

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
Toccoa Falls College
March 26, 2015

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2015, 6:00 p.m. at Toccoa Falls College in Toccoa, Georgia. The meeting was hosted by Stephens County and City of Toccoa.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Sam Norton called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for their attendance. Stephens County Commission Chairman Dennis Bell welcomed everyone to Gate Cottage at the foot of Toccoa Falls located on the college campus. Mr. Bell recognized Commissioners Debbie Whitlock, Dean Scarborough, and Michelle Grafton; County Administrator Phyllis Ayers, and County Clerk Beth Rider. Mr. Bell also thanked the Regional Commission for all the work that they have done for Stephens County and the cities within. City of Toccoa's Mayor Terry Carter stated that the City was honored to co-host this meeting. He recognized City Councilmembers Evan Hellenga, Gail Fry, and David Austin.

Mr. Austin introduced Mr. Lee Yowell, Vice President of Advancement for the college. Mr. Yowell welcomed everyone to the most beautiful water feature located on a college campus. USA Today just mentioned the Falls as one of the top ten beautiful landmarks to see. The college is over 100 years old. The college offers 39 majors and 27 minors and just received exciting news today that the State Board has approved the college for a nursing major. The college will be building a new nursing facility in the near future.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Dean Scarborough recognized special guests Daniela Belton, Aide with Senator Isakson's Office; Kathy Papa, Department of Community Affairs; and Danette Smith, Department of Labor. Will Wade introduced Angie Smith, City of Dawsonville Mayor Pro-tem.

INVOCATION/ PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Chairman Norton asked for any comments regarding the minutes of the January 29, 2014 meeting. Doug Wayne made a motion to accept the minutes as written and was seconded by Will Wade. Motion carried unanimously.

REPORTS

Chairman's Presentation of Awards

Due to two award recipients not being present at the Annual Meeting in December, Chairman Norton presented Charlie Auvermann with the Appointed Official of the Year which is voted on by the GMRC staff and Bill Chafin with the Council Member of the Year awards, which is given by the Council Chairman. Bill Chafin has served as the Chairman of the Finance Committee for a number of years. He thanked them for their dedicated service and stated that they are assets to the GMRC Council.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Danny Lewis reported that he and several staff members had recently attended the Appalachian Regional Commission Conference in Washington. This year ARC celebrated 50 years. The RC region has received \$66.5M in ARC funds. The ARC region covers states from New York to Mississippi. There are 37 counties in Georgia that are in the ARC region and the GMRC region is 100% ARC.

Becky Sievers and the accounting staff have been training for three weeks on the new accounting software. John Phillips spoke to the Union County Rotary about the GMRC.

The City/County Managers meeting will be held Wednesday, April 1st in Sky Valley. This is a good time to get together and share what is going on in their region.

Financial Report

Becky Sievers, Director of Finance, presented the Financial Report for February. The Cash Position as of February 28, 2015 showed a bank balance of \$969,376, receivables of \$381,366 and payables of \$416,057, with an uncommitted cash balance of \$934,685. The Revenue Expenditure Report for the period of July 1, 2014 – February 28, 2015 indicated the Actual Revenue Income of \$2,706,075, Expenditures of \$2,964,622, with 45 percent of the budget being expended for the fiscal year. David Stovall made a motion to accept the report and was seconded by Will Wade. Motion carried unanimously.

Planning Update

Adam Hazell, Planning Director gave an update on some projects that the Planning Department is working on. He reported that Joe Rothwell is working with the Demorest Women's Club on a project and White County on their Comp Plan. The Department is also working with Cities of Hartwell and Cleveland on a Downtown Revitalization Plan. Department of Human Services (DHS) has requested a Transit Update and some of the RC counties are part of this coordinated transit services that DHS has and Adam would be contacting these counties for information.

Mr. Hazell also announced a couple of things that were coming up. DCA's Plan First Program is one that if you demonstrate a good record with documents you have made; the implementation of these comprehensive plans; making changes in the communities; and achieving these provisions, you can get this designation. This designation enables you to receive special benefits including access to annual funds from DCA. The deadline is May 15th and the RC is happy to help with completing these applications, just contact the RC office. Also in our upcoming FY16 DCA contract, the RC has local discretionary funds which are used to help with implementing certain

implementing certain projects. If your city/county have a specific project in mind that the RC can assist you with, please let us know and we can help you.

Aerial Photography Update

Faith Bryan stated that she was proud to announce that with the Aerial Photography project, all of the Oblique Imagery is finished, LiDAR is 100% complete and the Aerial Photography acquisition is 93% complete.

OLD BUSINESS

Amendment to Travel Policy

Chairman Norton referred to a letter that was received from the Department of Audit and Accounts regarding the Travel Policy that stated that if the General Assembly did not take action requiring RC to adopt and follow state rules and requirements, DOAA would audit the RCs according to their own travel policy.

Chairman Norton recommended that the RC revert back to their original Travel Policy with the exception that the Executive Director continue to drive the RC vehicle that was assigned to him. The RC will file the previous policy in case we need to use it later. Leslie George made a motion to go back to the original GMRC Travel Policy. Motion was seconded by Doug Wayne and motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

RFP for Audit Services

RFPs were sent out for Audit services for the next three years and five RFPs were received. The staff opened the RFPs and scored the top three. The Finance and Executive Committee have reviewed and recommended the RC to go with Rushton and Associates for a one year contract for three years. Bill Chafin made a motion to contract with Rushton and Associates for individual one year contract for the next three years. Ken Schubring seconded the motion. In discussion it was stated that it is not required that the RC go out to bid for professional services. The savings will be approximately \$2,000 for the three year period and Rushton comes with good recommendations. With no other discussion, motion carried with one opposed.

Review Process for FY16 Budget

Bill Chafin informed the Council that the Executive Committee has reviewed the FY16 GMRC Budget and has recommended that it be passed on to the Council for their review. The Budget will be emailed to the Council tomorrow for your review before the April meeting. It will also be placed on the GMRC website.

Ethics Board Appointments

Chairman Norton stated that the Ethics Policy calls for an Ethics Board which would consist of three residents of the Georgia Mountains region. One shall be appointed by the GMRC Council Chairman; one shall be appointed by the GMRC Council; and the third shall be appointed by the GMRC Chairman with the approval of the Council. Chairman Norton would like to appoint Joel Cordle from Dahlonega and Bill Stewart from Royston. Bill Chafin recommended that the

Council ratified these two appointments and was seconded by L.J. Harrison. Motion carried unanimously. The third appointment by the Council will be made at the April meeting.

RLF Update

Jim Conley, Chairman of the RLF Committee reported that the Committee had reviewed a loan for \$35,000 to purchase equipment and two trucks for a landscaping company in Dawsonville. The company and three employees would be doing primarily businesses in Forsyth and Dawson Counties. High credit score. Leslie George made a motion to approve this and was seconded by Dean Scarborough. Motion carried. Will Wade abstained due to the company being in Dawsonville.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

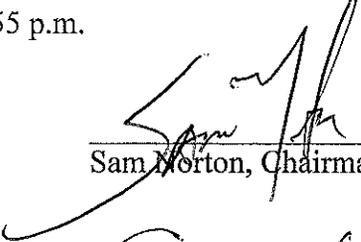
Next month's meeting will be held in the City of Cumming.

DOOR PRIZES

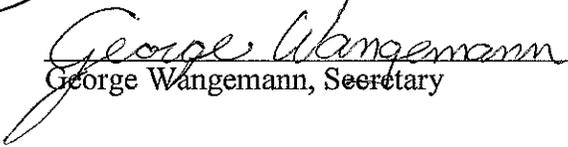
Stephens County and City of Toccoa provided a number of door prizes that were given away to the lucky winners.

ADJOURNMENT

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



Sam Norton, Chairman



George Wangemann, Secretary