

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
North Georgia Technical College – Blairsville Campus  
Blairsville, GA  
July 26, 2018

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular meeting on Thursday, July 26, 2018, 6:00 p.m. at the North Georgia Technical College – Blairsville Campus in Blairsville, Georgia. The meeting was hosted by Union County and the City of Blairsville.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Dean Scarborough called the meeting to order and thanked the Council and guests for their attendance. Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris welcomed everyone to Union County, City of Blairsville, and to the North Georgia Technical College campus. Commissioner Paris spoke of the great working relationship Union County and City of Blairsville have and also with the neighboring cities and counties. He recognized with Union County Larry Garrett, County Manager; Jennifer Mahan, Administrative Assistant; Laura Bristols, Accounting Director; Jill Chastain, Accounts Payable Clerk; Richard Jones, Assistant Fire Chief; and Union County Hospital Administrator Louis Kelley. Union County is proud to have the best hospital and the only full time fire department in the mountain region.

Mayor Jim Conley welcomed everyone to Blairsville and reiterated Commissioner Paris' remarks about the great working relationship of the city and county. The Mayor recognized City Council Members Mary Ruth Cook, Tony Dyer, Betty Easter, and Rhonda Mahan; Kay McCann, City Clerk; and Darren Harper, Downtown Development Program Manager.

Chairman Scarborough thanked Union County and the City of Blairsville for hosting this meeting and to North Georgia Technical College for the use of their facility.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice Chairman Sam Norton recognized special guests David Mull, USDA Area Director; Cheryl Smith, Department of Economic Development; and Mark Smith, Reporter for North Georgia News.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

Ms. Henrietta Sutton from White County gave our devotion, invocation, and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROGRAM

Executive Director Heather Feldman introduced Ms. Joyce White, Georgia State Director of United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development who presented the program.

USDA has over 40 programs featuring loans, grants and loan/grant combinations that are designed to create jobs and to support economic development. This department is considered the sixth largest bank in the United States. USDA currently has \$34 million allocated to helping the state bring business and industry to the regions in Georgia, \$30 million to help with affordable and safe housing, and \$70 million allocated for grants and loans. The biggest push for USDA at the present time is for water and sewer needs. USDA has \$4 billion set aside for water and sewer infrastructure in rural communities. Ms. White encouraged the Council to let her know if they have any water and sewer needs at this time. USDA also helps an average of about 5,000 Georgians each year to buy or rent affordable housing. Ms. White highlighted some of the projects that USDA had assisted with in our region

#### CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND ATTENDANCE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Chairman Scarborough asked for any comments regarding the minutes and attendance report for the June 28, 2018 meeting. Doug Wayne made a motion to accept the minutes and attendance report as presented and was seconded by Jim Conley. Motion carried. (Attendance report attached)

#### REPORT

##### Chairman's Report

Chairman Scarborough stated that the RC is already working on securing sponsors for 2019 Council meeting. Several have already been secured, but if anyone is interested in sponsoring one month, please let the RC know.

##### Executive Director's Report

Heather Feldman informed the Council that she and Andrea Newsom participated in the Rural Strong Georgia workshop on July 25<sup>th</sup> at Jaemor Farms. Rural Strong Georgia was created with a focus on the rural business and agriculture economies. The RC had an exhibit table along with a number of other entities and passed out information on the RC's RLF Program hoping to secure some new loans and get the word out about the program.

The RC has begun the initial process of our annual financial audit with Rushton & Company. The Auditors have already been in the office for a few days gathering their preliminary information and will be returning to our office on August 20<sup>th</sup>. GMRC staff has been extra busy working with the Auditors in preparing and pulling documents. She thanked the accounting and administrative staff for their hard work in preparing for this. Hopefully all the preparation will make the audit go smoothly.

The RC purchased two Mobile Training Units back in 2013 which we now call the Career Coaches. Our Career Coaches for the five year timespan have had 11, 620 people come onboard for some type of services. The total of actions performed on the units, such as filling out or updating resumes, has surpassed 21,000. The units are making a difference in our region into trying to get people back in the workforce. Congrats for Keith Krauth, Micah Thomas, and John Phillips with WorkSource for making this happen.

Huge kudos to Faith Bryan, Brandon Carlock, Adam Hazell, Joe Rothwell, and Caleb Davidson who have completed and submitted all of the LUCA data to the U.S. Census Bureau. This was a huge undertaking, providing assistance to 37 of our communities with this process. They had some software challenges but were still able to get them finished on time.

The Planning Department has a Lunch and Learn set for Tuesday, July 31<sup>st</sup> at the RC Office. They will be discussing Bike and Pedestrian Accessibility, which is becoming very popular.

### Financial Report

Andrea Newsom, Director of Finance, stated that this is audit season. The accounting department was only four days into the new fiscal year and the auditors were already asking for information to start the audit and the RC had not even closed the books for the last month of the fiscal year. The RC is better prepared this year due to the accounting software doing fund reporting and also having receivables set up in the reports. Ms. Newsom presented the Financial Report for the fourth quarter which was previously emailed to the Council. The Revenue Expenditure Report for the period of July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018 indicated the Actual Revenue Income of \$6,145,911, Expenditures of \$5,492,370, with 95 percent of the budget expended for the fiscal year. Jim Conley made a motion to accept the Financial Report and was seconded by Ricky Cartér. Motion carried unanimously.

### Planning Department Update

The RC Planning Department is made up of Planning Director Adam Hazell and Regional Planners Caleb Davidson and Joe Rothwell. Mr. Hazell introduced Mr. Davidson to give an update on what the department has been working on for the past year. The Department's motto is "Making our communities better than we inherited". They are here to assist our cities and counties and to provide them with more information and better information. Some of the projects that they perform are leveraged by DCA and DOT funding. Comp plans for the cities and counties are the bulk of their work. These comp plans allow the cities and counties to maintain their QLG status and to turn visions into shovel ready projects. Other projects they perform are feasibility studies, urban redevelopment plans, signage, local department assessment for fire departments and parks and recreation departments, project plan design, graphics, safe routes to schools, highway corridor studies, historic resource surveys, and watershed assessments. They have held two lunch and learn events. In February, the topic was Tiny Houses and this month's is Regional Trail Studies/Safe Routes to School. If the Planning Department can assist your city or county in anyway, please do not hesitate to contact the RC.

### OLD BUSINESS

No Old Business

### NEW BUSINESS

### Annual Meeting Committee Report

Angela Whidby, Chair of the Annual Meeting Committee reported that this year's event will be held Friday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at the Dillard House Conference Center. The ticket price remained at \$42. She encouraged the Council to begin working on sponsors for this year. Peggy will be

sending out this information by email to the Council. A sponsorship is \$250 which includes two tickets or \$500 will reserve a table. The Committee is already working on the entertainment for this year.

DOOR PRIZES

Union County and the City of Blairsville provided door prizes which were awarded to the lucky winners.

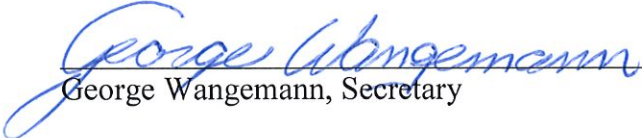
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next month's Council meeting will be hosted by Forsyth County Commission and the Cumming-Forsyth Chamber of Commerce.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

  
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Dean Scarborough, Chairman

  
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George Wangemann, Secretary

**GMRC COUNCIL  
ATTENDANCE SHEET  
2018-2019**

COUNTY	COUNCIL MEMBER	7/26/18	8/30/18	9/27/18	10/25/18	11/15/18	12/7/18	1/31/19	2/28/19	3/28/19	4/25/19	5/30/19	6/27/19
RABUN	Greg James	P (R)											
	Debbie Chisholm	A											
	Douglas Wayne	P											
STEPHENS	Dean Scarborough*	P											
	David Austin	A											
	Connie Tabor	A											
TOWNS	Cliff Bradshaw	P											
	Liz Ordiales	P											
	David Stovall	P (R)											
UNION	Lamar Paris	P											
	Jim Conley	P											
	Mitch Griggs	A											
WHITE	Travis Turner	P (R)											
	Annie Sutton	P											
	Bill Black	P											
GOV APPT.	Rex Farmer	A											
	Angela Whitby	P											
	Will Wade	A											
SPEAKER APPT.	Vacant												
	Vacant												

N = NEW MEMBER

E = EXCUSED

V = VACANCY

R = REPRESENTED

A = ABSENT

P = PRESENT

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

