

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
SPORTS COMPLEX AND CIVIC CENTER, PEARSON, GEORGIA
SEPTEMBER 26, 2019
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 Anthony Payton to give the invocation and lead 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"/> Johnson, Robert | <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"/> Gaskins, Ronnie | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harris, Skipper | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maxwell, James |
| <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 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deshazor, Zurich |
| | | |
| <u>Charlton County</u> | <u>Clinch County</u> | <u>Coffee County</u> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Everett, James | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metts, Roger | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kitchens, Jimmy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gowen, Lee | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kennedy, Tom | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moore, Bob |
| 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"/> Parrish, Lindsey | <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"/> Grissom, Kevin |
| <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, Bo | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone, Keith | Vacant |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daughtrey, Guy | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jones, Jon | | |

Staff Present

Backe, Elizabeth
 Cribb, Lisa
 Gary, Judi
 Hobbs, Kimberly
 Hull, Corey
 Lovett, Roberta
 Ray, Lindsay
 Strom, Chris
 Vining, Kim

Guests Present

Anderson, Tina
 Benefield, Alphyia
 Bennett, Latrice
 Denison, Brenda
 Forrester, Stuart
 Gibbs, Mary
 Johnson, Alice
 Johnson, Ouida
 Ivery, Kevin
 Redding, Jody
 Rubenbauer, Jason
 Settles, David
 Stevenson, Molly
 Williams, Bettye

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF AUGUST MEETING MINUTES: Chair Evans reminded those present that a copy of the August 22, 2019 meeting minutes had been emailed to all council members (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Barbara Maefield made a motion to approve the minutes. Janice McKinnon seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF JULY AND AUGUST 2019 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORTS: Chair Evans referred those present to a copy of the July and August 2019 Revenue and Expenditure Reports included in their member packets (copies attached and made a part of these minutes). Barbara Maefield made a motion to accept the July and August 2019 Revenue and Expenditure Reports. Janice McKinnon seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

KNOW YOUR REGION: SOUTHERN IONICS MINERALS, LLC (SIM): SGRC Assistant Executive Director Chris Strom introduced David Settles, business development manager for Southern Ionics Minerals, LLC (SIM) and Stuart Forrester, operations manager for Georgia with SIM. Mr. Settles began the presentation on SIM by giving a brief history of their operations. SIM is a minerals exploration and manufacturing company with administrative offices in Jacksonville, FL. SIM harvests and processes titanium and zirconium mineral sands. SIM began mining mineral sand deposits in 2014. Their operations in Georgia include its headquarters office and a mineral sand processing plant are in Pierce County, a mining office in Brantley County, and the Mission South Mine in Charlton County. Mr. Settles shared that in August 2019, SIM was acquired by and became a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Chemours Company. The Chemours Company is a global chemistry company with leading market positions in titanium technologies, fluoroproducts and chemical solutions based in Wilmington, Delaware.

Mr. Settles asked Stuart Forrester to share the operations side of SIM. Mr. Forrester explained some of SIMs processes. He stated that sand extracted at the mine is transported to the plant for separation and processing. Then the refined titanium and zirconium mineral sands are sold to customers that manufacture pigments and paints, aircraft engines, medical devices, welding rods, and other products. Mr. Forrester shared that SIM leases land from local landowners to mine. The land is cleared of trees, the topsoil is stripped and stockpiled, the active pit is mined. After the pit is fully excavated, it is refilled, then graded. The topsoil is replaced and tree seedlings are replanted. This process is SIM's Rapid Continuous Reclamation system. It is a process that leaves the smallest possible disturbed footprint. Mr. Forrester answered questions from the audience about the actual processing of the minerals, the size of the mines, and the time frames from start to finish per mine.

Mr. Settles continued the presentation by discussing the economic impact that SIM has had in Southern Georgia. SIM has created 140 jobs and has invested over \$96M in Charlton, Brantley, and Pierce counties. SIM has over \$7.8M in wages and salaries and pay over \$545,000 in payroll tax liabilities. Mr. Settles shared that SIM is investigating other potential mining locations. He said the mineral sand deposits of Southern Georgia constitute a world-class resource. Mr. Settles answered questions from the council. He and Mr. Forrester elaborated on SIMs processing plant and mining operations.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION: Chair Evans introduced SGRC Community and Economic Development Director Kimberly Hobbs to give an update of the economic development activities in the region. Ms. Hobbs referred those present to the handout in their packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). She began by explaining how a community can get involved in an economic development project. Ms. Hobbs said there are two major components involved when creating economic development projects, and they are job creation or retention and private investment. When a project offers job creation/retention, the funding source can be from an employment incentive program loan (EIP). With an EIP loan, the state will typically go by the rule of thumb for job creation/retention of \$10,000 of loan funds per position. As for the private investment, there is a dollar per dollar investment requirement. Businesses have to invest as much as they borrow for their economic development project. Typically, the investment by the business is greater than the amount borrowed from economic development funding sources. When committing to creating jobs and investing private equity for an economic development project, the companies must make their commitment in written letter in jobs creation and private investment. Companies are also asked to put up letter of credit or surety bond in the amount of the grant until jobs creation and private investment are met. The economic development funding sources that are utilized most in southern Georgia are the CDBG-EIP, OneGeorgia and EDA public works (a Federal funding source).

Ms. Hobbs highlighted projects in the Southern Georgia Region that have been funded and are underway.

- \$750,000 CDBG-EIP to city of Adel for water and sewer improvements for the Cook County Medical Center. At completion, the project will have a \$47M private investment with 177 jobs retained and 51 jobs created.
- \$528,000 CDBG-EIP to the city of Douglas for water and road improvements for Elixir Industries expansion. This project had a private investment of \$10M and created more than the commitment of 100 jobs.

- \$500,000 OneGeorgia Equity funds for Property acquisition, water and sewer, and street improvements for an industrial park capacity building in Berrien County.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES/UPDATES:

Grants: SGRC Community and Economic Development Director Kimberly Hobbs directed the Council to the project status list in their packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). Ms. Hobbs stated that the list includes the status of current programs the Community and Economic department has in progress. She informed the Council members that DCA had announced the recipients of the 2019 Community Development Block Grant awards. She explained that DCA revealed overall there were 59 communities awarded CDBGs. Our region, region 11, was awarded ten CDBGs. These ten projects will have \$67,275,136 total project cost (including private investment) of which \$5,078,228 will be grant funds. These projects will create/retain 328 jobs. Ms. Hobbs reminded everyone that the DCA fall conference, award ceremony, and recipient workshop are scheduled for October 15th -17th at the Great Wolf Lodge in LaGrange, GA and stressed that the deadline to register is fast approaching. She encouraged those that had not registered to do so asap. She explained that now is the time to start working on re-submittals as well as new applications for 2020 CDBG grant opportunities.

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 encouraged council members to review the schedule for upcoming deadlines for their communities and to contact SGRC Planning staff with any questions. She also gave details about an upcoming Community Planning Institute training taking place in Thomasville, GA on Nov. 14th for Georgia Planning Commissioners, elected officials, and local government staff.

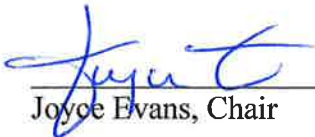
Transit System: SGRC Transportation and Environmental Director Corey Hull presented an update on the application process to begin a regional public transit system that was authorized by the council in August. He stated that Governor Kemp has ordered 4% budget cuts for state agencies. One of the items cut was DFACS funding for transportation statewide. The state provided \$2.4M of funding for DFACS transportation, and the Southern Georgia Regional Commission received \$850,000 of those funds. Mr. Hull stated that this is a tremendous setback for the coordinated transportation program operated under the SGRC. The statewide cut will go into effect on October 1st. Mr. Hull stressed that the RC is working with DHS representatives to find ways to fill the funding gap. This statewide cut leaves the regional public transit system in limbo at this time. Mr. Hull said that questions and requests about transportation funding have been submitted to DOT and DHS. He asked the for any questions, there being none, Mr. Hull thanked the council for the opportunity to speak.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- 1.) **Recognition of Guests and Representation:** Chair Evans recognized Dr. Tina Anderson from Wiregrass Technical College, Alice Johnson from Rep. Austin Scott's office, and Jody Redding from Senator Isakson's office. Chair Evans announced that Atkinson County, Brantley County, Charlton County and Coffee County had 100% representation at the council meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

- 2.) **ACCG Update:** Chair Evans called upon James Everett to give an update on ACCG activities. He reminded Council members that the ACCG 2019 Legislative Leadership Conference will be held in Athens-Clarke County on October 2-4, 2019 at the Classic Center.
- 3.) **GMA Update:** Council member Lee Gowen shared that the GMA District 11 meeting will be held on October 4, 2019 at Wiregrass Technical College in Fitzgerald, GA. Mr. Gowen also told the council about a Regional Training Class that will be held on October 23, 2019 in Tifton at the Tifton Development Center.
- 4.) **Service Award:** Chair Evans presented SGRC staff member Judi Gary with a plaque for fifteen years of dedicated service to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission and commended her for her service.
- 5.) **Area Officials Appreciation Evening:** SGRC Executive Director Lisa Cribb reminded those present that the Annual Area Officials Appreciation Evening (flyer included in council packets) will be held on Wednesday, October 23, 2019 in Adel, GA at Dinnerman's Farm.
- 6.) **GARC Annual Training Conference:** SGRC Executive Director Lisa Cribb shared with those present that the 2019 GARC 21st Annual Training Conference will be held November 6-8, 2019 at the King and Prince Resort on St. Simons Island (flyer included in council packets.) She explained to the council that, as usual, the SGRC would cover the registration fee for any council member wanting to attend; and the registration fee plus lodging for any SGRC Executive Committee member. Ms. Cribb asked anyone interested in attending to please contact SGRC staff member Kim Vining.
- 7.) **Okefenokee Occasion:** SGRC Executive Director Lisa Cribb told the council that preparations were underway for the 2020 Okefenokee Occasion to be held January 15, 2020 at the Georgia Freight Depot in Atlanta across from the Capital (flyer included in council packets.) She told those present this event is a great time to meet and mingle with legislators and numerous state agency staff.
- 8.) **Other Announcements:** 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