

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
Hart County Agriscience Center
Hartwell, Georgia
March 29, 2018

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular meeting on Thursday, March 29, 2018, 6:00 p.m. at the Hart County Agriscience Center in Hartwell, Georgia. The meeting was hosted by Hart County and City of Hartwell.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Dean Scarborough called the meeting to order and thanked the Council and guests for their attendance. Ricky Carter, Hart County Commissioner recognized Tray Hicks, Hartwell City Councilman; and Bill Chafin, Hart County Private Sector Representative. All three serve on the GMRC Council representing the Hart County area. Mr. Carter welcomed everyone to Hart County and their new Agricultural Center. He recognized Hart County Commissioner Marshall Sayer and County Administrator Terrell Partain; Jim Burney, Kelly Cagle, Felicia Brown, and George Nolan with the City of Bowersville; Brandon Johnson and David Aldrich with City of Hartwell; Dennis Dowell and Jay Floyd with Hart County Board of Education; Anna Strickland, Hart County Archway; Scott Hardigree, Scott Fleming, Dwayne Dye, Barry Jennings, and Tammy Demchak with College and Career Academy Board of Directors; and Christine Blomberg with the Chamber of Commerce. Dwayne Dye, Hart County Economic Development Director gave a brief update on Hart County and some of their project highlights and accomplishments in the area.

Chairman Scarborough thanked Hart County, City of Hartwell, Hart County Board of Education, Hart County Chamber of Commerce, and Hart County College and Career Academy for making this meeting possible. He stated that Hart County is very fortunate to have such a great facility and asset to the Hart County area.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Sam Norton recognized special guests Kathy Papa, Department of Community Affairs; Nancy Bobbitt, Sen. Isakson's Office; Andrew Seaver, Sen. Perdue's Office; and Savannah Emerich, Rep. Tanner's Office.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

Deborah Mack gave our devotion, invocation, and followed with the pledge of allegiance.

PROGRAM

GMRC Council Member Bill Chafin introduced Dr. Phillip Brown, Director of the Hart County College and Career Academy. Mr. Brown spoke to the Council regarding the programs and courses that are offered at the Career Academy.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND ATTENDANCE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Chairman Scarborough asked for any comments regarding the minutes and attendance report for the February 22, 2018 meeting. Natalie Crawford made a motion to accept the minutes as presented and was seconded by David Austin. Motion carried. Bill Chafin made a motion to accept the attendance report as presented and was seconded by Doug Wayne. Motion carried. (Attendance report attached)

REPORT

Chairman's Report

Chairman Scarborough informed the Council that as part of the annual Department of Audits and Accounts (DOAA) audits that are performed each year, surveys are now being sent out to the cities and counties. This is how they rate the RCs on their performance for our region. He asked the Council Members to contact their city/county officials and ask them to fill these surveys out and send them back in. Last year, GMRC had a low rate of surveys that were filled out and returned.

Chairman Scarborough also introduced and welcomed Ms. Liz Ordiales as our newest Council Member. Ms. Ordiales is the Mayor for the City of Hiawassee. City of Hiawassee and City of Young Harris rotate serving on the Council every two years.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Heather Feldman stated on March 7th, the RC hosted the first ever Newly Elected Official Training at the GMRC office. It was a good event and hopes to do this annually in March. She thanked Chairman Scarborough and Vice-Chairman Norton for attending.

The RC recently did a retreat for the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager for the City of Lula. If your city or county would like to have a retreat, please let the RC know. There is no charge for this service.

Patrick Larson, Daniel Martin, and Ms. Feldman recently presented a NADO Innovation Award to Stephens County and the Stephens County Development Authority. This NADO Award was for the Nifco KTW project.

Faith Bryan has received 34 of the 38 Local Update of Census Address (LUCA) packets for the communities that GMRC are assisting. All of the updates are required to be completed in July 2018. Faith Bryan, Adam Hazell, Caleb Davidson, Joe Rothwell, and Brandon Carlock are currently working with each of these communities to get these completed as soon as possible. She thanked the communities for the opportunity to assist with this project.

Daniel Martin, Laurin Yoder, Patrick Larson, and Ms. Feldman recently attended the Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA) conference in Washington, DC. It was a great opportunity to network with our peers and learn more about relevant topics to our region.

The Department of Community Affairs will be conducting a GARC Council Member training at the UGA Gwinnett campus on April 17, 2018 from 9am to 3pm. If any Council Members are interested in attending, please register online at <https://cviog.uga.edu/regional-commission->

training. This course will provide an overview to Council members on the basics each Regional Commission is expected to accomplish, leadership roles of the Council, and how to complete their work using best practices.

Ms. Feldman thanked Andrea Newsom, the Finance Department, and the GMRC Finance Committee for all of their hard work in preparation of the FY 2019 Budget.

The GMRC has had several staff changes in the last few months. Danielle Avelar was recently selected to serve as the Outreach Coordinator for the Adult/Dislocated Worker Program for WorkSource Georgia Mountains. Danielle has been with GMRC for over six years working in the Youth Department. Ms. Gina Kessler and Bethany Coggins also joined the GMRC Team. Gina Kessler works in the Economic Development Department as our Grant Administrator and has already hit the ground running on the 15+ projects that she is administering. Ms. Bethany Coggins works in the Youth Department of WorkSource Georgia Mountains as a Case Manager. She has a lot of passion for helping youth, and we look forward to her positive contributions in the department. We are excited to welcome these ladies as part of TEAM GMRC, and look forward to working with them.

At February Council meeting, the GMRC voted to recertify the GMRC's Organization of Ethics Policy with the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). A resolution signed by the Council is a requirement of this recertification process. All Council members that have not signed the resolution, please see Peggy Lovell to do so. The GMRC will be recognized for this distinction at the GMA Annual Convention in June.

Ms. Feldman also gave an update on some legislation and bills that were in motion at that time. She will keep the Council updated as decisions are made and bills are signed.

Finance Department Update and RLF Report

Andrea Newsom, Director of Finance presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Revolving Loan Program (RLF) Program. The loan program was created with funds from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to help people in our region to start businesses or help an existing business. The RLF Program can loan up to \$150,000. The applicant must have a declination letter from a financial institution and the loan should help to create jobs or maintain jobs in the business. EDA allows 100% financing on loans with sufficient collateral. Ms. Newsom showcased three existing loans, Bobbers and Beer, 441 Diesel, and Scott's on the Square with their success stories.

OLD BUSINESS

No Old Business

NEW BUSINESS

Authorization to Purchase New Fleet Vehicles

Ms. Feldman asked the Council for authorization to solicit a RFP for the purchase of two Ford Taurus' to be added to the fleet. Most of the cars in the fleet are Ford Explorers and majority of the time large vehicles are not needed. This is one reason why a mid-size car would be more efficient. The RC currently has a 2006 Jeep Liberty in the fleet that needs to be replaced. This

vehicle has been primarily used for GIS/Planning staff conducting field work. Paint is peeling and some of the internal controls are not functioning. One vehicle would replace the Jeep. The other would be leased to WorkSource for a total of \$1,500 quarterly. The WorkSource staff currently leases one of the GMRC fleet vehicles, but staff are consistently having to rent another vehicle when traveling throughout the region. The availability of two vehicles for WorkSource would cut down on the consistent need to rent vehicles. There is money in the Capital Improvement Account for this purchase. Bill Chafin made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to solicit a RFP for the purchase of two Ford Taurus' to be added to the fleet and also to dispose of the Jeep Liberty. Motion was seconded by Ricky Carter. It was questioned as to how the vehicle would be disposed of. Ms. Feldman stated it would be sent out by email to the cities and counties in our region and sold to the highest bidder. Chris Dockey asked why were we only limiting the RFQ to Ford? Ms. Feldman stated that all our other fleet vehicles are Fords and just wanted to stay with the same brand. Jim Conley stated that Ford has the state contract on vehicle purchases. Tray Hicks disputed that state contract does not always give the best price. After some discussion, Chairman Scarborough stated that the RFP could be opened up to other dealerships if that is what the Council wants. Bill Chafin amended his motion to state that the Council would authorize the Executive Director to solicit a RFP for the purchase of two mid-size sedans and be allowed to dispose of the Jeep Liberty. Ricky Carter amended his second. Motion passed.

State Travel Policy

The State Travel Policy has been brought to the Council before, but GMRC had decided to stay with the current policy that the RC had. Due to findings that were discovered by DOAA when audits were done on some of the RCs last year, the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) are suggesting all RCs across the state to adopt the State Travel Policy. They feel that all RCs would be following a uniform set of rules. It was previously discussed with the Executive Committee and they think that GMRC should pursue adopting the State Travel Policy which would be effective on July 1, 2018. The reason for the delay in adopting the new policy is if the GMRC is audited by DOAA for this current year, the RC would have two separate policies to follow during one year. If the change is made effective on July 1, 2018, the RC would only be using their current travel policy for the fiscal year that was being audited. The new policy will be presented to the Council at a later date.

Budget Amendments to FY18 GMRC Budget

Bill Chafin, Finance and Audit Committee Chairman stated the FY18 Budget needed to be amended to include three items. This Amendment includes \$345,295 in Discretionary Grant funds for North Georgia Tech, \$227,979 for the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI), and \$186,934 for the Stekoa Creek Watershed Project. The Discretionary Grant and HDCI grants are both additional grants for WorkSource. The RC has already received the money, but it was not included in the FY18 Budget when approved at the beginning of the year. The money was received later in the year. This comes as a motion from the Finance Committee and Executive Committee to recommend approval of this amendment to the FY18 Budget. Tray Hicks seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

RLF Update

Jim Conley, Loan Committee Chairman reported that the RLF Committee met prior to the Council Meeting. He gave an update on a couple of the loans. One of the loans which was made to a business in Hartwell and a building downtown was used as the collateral. The loan has fallen behind and the RC had to pay the property taxes on the building. The RC is in the process

of foreclosing on this loan. Also, the attorney has sent a demand letter to another loan recipient that had fallen behind. The Committee also received a request from one of our current loans which is in good standing, for an additional loan. This will be sent to the Council at a later date.

DOOR PRIZES

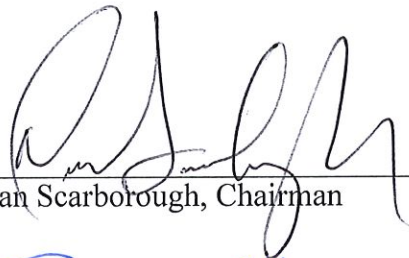
Hart County and City of Hartwell provided door prizes which were awarded to the lucky winners.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

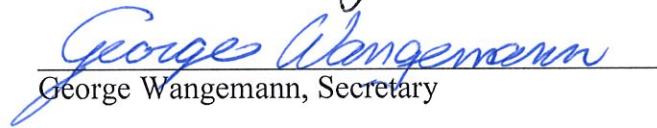
Next month's Council meeting will be sponsored by City of Lavonia at the Lavonia Railroad Depot.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.



Dean Scarborough, Chairman



George Wangemann, Secretary

**GMRC COUNCIL
ATTENDANCE SHEET
2017-2018**

COUNTY	COUNCIL MEMBER	7/27/17	8/31/17	9/28/17	10/26/17	11/16/17	12/11/17	1/25/18	2/22/18	3/29/18	4/26/18	5/31/18	6/28/18
BANKS	Danny Maxwell	P	P	A	P (R)	P (R)	P	A	P (R)	A			
	Jerry Payne	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A			
	Leslie George	P	P	P	P (R)	P	P (R)	P (R)	P	P (R)			
DAWSON	Billy Thurmond	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	P	A			
	Mike Eason							(N) P	A	A			
FORSYTH	David Headley	P	A	P	P	P	A	A	P	P			
	Pete Amos	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P			
	Vacant												
FRANKLIN	Robert Long	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P			
	Thomas Bridges	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P			
	Ralph Owens	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	P			
	Gerald Voyles	P	P	A	P (R)	P	P	P	P	P			
HABERSHAM	Natalie Crawford	A	P	A	P	A	A	P	A	P			
	Audrey Turner	P	P	P (R)	P	P (R)	P	P	P	P			
	Ken Schubring	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
HALL	Richard Higgins	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P	P (R)	P (R)	A			
	George Wangemann***	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A			
	Deborah Mack	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	P	P			
HART	Ricky Carter	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
	Tray Hieles	P	A	A	P (R)	A	P	A	P	P			
	Bill Chafin	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
LUMPKIN	Chris Dockery	P	P	P (R)	P	A	P	A	A	P			
	Sam Norton*	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P			
	J.B. Jones	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			

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RABUN	Greg James	P	A	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)			
	Debbie Chisholm	P	A	P	A	A	P	P	A	A			
	Douglas Wayne	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
STEPHENS	Dean Scarborough**	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P			
	David Austin	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	A			
	Counie Tabor	P	P	P	A	P (R)	A	P	P	A			
TOWNS	Cliff Bradshaw	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P (R)	P			
	Liz Ordiales									(N) P			
	David Stovall	A	P	P (R)	P	P (R)	P	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)			
UNION	Lamar Paris	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P (R)	P (R)			
	Jim Conley	P	P	P (R)	P	P	P	P (R)	P (R)	P			
	Mitch Griggs	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P			
WHITE	Travis Turner	P	P (R)	P	P (R)	P (R)	A	P (R)	P (R)	A			
	Annie Sutton	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P (R)			
	Bill Black	P	P	P	A	P	P	A	P	A			
GOV APPT.	Rex Farmer	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A			
	Angela Whidby	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P			
	Will Wade	A	A	P	P	P	E	A	E	A			
SPEAKER APPT.	Vacant												
	Vacant												

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

* Chairman
** Vice Chairman
*** Secretary