

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING

Union County Community Center  
Blairsville, GA  
November 17, 2011

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular meeting on Thursday, November 17, 2011, 6:00 p.m. at new Union County Community Center in Blairsville, Georgia. The meeting was hosted by Union County and City of Blairsville.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME/DINNER

Chairman David Stovall called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for their attendance. He also expressed his appreciation to Union County and the City of Blairsville for hosing this meeting at such a beautiful facility. He stated that Union County is fortunate to have such a facility for their citizens to use.

Chairman Stovall recognized Mayor Jim Conley, City of Blairsville, for local introductions. Mayor Conley welcomed everyone to Union County and the City of Blairsville. He stated that he appreciated the great working relationship that the County and the City has. He recognized City Council Members Tony Dyer, Buddy Moore, Jane Thompson, Bob Wood, and Rhonda Mahan; and City Clerk Janice Gratton. Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris also welcomed everyone to their new facility and invited everyone to tour the building before leaving. He recognized the Commission Office Staff, Peggy Deyton, Jennifer Queen, Pam Hawkins, Robin Gazaway, Larry Garrett, and Randy Day; Mitch Griggs, Union Co. Development Authority; Cindy Williams, Chamber of Commerce Director; Ranai Brock, Conference Center Coordinator, Blair Groves, Golf Course Coordinator; and his wife, Dianna Paris. Mr. Paris also recognized King Evans, CHA Engineering Firm, and Norman Moye and Richard Collins with Winter Construction who built this beautiful building and the new Union County Library.

Mr. Paris reported that this building is an example of the SPLOST money at work in Union County. He stated that they are very proud of this beautiful building and commended the Union County employees for all their hard worked to help make this possible. We are "trying to make Union County a better place to live". He stated that the cities and counties in this area are working together to attract people to the Northeast Georgia Mountains. Other examples of SPLOST projects in Union County are Meeks Park and the covered horse arena, Farmers Market, the remolded Civic Center, the new Union County Library, Bryon Herbert Reece farm, and the remodeling of the old school for a Community Center.

Mr. Paris also recognized David Gray, with the North Georgia Technical College Culinary Center. He and his students will be responsible for tonight's dinner.

## INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Sam Norton recognized other special guests Senator Steve Gooch and Kathy Papa, DCA.

## INVOCATION/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

L.J. Harrison, GMRC Chaplain, gave our devotion, invocation, and followed with the pledge of allegiance.

## PROGRAM

Mr. Randy Donaldson with the UGA Carl Vinson Institute's Small Business Development Center spoke to the audience on the services that they offer to small businesses. They offer educational courses for individuals who are starting a new business, assistance in securing a loan, writing a business plan, etc. They have an office in Gainesville and have worked with such businesses as Plasticworks, Cleveland; Fudge Factory, Dahlonga; Turk Pest Control, Homer; Adams Moving and Storage, Gainesville; Sanders Drugs, Toccoa and others in our area.

## CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Chairman Stovall asked for any comments regarding the minutes of the October 27, 2011 meeting. Doug Wayne made a motion to accept the minutes as written and was seconded by Paul Kreager. Motion carried unanimously.

## REPORTS

### Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Danny Lewis reported that the GMRC had a total of 19 representatives at the GARC Annual Conference in St Simons. He thanked Council Members and staff that attended.

David Sargent will retire at the end of December. Earlier today he attended his last meeting with the CEDS Committee. Next week, David and Heather Feldman will be meeting with the Economic Development Pros. At these meetings, only Economic Development representatives attend and are able to network with other ED Pros on projects and needs in our area.

The Regional Commission won another NADO award for the Diving Bell. Chip Wright attended the NADO Conference in Miami, FL to receive this award for the RC. This made the thirteenth award for Georgia Mountains RC. Also, the GARC received the first statewide award for their ESRI project. Faith Jones is a member of this group and worked on this project.

The GMRC received the 2011 Annual Report from the printers today. Mr. Lewis thanked Heather for the great job that she did on this report. The Annual Reports will be mailed out next week. He also stated that the staff pictures were taken at Cromer's Covered Bridge in Franklin County. He thanked County Manager Billy Morse for making this possible.

Mr. Lewis thanked Franklin County Commissioner Angela Whidby for hosting the City/County Managers Meeting in Franklin County on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

### Financial Report

The Financial Report was given by GMRC Director of Finance, Becky Sievers. The Cash Position as of October 31, 2011 showed a bank balance of \$262,983, receivables of \$176,933 and payables of \$247,813, with an uncommitted cash balance of \$192,103. The Income-Expense Report for the period of July 1, 2011 – October 31, 2011 indicated income of \$249,509, expenses of \$359,202, accounts receivable of \$109,693, with 26 percent of the budget being expended for the fiscal year. Jim Conley made a motion to accept the report and was seconded by Will Wade. Motion carried.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### Annual Meeting Report

Leslie George reported that all the plans have been made with the Dillard House for the Annual Meeting/Awards Dinner. The reception will start at 5:00 p.m. and the dinner will follow at 6:00 p.m. She encouraged the Cities and Counties to bring a gift basket to be given away as a door prize. There are also rooms available for people who want to stay overnight. You will receive a special group rate for the room and also 20% discount on all meals during your stay at the Dillard House. Sponsors are still needed and each will receive recognition during the meeting. This is great advertisement for the sponsors. Ms. George promised everyone that attends a good time.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### GMRC FY11 Audit

Mr. Chris Edwards with Clifton, Lipford, Hardison, and Parker, LLC firm informed the Council that the FY11 Audit is a clean audit with no findings and it came in under budget by \$98,000. He briefly explained the different reports in the Audit and the Letter of Understanding. He thanked Becky Sievers and staff for their assistance during the Audit process.

Chairman Stovall stated that the Audit had been previously reviewed and approved by the Audit and Executive Committee. A motion was made by L.J. Harrison to approve the FY11 GMRC Audit and was seconded by Bill Chafin. Unanimously approved.

#### Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

Mr. Lewis reported that Sam Norton, RLF Committee Chairman, was scheduled to speak on the RLF Program but was detained at the Dahlonega City Council Meeting. Mr. Lewis referred to the RLF brochures that were distributed on the tables. He explained the RLF program and reminded the Council that 12 counties in the GMRC region are eligible for this program (Forsyth

County is not eligible). The program has not made a loan in several years and due to that fact EDA has sequestered some of the funds. When the RC loans some of the money, we will be able to use this money again. The RC needs to get the word out that the RLF Program has funds available for loans and educate the financial institutions on the requirements and restrictions of the RLF so that we can partner with them to make some loans in our area. A community leader has volunteered to provide a lunch for bankers and other financial officials to be able to do just that. Council Members can likewise take these brochures and help spread the word that the RLF program is available to individuals in our region.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Annual Meeting/Awards Dinner is scheduled for December 2, 2011 at the Dillard House Conference Center. The January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting will be hosted by the City of Gainesville at the Civic Center. Chairman Stovall also reminded everyone of the City/County Managers meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn Express in Lavonia at 10:00 a.m. and the WIB Board will meet on the same day at 10:00 a.m. at the GMRC Office.

Chairman Stovall stated that if anyone was interested in sponsoring the February, March, or April meeting to contact Peggy Lovell.

#### DOOR PRIZES

Door prizes that were furnished by City of Blairsville and Union County were awarded to lucky recipients

#### ADJOURNMENT

The Council Meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.



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David Stovall, Chairman



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L.J. Harrison, Secretary

**GMRC COUNCIL  
ATTENDANCE SHEET  
2011-2012**

COUNTY	COUNCIL MEMBER	7/28/11	8/25/11	9/29/11	10/27/11	11/17/11	12/2/11	1/26/12	2/23/12	3/29/12	4/26/12	5/31/12	6/28/12
BANKS	Sammy Reece	P	P	A	A	P							
	Jerry Payne	P	P	P	A	P							
	Leslie George	A	P	A	P	P							
DAWSON	Mike Berg	P	A	P	P	A							
	Calvin Byrd	P	A	P	P	A							
	Charlie Auvermann	P	P	P	P	P							
FORSYTH	Brian Tam	P	P	P	A	A							
	Ralph Perry	P	A	A	A	A							
	James McCoy	P	A	P	P	A							
FRANKLIN	Angela Whidby	P	P	P	P	P							
	Ralph Owens	P	A	P	P	A							
	Gerald Voyles	P	P	P	P	P							
HABERSHAM	Lee Mulkey	P	P	P	P	P							
	Audrey Turner	P	A	P	A	P							
	Todd Peabock	(NP)	P	A	P	P							
HALL	Vacant												
	George Wangemann	P	A	A	P	A							
	Deborah Mack	A	P	A	A	A							
HART	Bill Myers	P	P	P	P	A							
	Tray Hicks	P	P	P	A	A							
	Bill Chafin	P	P	P	A	P							
LUMPKIN	Dr. John Raber	P	P	A	P	P							
	Sam Norton**	P	P	P	P	A							
	J.B. Jonts	P	A	A	P	P							

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RABUN	Stan Darnell	(N/A)	A	P	P	A							
	Debbie Chisholm	P	P	P	P	P							
	Douglas Wayne	P	P	P	P	P							
STEPHENS	Dean Scarborough	P	P	P	P	A							
	Ron Seib	A	P	P	P	A							
TOWNS	L.J. Harrison	P	P	P	P	P							
	Bill Kendall			P	P (R)	P (R)							
	Joan Crothers	P	A	A	P	P							
UNION	David Stovall*	P	P	P	A	P							
	Lamar Paris	P	P	P	P	P							
	Jim Conley	P	P	P	P	P							
WHITE	Mitch Griggs	P	P	A	P	P							
	Travis Turner	P	A	P (R)	P	P (R)							
	Annie Sutton	A	P	P	P	A							
GOV APPT.	Bill Black	P	A	P	P	A							
	Rex Farmer	P	P	P	P	P							
	Paul Kresger	P	P	A	P	P							
LT. GOV. APPT.	Will Wade	P	P	P	P	P							
	Kevin Tallant	P	P	P	P	A							
	SPEAKER APPT.	P(N)	P	P	P	P							

P = PRESENT      A = ABSENT      \* = REPRESENTED      V = VACANCY      E = EXCUSED      (N) = NEW MEMBER

\* Chairman  
 \*\* Vice Chairman  
 \*\*\* Secretary