

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
Towns County Recreation and Conference Center
Hiawassee, Georgia
June 28, 2018

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular meeting on Thursday, June 28, 2018, 6:00 p.m. at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center in Hiawassee, Georgia. The meeting was hosted by Towns County and the Towns County Chamber of Commerce.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Dean Scarborough called the meeting to order and thanked the Council and guests for their attendance. Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw welcomed everyone to the Towns County and to the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center. Commissioner Bradshaw spoke of a number of events that are coming up in Towns County. He thanked Chamber President Candace Lee and the Chamber of Commerce for helping to sponsor this meeting and for setting up the meeting. Attending from the Chamber and CVB Board, along with Ms. Lee, are Lisa and Dwayne Phillips, Ronnie and Suzanne Phillips, and Dr. Lanier Nicholson. Commissioner Bradshaw recognized with the Commissioner Office, Margie Lovingood and Alisa Richards; Marty Roberts, 911 Director; Harold Copeland, Fire Chief; and Mayor of Hiawassee Liz Ordiales.

Chairman Scarborough thanked Towns County and the Chamber of Commerce for hosting this meeting at such a beautiful location.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice Chairman Sam Norton recognized special guests Paul Chambers, AT&T; Bill Kokaly, Congressman Collins' Office; Brad Williamson, Senator Isakson's Office; Kathy Papa, Department of Community Affairs; Cheryl Smith, Department of Economic Development; and Todd Forrest, reporter for North Georgia News and Towns County Herald.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

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

PROGRAM

Executive Director Heather Feldman introduced Jay Markwalter, Executive Director of Georgia CVBs and Chris Hardman with Georgia Hotel Lodging Association who presented the program. Tourism is a main economic development driver of this area of Georgia and is the State's second largest industry. Mr. Markwalter thanked the cities and counties in the GMRC region for supporting the Georgia CVB, because all of these tourism programs are members of the CVB organization. The CVB Board is made up of 12 cities/counties or destinations that work hand in

hand and their mission is to be a unified voice for education to the state. Mr. Hardman also explained the hotel/motel tax and how the money is distributed and utilized.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND ATTENDANCE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Chairman Scarborough asked for any comments regarding the minutes and attendance report for the May 26, 2018 meeting. Jim Conley made a motion to accept the minutes and attendance report as presented and was seconded by Doug Wayne. Motion carried. (Attendance report attached)

REPORT

Executive Director's Report

Heather Feldman informed the Council that Leslie George will be coming off the Council. Ms. Feldman expressed her thanks for Ms. George serving on the GMRC Council and her dedication for the last 13 years. During that time she was a huge advocate for the GMRC and consistently encouraged communities to understand and utilize the services of the Regional Commission. Her leadership on the Annual Meeting over the years was instrumental in making the event for many years a huge success. She will be missed each month, but we wish her well in all of her future endeavors.

At the recent Georgia Municipal Association Annual Convention in Savannah, the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission received recertification as an Organization of Ethics and City of Hiawassee was recognized as an Organization of Ethics. Sam Norton and David Austin were appointed to the GMA Board for the upcoming year. Jim Conley also accepted the Great Promise Partnership Award for the City of Blairsville and Union County. Ms. Feldman attended the Convention along with a lot of our city officials.

The Youth Division of WorkSource Georgia Mountains held its second annual Youth Conference on June 8th. It was very successful and had 81 youth participants in attendance. Breakout sessions were held on topics such as financial health, character building and traits necessary for employment, and resume building. Congratulations to John Phillips, Jessica Williams, Ebony Tucker, Shameka Harrison, Sonia Zavala, and Bethany Coggins on this achievement!

Again this year, the RC has compiled Fact Sheets which contains a five year snapshot of work the RC has done for our 51 member governments in our region. This is the second year the RC has done these. The cities and counties were previously surveyed as to what type of information they want to see on the Fact Sheets and demographic information was added this year. Copies were available or they are also on the RC website for your access. Ms. Feldman asked if there was other information that needs to be added, please let the RC know.

On July 1st, the *WaterFirst* program will join the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority! After 15 great years with the Department of Community Affairs, *WaterFirst* will be now be administered by GEFA. This move will offer new opportunities to grow the program and expand its important scope! *WaterFirst* communities in Region 2 are City of Cornelia, City of Gainesville, City of Hartwell, and Forsyth County. Council Member Travis Turner serves on the GEFA Board.

The Executive Leadership of the Small Business Administration and US Department of Agriculture have developed a MOA that focuses on rural business and agricultural economies, and access to new capital. On July 25th, there will be free workshop held at Jaemor Farms from 12:00-4:00 with USDA, SBDC, and others talking about bringing rural entrepreneurs the tools that they need to grow their expanding businesses. The RC will have a booth there with information on our Revolving Loan Program.

WorkSource Update

John Phillips, WorkSource Georgia Mountains Director spoke on the services that they have available to individuals who live in or have been separated from their jobs in Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union, and White Counties. These individuals could be eligible for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program assistance through WorkSource Georgia Mountains. This is a federal funded government program which assists youth and adults in getting trained or finding a job to enable them to get back into the workforce. Participants from different counties were interviewed regarding how the WorkSource Program had benefited them.

OLD BUSINESS

GMRC Travel Policy

Ms. Feldman stated the draft GMRC Travel Policy had been sent to the Council earlier in the month for their review. Georgia Association of Regional Commission (GARC) has strongly recommended that all RCs adopt the State Travel Policy. The GMRC Travel Policy mirrors the State Policy with a few adjustments such as no international travel, etc. Bill Chafin made a motion to adopt the GMRC Travel Policy as presented and also have the new policy incorporated into the current Personnel Policies and Finance Policies. Sam Norton seconded and motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

2018-19 GMRC Council Private Sector Representatives

According to the Bylaws, the GMRC Private Sector Representatives should be reappointed each year. Reappointment letters had previously been sent to the county and the cities within for a recommendation for their Private Sector Representative who will serve for 2018-19. Chairman Scarborough stated that the Private Sector Representatives on the Council are some of the most active members. Notification was received from all counties with the exception of Towns County. They will be making their appointment later. The confirmed reappointments are Vicki Boling, Banks; David Headley, Dawson; Robert Long, Forsyth; Gerald Voyles, Franklin; Ken Schubring, Habersham; Deborah Mack, Hall; Bill Chafin, Hart; J.B. Jones, Lumpkin; Doug Wayne, Rabun; Mitch Griggs, Union; and Bill Black, White. This slate of Private Sector Representatives comes as a recommendation from the Executive Committee. Travis Turner made a motion to accept this recommendation and was seconded by Tray Hicks. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Scarborough introduced Vicki Boling and welcomed her to the Council. Ms. Boling is our newest Council Member and is the new Private Sector Representative for Banks County.

SARA Software Contract

Georgia Mountains RC and WorkSource Georgia Mountains previously sent out an RFP for an integrated text and email software system (SARA) which will work with the VOS software that WorkSource currently use. At the present time the case managers have to document everything and text or emails their participants. The software will help free up some of their time and they will be able to spend more one-on-one time with participants. Only one bid was received from ERISS Corporation for \$50,500 start-up fee for the first year, and an annual subscription fee of \$29,800. This would be paid for out Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program money. The Workforce Development Board approved a one year contract, but it also needs Council approval. Tray Hicks made a motion to approve and was seconded by Jim Conley. Motion carried.

DOOR PRIZES

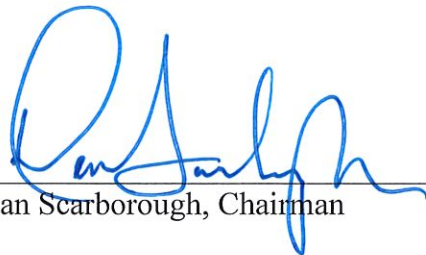
Towns County Commission and the Chamber of Commerce provided door prizes which were awarded to the lucky winners.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

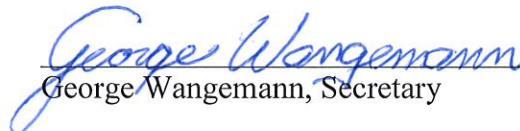
Next month's Council meeting will be hosted by Union County and the City of Blairsville.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 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	P (R)	P	A
	Jerry Payne	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	A
	Vicki Boling												(N) P
DAWSON	Billy Thurmond	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	P	A	A	P	A
	Mike Eason							(N) P	A	A	P	P (R)	P
FORSYTH	David Headley	P	A	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	A	P	P
	Pete Amos	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	P	P	A
	Jason Evans											(N) P	A
FRANKLIN	Robert Long	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P
	Thomas Bridges	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P
	Ralph Owens	P	P	P	A	A	P	P	P	P	P	A	A
HABERSHAM	Gerald Voyles	P	P	A	P (R)	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P
	Natalie Crawford	A	P	A	P	A	A	P	A	P	P	A	A
	Audrey Turner	P	P	P (R)	P	P (R)	P	P	P	P	P	P (R)	P (R)
HALL	Ken Schubring	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
	Richard Higgins	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P (R)	P	P (R)	P (R)	A	P (R)	P (R)	P
	George Wangemann***	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
HART	Deborah Maek	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	Ricky Carter	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P
	Tray Hicks	P	A	A	P (R)	A	P	A	P	P	P	A	P
LUMPKIN	Bill Chafin	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	Chris Dockery	P	P	P (R)	P	A	P	A	A	P	A	P	P (R)
	Sam Norton*	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
	J.B. Jones	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	P

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

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

* Chairman
** Vice Chairman
*** Secretary