

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
October 26, 2023

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular monthly meeting on October 26, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at Montaluce Winery and Restaurant, located at 501 Hightower Church Rd., Dahlonega, GA 30533. The meeting was hosted by Lumpkin County and the City of Dahlonega.

CALL TO ORDER

GMRC Chairman Ken Schubring called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. and welcomed all attendees.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners Chairman Chris Dockery welcomed all in attendance to Lumpkin County and introduced Lumpkin County Manager Alan Ours and thanked him for his work in putting the meeting together.

City of Dahlonega Mayor JoAnne Taylor also welcomed all attendees, thanked Chairman Dockery and Alan Ours for arranging the meeting, and introduced City Councilmen Lance Bagley and Ron Larson.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Courtney Umbehant recognized special guests; Cheryl Smith, Georgia Department of Agriculture; Mike Fisher, WGI; Kathy Papa, Department of Community Affairs; Melanie Garrett, UGA Small Business Development Center; and Tammy Rauch, Technical College System of Georgia.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

Ms. Deborah Mack gave the devotion, invocation, and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance. Dinner was provided by Montaluce Restaurant.

PROGRAM

Michael Chriszt, VP & Regional Outreach Officer, for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta presented a program update.

A copy of the presentation can be found at <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/gmrccouncil>.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND ATTENDANCE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Secretary Bruce Palmer asked for any comments or a motion regarding the minutes and attendance report for the September 28, 2023 Council meeting. Bill Chafin made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Doug Wayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Chairman's Report

Chairman Schubring reported that he, along with Vice-Chairman Umbehant and Secretary Palmer, would be joining GMRC staff at the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) Annual Conference on November 8 – 10, 2023.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Feldman reported that GMRC was one of 10 Local Development Districts (LDDs) selected as a recipient of the Ready LDD Grant through the Appalachian Regional Commission. GMRC will be awarded \$100,000 to expand staffing and capacity to better support its communities in identifying, accessing, and implementing federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and other funding sources.

Ms. Feldman congratulated the Union County Development Authority on receiving \$62,500 in Appalachian Regional Commission grant funding for the development of a Strategic Plan for their community.

Ms. Feldman also congratulated the City of Royston who was awarded an ARC grant in the amount of \$87,500 for the development of their Strategic Plan.

Executive Director Feldman was happy to announce that GMRC and WorkSource Georgia Mountains finished the programmatic and financial monitoring for the Workforce Development operations, and that for the second year in a row, there were not any findings.

GMRC hosted an Appalachian Regional Commission training for Local Development District staff in Georgia, Tennessee, and South Carolina. We were pleased to have ARC staff from headquarters in DC and DCA office visit Georgia and the GMRC offices.

Executive Director Feldman and Senior Project Manager Laurin Yoder recently attended the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce's annual Small Business Resource Fair. It was a great success, and they had the opportunity to network with small businesses and share the Revolving Loan Fund program. Ms. Feldman advised the Council that if their chamber has a similar event, please let her know, and GMRC would be happy to participate.

Ms. Feldman advised the Council that Whitney Blair, WSGM Director, would be going out on maternity leave within the next few weeks, and that Danielle Avelar, Adult and Dislocated Worker Supervisor, will be the point of contact in her absence. For anything Workforce Development related, Danielle can be reached at davelar@gmrc.ga.gov or 770-538-2727.

Quarterly Finance Report

All Council members received the FY24 quarter 1 financial report in the agenda packet prior to the meeting. GMRC Finance Director Alicia Page explained that the report is for the unaudited period ending September 30, 2023.

As of the period end, the year-to-date revenues total \$1,542,984.85 of which:

- \$1,017,674.51 or approximately 66% are federal and state funding.
- \$155,155.05 or approximately 10% are member dues.
- \$343,931.58 or approximately 23% are charges for services.
- The remaining \$26,223.71 or 1% is for other revenues.

At the end of the period, expenditures totaled \$1,422,783.02. Total transfers and matching obligations for the period were \$46,497.71. Leaving a total surplus of \$120,201.83 for the period end.

Factors that contribute to this surplus include:

- \$12,072.56 in investment income from the Regional Commission's two revolving loan funds.
- The remaining surplus is due to recognized savings from higher interest earnings, and conservative spending in order to facilitate the RCs ongoing operational needs.

Chairman Schubring asked for a motion to accept the finance report. Doug Wayne made the motion and Bill Chafin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner

Annual Meeting Committee Chairwoman Deborah Mack reminded the committee that the GMRC 61st Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner will be held on Friday, December 1, 2023. The reception will start at 4:30 p.m. with dinner and awards to follow at 6:00 p.m. Ticket prices are \$45, and Council members must purchase a ticket to attend. Ms. Mack reported that the meeting had already received several sponsorships, but more are needed. At the time of the meeting there were four Diamond Sponsors, one Platinum Sponsor, two Gold Sponsors, and four Silver Sponsors already secured.

CEDS/Regional Plan Update

GMRC Economic Development Director Patrick Larson explained that the Economic Development Administration (EDA) requires that, as part of its planning program, recipients develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that is rewritten every five years with annual updates on the progress of goals and objectives outlined in the document. The GMRC CEDS and Regional Plan was last rewritten in 2022 and 2023 serves as the first annual update for the 2022-2026 document.

This update provides EDA with progress made in each of the documents seven goal areas: Natural and Cultural Resources; Land Use; Community Facilities and Services; Economic Development, Business and Industry; Workforce Development; Housing; and Pre-Disaster Mitigation.

Highlights from the document were discussed at the September Council meeting, and the document was e-mailed to all members on September 28th for review.

The CEDS Committee met on September 6, 2023, and approved moving the CEDS and Regional Plan Annual Update to the GMRC Council for review and approval.

Chairman Schubring asked for a motion to approve the CEDS and Regional Plan update. Denise McKay made the motion and Kevin Herrit seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget Amendments

GMRC Finance Director Alicia Page explained to the committee that GMRC is required by state law to adopt a balanced operating budget each fiscal year prior to its fiscal year's start of July 1st. Many times, the budget process requires the use of estimates as Federal and State agencies have not released their allocations prior to adoption of GMRC's fiscal budget. Additionally, from time-to-time unforeseen expenditures arise that require the use of funds not previously adopted during the budget process. Georgia State law allows GMRC to amend its budget at any time during the budget period to account for these changes. All changes were sent out to the Council in the agenda packet. The changes discussed are listed in the chart below:

Funding To Amend	Original Budget	Amended Budget
FY24 Safety Grant	3,000.00	-
FY24 Budgeted Fund Balance	-	50,000.00
Ready LDD ARC Grant	-	100,000.00
FY24 DOT Transit Grant	85,993.00	96,741.00
WIOA Dislocated Worker Quest Grant	-	325,596.88
WIOA 3rd Year Youth Funding	-	200,000.00
WIOA 3rd Year Adult Funding	-	120,000.00
WIOA PY23 Adult Allocation Funding	1,409,983.00	1,566,732.00
WIOA PY23 Youth Allocation Funding	676,291.00	689,415.00
WIOA PY23 Dislocated Worker Allocation Funding	95,344.00	101,900.00

Chairman Ken Schubring asked for a motion to approve the amendments. Bill Chafin made the motion and JoAnne Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RLF Plan Update

The RLF Plan updates were sent to all Council members on October 16, 2023. The update provided had all the changes highlighted as well as explanations of why those changes were made. GMRC Senior Project Manager Laurin Yoder explained that changes were made that would benefit the region, as well as changes that were required by EDA due to regulation changes. Ms. Yoder recognized the RLF Committee members and thanked them for their assistance in identifying the updates that needed to be made.

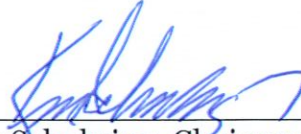
Chairman Schubring asked for a motion to approve the updates and submit the plan to EDA. Mitch Griggs made the motion and JoAnne Taylor seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Schubring announced that the November Council Meeting will be held in the City of Dawsonville, in the Gordon Pirkle Room of the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame, and that free tours would be available from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. before the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.



Ken Schubring, Chairman



Bruce Palmer, Secretary

**GMRC COUNCIL
ATTENDANCE SHEET
2023-2024**

COUNTY	COUNCIL MEMBER	July 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	March 24	April 24	May 24	June 24
RABUN	Kent Woerner	(R)	A	A	(R)								
	Althea Bleckley	P	P	P	A								
	Douglas Wayne	P	P	A	P								
STEPHENS	Tara Simmons	P	A	P	P								
	David Austin	P	P	(R)	A								
	James Addison	P	E	P	P								
TOWNS	Cliff Bradshaw	P	P	P	A								
	Liz Ordiales	P	(R)	(R)	A								
	Denise McKay	R	P	P	P								
UNION	Lamar Paris	P	P	A	P								
	Jim Conley	P	P	(P)	P								
	Mitch Griggs	P	P	P	P								
WHITE	Travis Turner	(P)	(P)	P	(P)								
	Nan Bowen	P	P	P	P								
	Susan Cremering	A	P	P	P								
GOV APPT.	VACANT	V	V	V	V								
	Angela Whidby	P	A	P	P								
	VACANT	V	V	V	V								
LT. GOV APPT.	VACANT	V	V	V	V								
SPEAKER APPT.	VACANT	V	V	V	V								

P = PRESENT A = ABSENT (R) = REPRESENTED (P) PROXY VOTE V = VACANCY E = EXCUSED N = NEW MEMBER X = NO MEETING
 * Chairman
 *** Vice Chairman
 **** Secretary