

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
Habersham EMC Office
January 29, 2015

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular meeting on Thursday, January 29, 2015, 6:00 p.m. at the Habersham EMC Office in Clarkesville, Georgia. The meeting was hosted by Habersham County.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Sam Norton called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for their attendance. Habersham County Commissioner Sonny James welcomed everyone to “the most beautiful county in Georgia”. He encouraged everyone to come back to Habersham County and visit. Mr. James recognized Habersham County Commissioners Ed Nichols and Victor Anderson; County Manager, Phil Sutton; and City of Alto Mayor, Audrey Turner.

Mr. James introduced Bill Verner, Vice President of External Affairs with Georgia Electric Membership Corporation. Mr. Verner gave an informative presentation as to how the Georgia EMCs and the local EMCs work with the cities and counties in our region.

Chairman Norton thanked Habersham EMC for hosting this meeting at their lovely facility.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Dean Scarborough recognized special guests Tate O’Rourke, Aide with Senator Isakson’s Office; Cheryl Smith, Georgia Department of Economic Development; Kathy Papa, Department of Community Affairs; Frank Riley, Chestatee Chattahoochee RC&D; and Stami Williams, Aide with Senator Perdue’s Office.

INVOCATION/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

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

PROGRAM

Heather Feldman introduced the new Appalachian Regional Commission State Program Director, Ms. Annaka Woodruff. Ms. Woodruff is new to ARC and has only been in this position for 27 days. There are 37 counties in Georgia that are in the ARC region. All thirteen of the GMRC counties are in ARC. Ms. Woodruff spoke about how ARC helps with funding for projects in the Appalachian region with roads, water/sewer, economic development, park facilities, etc. She was excited about working with the RC on existing projects in our region and also new projects.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Chairman Norton asked for any comments regarding the minutes of the November 20, 2014 meeting. Ken Schubring made a motion to accept the minutes as written and was seconded by Doug Wayne. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Chairman's Report

Chairman Norton reported that he has the pleasure of attending the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) Meeting on January 14th in Atlanta. GARC is an organization that backs up all the 12 RCs in Georgia. This organization makes decisions that make things flow better for the RCs in the state. They have been working with the State on the RC's Travel Policies. Our Executive Director serves on several committees with this organization.

Ricky Carter was welcomed as the new GMRC Council Member representing Hart County. Mr. Carter serves as a Hart County Commissioner.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Danny Lewis spoke at the Newly Elected Officials meeting in Athens.

Financial Report

Becky Sievers, Director of Finance, presented the Financial Report for October. The Cash Position as of December 31, 2014 showed a bank balance of \$811,750, receivables of \$221,957 and payables of \$425,321, with an uncommitted cash balance of \$608,386. The Revenue Expenditure Report for the period of July 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 indicated the Actual Revenue Income of \$2,004,736, Expenditures of \$1,966,974, with 33 percent of the budget being expended for the fiscal year. Jim Conley made a motion to accept the report and was seconded by Chris Dockery. Motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Recap of the Annual Meeting

Leslie George, Chairman of the Annual Meeting Committee thanked the Committee members and staff for their hard work on this year's event and everyone that attended. Surveys have been sent out and the Committee will meet to review the comments that have been submitted and evaluate the event in hopes that next year will be even better than this year's.

Revision to Travel Policy

The revised GMRC Travel Policy was previously sent to Council Members for their review. Chairman Norton stated that this Policy will be continuously looked at to keep up to date. Bill Chafin made a motion to approve the changes to the policy. Sonny James seconded and was unanimously approved.

Aerial Photography and LiDAR Project

Faith Bryan gave a quick update on the Aerial Photography and LiDAR project. This project includes 26 Georgia counties and jurisdictions, with each having different things done. This project will cover approximately 6,350 square miles. With three planes in the air, Quantum Spatial has completed 39% of the overall LiDAR acquisition and 30% of the overall Orthoimagery acquisition. Pictometry has completed 50% of the overall oblique imagery acquisition.

NEW BUSINESS

Banking Services

Mr. Lewis informed the Council of a couple of issues that have taken place regarding the WD checking account. This checking account is a flow through account for funds from the Federal Government to the WD participants. Checks on this account are mailed to participants for their school expenses and supplies, books, etc. Most checks that are written on this account are for under \$200. Fraud had been detected on this account with a total of six checks being cashed with a sum of \$27,000. When detected the accounting staff notified the bank and the police department. Law enforcement informed us that we are not the only ones that this had happened to. They stated that 85% of the bank accounts have had some type of fraud on their accounts in the last 12 months. We are proud to say that all of the WD funds were recuperated and placed back into the account.

To cut down on the number of checks that are issued to participants, the bank stated that WD could use a new way of disbursing funds to the participants. Each participant would be issued a Pay (P) Card with their reimbursement funds on it. It works like the EBT card program. In order to receive the card, the participant must have a checking account and the funds would be deposited into that account on which the P Card is connected to. WD would send a list to the bank and they will direct deposit this into their account. The cost is \$1 issue the card and a \$1 per month service charge. Department of Economic Development has said that these funds can be paid for out of the WD funds, so it will be at no cost to the participant. This has been discussed with the WD Board and the Executive Committee earlier and the recommend putting this action into place.

A motion was made by Bill Chafin to start using the P Card accounts for the WD participants. David Strickland seconded and motion carried unanimously.

The RC has bank accounts in several different banks. It has been discussed with the Executive Committee, the possibility of changing all our accounts to one bank. Due to a few problems that we have had with banking services in the last ten years, the RC sent out bids for all our banking services. Professional services do not have to go out for bid, but with banking services changing so it was decided it would be best. The bank would need to have a location in Hall County. Three bids were received and fraud protection prices ranged from \$600, \$450, and \$200. With comparison of all banking fees, it was recommended by the Executive Committee to move all bank accounts to United Community Bank. Question was asked, if the funds would be protected by FDIC? Yes, with these being public funds, they must be collateralized over the FDIC limits.

A motion was made by David Stovall to move all bank accounts to United Community Bank. Mike Berg seconded and motion carried unanimously.

Fund Balance Policy

Becky Sievers reported that during this year's Audit, the Auditor had recommended that all RCs have a Fund Balance Target Policy which consists to the amount of three months expenditures. The GMRC policy would be to have \$1.6 million which would be three months of expenditures. This is low for our Budget, but most of the funds for Workforce Development, Transit, and the Aerial Photography are all pass through money. Sonny James made a motion to adopt this Fund Balance Target Policy of the RC. Motion was seconded by Doug Wayne and motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Whistleblower Policy

Chairman Norton stated that the CLEO and WD Board had previously adopted the Whistleblower Policy. The RC feels that they need to also adopt it for its employees. Basically this policy states if an employee knows that someone is doing something wrong and reports it, this would be kept confidential and the RC will not take action against this person.

Chris Dockery recommended that the Council adopt this Whistleblower Policy for the RC. Leslie George seconded the motion and motion carried unanimously.

Appointments to Chestatee-Chatt RC&D Council

It is time to appoint two representatives to serve on the Chestatee Chattahoochee RC&D Council. Chairman Norton has appointed Bruce Hoffman, City of Dahlonega Councilman and Adam Hazell, GMRC Planning Director to represent the RC on the RC&D Council.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next month's meeting will be held in Hall County and DOL Commissioner Mark Butler will be our program.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



Sam Norton, Chairman



George Wangemann, Secretary

**GMRC COUNCIL
ATTENDANCE SHEET
2014-2015**

COUNTY	COUNCIL MEMBER	7/31/14	8/28/14	9/25/14	10/30/14	11/20/14	12/5/14*	1/29/15	2/26/15	3/26/15	4/30/15	5/28/15	6/25/15
BANKS	Danny Maxwell	A	A	E	P	P (R)	P						
	Jerry Payne	P	A	P	P	P	P						
DAWSON	Leslie George	P	P	P	P (R)	P	P						
	Mike Berg	P	P	P	P	A	A						
	James Grogan	P	P (R)	P	P	P	P						
	Charlie Auvermann	P (R)	P	P	P	P	A						
FORSYTH	Brian Tam	P	P	P (R)	P	A	A						
	Ralph Perry	P	P	A	P	P (R)	A						
FRANKLIN	Randall Toussaint	A	P (R)	P	A	A	P						
	David Strickland	P	P	P	P	P	P						
	Ralph Owens	P (R)	P	P	P (R)	P (R)	P						
	Gerald Voyles	P	P	P	P	P	P						
HABERSHAM	Sonny James	A	P	P	P	A	P						
	Audrey Turner	P	A	P	P (R)	P	P						
HALL	Ken Schubring	P	P	A	P	A	P						
	Dick Mecum	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P						
	George Wangemann***	P	P	P	A	P	P						
	Deborah Mack	P	P	P	P	P	P						
HART	Bill Myers	A	P	A	A	A	A						
	Tray Hicks	P	A	A	P	P	P						
LUMPKIN	Bill Chafin	P	P	P	P	P	A						
	Chris Dockery	P	A	A	P	P	P						
	Sam Norton*	P	A	P	P	P	P						
	J.B. Jones	P	P	A	P	A	P						

Cancelled due to inclement weather

December is not an official business meeting - Attendance is not counted

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RABUN	Greg James	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P						
	Debbie Chisholm	P	A	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	A						
	Douglas Wayne	P	P	P	P	P	P						
	Dean Scarborough**	P	P	P	P	P	P						
STEPHENS	Jeanette Jamieson	A	A	P	A	A	P						
	L.J. Harrison	P	P	P	P	P	P						
	Bill Kendall	P	P (R)	P	P (R)	A	A						
	Joan Crothers	P	A	P	A	P	A						
TOWNS	David Stovall	A	P	P	A	A	A						
	Lamar Paris	P	A	P	A	A	P						
	Jim Conley	P	P	A	P	P	P						
	Mitch Griggs	P	P	P	A	A	P						
WHITE	Travis Turner	P	A	P	P (R)	A	P						
	Annie Sutton	P	P	P	P	A	P						
	Bill Black	P	P	P	A	P	P						
	Rex Farmer	P	P	P	P	P	P						
GOV APPT.	Vacant												
SPEAKER APPT.	Will Wade	A	P	P	P	A	A						
	Larry Miller	P	P	P	P	P	A						
	Peter Hill	P	A	P	P	A	P						

Cancelled due to inclement weather

P = PRESENT A = ABSENT R = REPRESENTED V = VACANCY E = EXCUSED N = NEW MEMBER

* Chairman
** Vice Chairman
*** Secretary