

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COUNCIL MEETING  
Civic Center  
Gainesville, Georgia  
August 31, 2017

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular meeting on Thursday, August 31, 2017, 6:00 p.m. at the Civic Center in Gainesville, Georgia. The meeting was hosted by City of Gainesville.

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairman Dean Scarborough called the meeting to order and thanked the Council and guests for their attendance. City of Gainesville Mayor Danny Dunagan welcomed everyone to Gainesville, Georgia. He recognized George Wangemann, City Councilman; Denise Jordan, City Clerk; Alisha Grayson, Deputy Assistant City Clerk; and Bryan Lackey, City Manager. Mayor Dunagan recognized State Representative Lee Hawkins; Daniella Perry, Senator Isakson's Office; and Bill Kokaly and Joel Katz, Congressman Collins' Office and thanked them for attending. Mr. Wangemann presented the Downtown Gainesville Renaissance Strategic Vision and Plan that the City is in the process of utilizing to make the downtown area a thriving and growing economic engine.

Chairman Scarborough thanked City of Gainesville for hosting tonight's meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman James Grogan recognized other special guests Kathy Papa, Department of Community Affairs; and Cheryl Smith, Georgia Department of Economic Development.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

Deborah Mack gave our devotion, invocation, and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROGRAM

Mr. Louis Smith, President of System Acute and Post-Acute Operations for North Georgia Health Systems (NGHS) presented a very informative program to the Council. NGHS started in 1951 as Hall County Hospital and now serves almost the entire GMRC region. For the last several years, NGHS generated over \$1B in economic benefits to this area. They feel that future focus needs to be on services in the rural areas. More care needs to be driven back out to the rural area to prevent them from having to drive to Atlanta for health services. Two big changes which are being implemented are bedside shift report which involves the care givers going into the patient's room and discussing their care with the patient and their family at shift change. Also, NGHS has changed their electronic health record system which can reflect all health

information from all doctors' offices, long term health care facilities, and hospitals in the north Georgia region. This means you will only have to be registered one time into the system. They are striving to improve and their motto is "Better tomorrow than we are today".

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

Chairman Scarborough asked for any comments regarding the minutes and attendance report for the July 27, 2017 meeting. Chris Dockery made a motion to accept the minutes and attendance report as presented and was seconded by Danny Maxwell. Motion carried. (Attendance report attached)

#### REPORTS

##### Chairman's Report

Chairman Scarborough asked Kathy Papa with Department of Community Affairs to brief the Council about a new program that is available. Ms. Papa informed the Council of a new program through Department of Community Affairs called Rural Zones which was made possible through HB73. Almost every city is eligible. She has been trying to get the word out because the deadline for this program is October 31, 2017. There are huge benefits from the program. If your city is selected to have a rural revitalization zone, the businesses that come to this zone will receive investment tax credits, revitalization tax credits, and job tax credits. Ms. Papa asked if any city was interested in applying, please contact her and she would help with the application.

Chairman Scarborough also reported the Annual Committee met prior to the Council Meeting and are making arrangements for this year's event. All Council members were encouraged to look at firms that do work with their city/county and ask them to be a sponsor.

##### Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Heather Feldman reported the GMRC staff has been extremely busy this month.

John Phillips attended the State Workforce Development Board meeting in Augusta. At that meeting, they voted to have the State Workforce Development Board Meeting on May 17, 2018 in Gainesville. They want to see a comprehensive One-Stop center that is up and running.

Congratulations to the City of Toccoa on the recent visit and report from the Georgia Department of Economic Development – Tourism Division Product Development Resource Team. The Resource Team spent several days reviewing and analyzing the city's tourism and product development goals. The report will help enhance tourism and help create new opportunities to introduce new audiences to Toccoa/Stephens County's amazing variety of sites and attractions.

Ms. Feldman thanked Andrea Newsom and her staff for all their hard work on the two audits that the RC has just completed. Auditors have been in our office for three weeks working on the

GMRC and WorkSource Audits. The Council will be hearing more in the near future regarding the final reports from the Auditors.

Daniel Martin held the annual Economic Development Retreat at the RC office. It was great to hear about the exciting things happening throughout the region as well as the dialogue regarding opportunities and challenges that everyone is facing. Thank you to Robert Long and Mitch Griggs for attending!

The Georgia Association of Regional Commissions Annual Conference is scheduled for November 8-10, 2017 at the King and Prince, St. Simons Island. This is a great conference with extremely informative speakers and is a good time to meet and network with other RC Council members and staff from across the state. If you are interested in attending, please call Peggy Lovell at 770-538-2607 or email at [plovell@gmrc.ga.gov](mailto:plovell@gmrc.ga.gov).

GMRC has received funding from the Department of Community Affairs to assist your local government with the LUCA process. There will be no additional cost to your City or County. If you would like for GMRC to process the US Census Bureau's residential address list for your jurisdiction, please give Faith Bryan a call. It is very important that you designate GMRC as your LUCA Liaison or Designated Reviewer on the registration form. Without this designation, GMRC will be unable to assist you. According to notification we received from DCA on the status of the registered communities across the state, and GMRC is leading the way. Great job to Faith Bryan and Brandon Carlock on all of their efforts in helping our communities!!!

Ms. Feldman recognized Patrick Larson and announced his promotion to Senior Project Manager in the Economic Development Department. Patrick has been with the Regional Commission for six years and has done great work for our cities and counties on the grant applications he has prepared.

#### Veterans Parkway Infrastructure Project

Tim Blaydes with Goodwin, Mills and Cawood shared a success story for the Veteran's Parkway Infrastructure Project located in Stephens County. City of Toccoa and Stephens County partnered together and with the assistance of GMRC applied for several grants for the water and sewer infrastructure which runs along Veterans Parkway. A total of \$3.92M was secured for this project. The City and County each provided \$1M in SPLOST money; \$1.42M was secured from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), \$300,000 from Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and \$200,000 from OneGeorgia grants applications. This one project saved and created over 1,000 jobs for this area. Sage had 235 jobs saved, ASI had 91 job created with the first expansion and 50 with the second; and NIFCO KTW had a total of 400-600 jobs. Mr. Blaydes thanked GMRC for all their work on the grant applications. They are currently working on Phase II of this project now.

Chairman Scarborough stated this is a great example of using the RC to put all these entities together for funding that is crucial to our cities and counties.

OLD BUSINESS

No Old Business

NEW BUSINESS

2017 CEDS Document Review

Daniel Martin, Economic Development Director announced that the RC had just received word that three grants were approved for funding. Banks County received \$1M through an EDA grant for the Diana Foods project. Habersham County received \$750K for their Senior Center and Lumpkin County also received \$595K for their Senior Center. These two projects were funded through Department of Community Affairs' Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Thank you to Patrick for his hard work on these applications and congratulations to all three recipients.

Mr. Martin recognized the 2017 Community Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) committee members that were present and thanked them for their valued work on this document. This is a five year plan and has been completely rewritten.

A few highlights are:

1. Our region experienced a year of significant growth with 2,047 jobs created which was a 63% increase from last year, and \$311M in private investment generated.
2. Film Industry and New Business Recruitment was added as new priorities.
3. Greater emphasis on supporting tourism product development which include the regional wine industry.
4. Regarding workforce, issues were outlined revolving around soft skills and workforce housing.
5. Our regional priority list included notable changes including infrastructure and transportation projects.

This document has been emailed to the Council Members for their review. It was recommended that this document be placed on table for review until the September Council meeting. Jim Conley made a motion and was seconded by Doug Wayne to accept the recommendation. Motion carried unanimously.

DOOR PRIZES

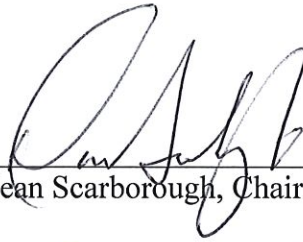
City of Gainesville provided door prizes which were awarded to the lucky winners.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next month's Council meeting will be sponsored by White County and City of Cleveland at the Woodlands Camp.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.

  
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Dean Scarborough, Chairman

  
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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										
	Jerry Payne	P	P										
	Leslie George	P	P										
DAWSON	Billy Thurmond	A	P										
	James Grogan	P	P										
	David Headley	P	A										
FORSYTH	Pete Amos	P	P										
	Chuck Welch	P	P										
	Robert Long	P	P										
FRANKLIN	Thomas Bridges	P	P										
	Ralph Owens	P	P										
	Gerald Voyles	P	P										
HABERSHAM	Natalie Crawford	A	P										
	Audrey Turner	P	P										
	Ken Schubring	P	P										
HALL	Richard Higgins	P (R)	P (R)										
	George Wangemann***	P	P										
	Deborah Mack	P	P										
HART	Ricky Carter	P	P										
	Tray Hicks	P	A										
	Bill Chafin	P	P										
LUMPKIN	Chris Dockery	P	P										
	Sam Norton*	P	P										
	J.B. Jones	P	A										

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

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

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