from happening in the future. Mr. Valenti again stated that the finding did not affect the financial statement reporting. There were no other findings. Mr. Valenti thanked the council for their time. Matt Seale made a motion to accept the audit report. Janice McKinnon seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Georgia Cotton in 2018: Chair Evans called upon SGRC Assistant Executive Director Chris Strom to introduce Mr. Alan Lowman, Executive Director of the Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation of Georgia, Inc. (BWEF) Mr. Lowman started with an overview of the traps used in eradicating the boll weevil population. He then discussed the history of the Boll Weevil in Georgia, and its devastation to cotton crops. He gave a detailed description of the Boll Weevils different species and their characteristics. The Boll Weevil was eradicated in the 1990's, but there is still a concern that a re-infestation could occur. The BWEF move within 24 hours of reports of Boll Weevils sightings to install traps and apply treatments. Mr. Lowman commended the SGRC for the work that is done through the GIS department and how it has helped his foundation. Through the mapping capabilities of the GIS department, Mr. Lowman and his foundation are able to estimate, more accurately, the movement of the Boll Weevil.

Mr. Lowman followed his discussion on the Boll Weevil with a look at Hurricane Michael's effect on Georgia's cotton production. Hurricane Michael devastated Georgia's cotton crop. There is an estimated \$1.2 billion of farm related damages in Georgia alone from the storm. That includes an estimated loss of \$71 million for cotton farmers. Mr. Lowman expressed his concern for cotton growers and other farmers in Georgia dealing with the impacts of Hurricane Michael. Mr. Lowman ended his presentation by thanking the council for its time and encouraged anyone with any questions to contact the BWEF.

ANNUAL CERTIFICATION OF EDA REVOLVING LOAN FUND PERFORMANCE:

SGRC Loan Program Director Michelle Frey referred those present to a copy of a resolution included in their member packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes) to certify the EDA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is consistent with the area's current economic adjustment strategy; and to certify the RLF is being operated in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in the RLF Plan. She also referred members to a handout included in their member packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes) which explained what the area's adjustment strategy is and shows a comparison of the RLF Portfolio to the RLF Plan. She stated that the SGRC is operating the RLF in accordance with the plan, and the portfolio meets the standards contained in the RLF Plan. Janice McKinnon made a motion to approve the EDA RLF resolution. Matt Seale seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION TO ADOPT REGIONAL PLAN:

SGRC Planning Director, Elizabeth Backe, 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 2018 Full Update. She shared with the council a letter from DCA in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes) accepting the revised Regional Plan. DCA also congratulated the Commission on the completion of the plan and for meeting the standards and requirements for Regional Planning. Janice McKinnon made a motion to adopt the Regional Plan. Matt Seale seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

UPDATE ON VALDOSTA OFFICE RELOCATION: SGRC Assistant Executive Director Chris Strom directed those present to a timeline of events for the Valdosta Office Relocation located in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Since the last meeting in June, the contracts have been executed with the architect and engineering firms, Ellis Rickett and Associates Architecture and Lovell Engineering Associates. Mr. Strom discussed the timeline and the planning that has gone into getting to this stage in the process. The conceptual plans have been completed. The building layout is 15,000 square feet. Mr. Strom stressed that the building layout is geared toward efficiency for departments to work together, ease of access to conference areas for meetings, and to be able to supply a level of security for employees and visitors that the current building does not have. There will be more parking than what is available at the current building, also. Mr. Strom then asked the members to review the rendering of the new building that is in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes.) The next step in the process, according to Mr. Strom, is completing a cost estimation for construction and furniture, fixtures, and equipment. Mr. Strom fielded some questions from the council about the bid letting process. In response to a question about cost, he stated that the architect estimates the cost to be approximately \$165 per square foot. This estimate is an average across all spaces in the proposed building as the cost of certain spaces may be below or above this number. Mr. Strom answered another question by stating that he anticipates that the plans should let for requests for proposal from general contractors in Mid-March or April of 2019. Mr. Strom thanked the council for the opportunity to give an update on the new office.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES/UPDATES:

Planning: SGRC Planning Director, Elizabeth Backe, 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). Ms. Backe stated that the Irwin/Ocilla comprehensive plan has been submitted to the Department of Community Affairs. She stated that Berrien County's comprehensive plan is coming up next, following closely after that are Charlton, Cook, and Echols counties. She informed the council that DCA is in the process of drafting Broadband Model Ordinance language, which should be available in January 2019. At which time the planning staff will reach out to the communities to let them know what the wording will look like, so that they can start updating their comprehensive plans to include the new ordinance language to be ready to apply for Broadband Ready Community designation. She also spoke about a Hazard Mitigation grant program that FEMA and GEMA have, and encouraged those interested in this grant or other programs to contact SGRC planning staff for more information.

Grants: SGRC Economic Development Director, 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 projects that have been funded and projects that have been applied for in our region, grouped by county. She informed the council that DCA will be implementing some new timeframes/time limits for applying and submitting applications for CDBG that can greatly affect those applying. She encouraged those that are thinking of applying for 2019 CDBG to not hesitate. She asked council members to contact staff regarding any questions on the projects on the list or any potential projects that they may be interested in for their communities.

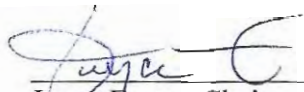
QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

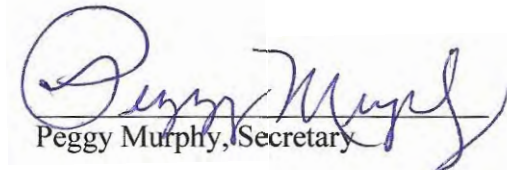
- 1.) **ACCG Update:** Chair Evans reminded those present that a Lifelong Learning Academy workshop will be held January 18th in Macon, and the Capitol Connections Conference will be February 27-28th in Atlanta. She then informed the council that Carol Baker with ACCG will be retiring in December.
- 2.) **GMA Update:** Matt Seale reminded those present of the GMA Mayor's Day Conference coming up January 25-28th in Atlanta. He noted the Legislative Breakfast on Monday, January 28th, has been moved to the Georgia Freight Depot. He also informed the council that Newly Elected Officials training will be in Tifton, March 6th -8th.
- 3.) **DCA Update:** No update.
- 4.) **Okefenokee Occasion:** SGRC Executive Director Lisa Cribb told the council that the final preparations were underway for the 2019 Okefenokee Occasion to be held January 16, 2019 at the Georgia Freight Depot in Atlanta. She told attendees that this event is a great time to meet and mingle with legislators and to schedule one-on-one meetings with state agencies while in Atlanta. She encouraged anyone with any questions about this event to contact SGRC staff member Tonia Hendricks.
- 5.) **Recognition of Guests and Representation:** Chair Evans recognized Michelle Shaw from Georgia Department of Economic Development and Kelly Lane from DCA. Chair Evans announced that Atkinson, Lanier, Lowndes, and Charlton Counties had 100% representation at the council meeting and thanked them for their attendance.
- 6.) **Service Awards:** Chair Evans presented staff member Michelle Frey with a plaque for thirty years of dedicated service to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission. Ms. Evans commended Ms. Frey for her service.
- 7.) **Announcement:** SGRC Executive Director Lisa Cribb told those present that copies of the audit were available in both paper and digital form, and to request a copy from one of the SGRC staff members present.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chair Evans called upon Willie Hardee to bless the meal.

ADJOURN: As there was no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.


Joyce Evans, Chair


Peggy Murphy, Secretary