

## MINUTES

Middle Georgia Regional Commission  
Council Meeting  
Thursday, November 13, 2014, 6:00 p.m.  
175 Emery Highway, Suite C, Macon, GA

### MEMBERS PRESENT:

#### BALDWIN COUNTY

Johnny Westmoreland  
Richard Mullins  
Bill Millians  
Denese Shinholster

#### CRAWFORD COUNTY

Paul Chapman  
Becky Smith  
Charlie Westberry  
Robert Ray

#### HOUSTON COUNTY

George Slappey  
Clifford Holmes

#### JONES COUNTY

Preston Hawkins  
Jimmy Roberts  
Francis Adams  
Frank Duke

#### MONROE COUNTY

Mike Bilderback  
Dick Bazemore

#### PEACH COUNTY

James Richardson  
James Khoury

#### PULASKI COUNTY

Butch Hall  
Henry Cravey  
James Colson

#### PUTNAM COUNTY

Billy Webster  
John Reid  
Terry Schwindler

#### TWIGGS COUNTY

Ken Fowler  
Shannon Hart  
Johnny Branan  
Joyce Mitchum

#### WILKINSON COUNTY

Dennis Holder

#### MIDDLE GEORGIA

Charles Sims

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GUESTS PRESENT:

Ken Neil – Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker, LLC

Russell Lipford – Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker, LLC

Ned Sanders – Clean Air Coalition Chairman

Bill Stembridge – Office of Congressman Saxby Chambliss

Elaine Westberry – Spouse of Council Chair Charlie Westberry

STAFF PRESENT:

Greg Boike – Government Services Specialist

Kevin Brown – Attorney

Daniel Cummings – Senior Government Services Specialist

Sheknita Davis – Workforce Director

Crystal Gaillard – Government Services Specialist

Matt Garvin – Finance Officer

Dan Gary – Office Manager

Kristi Harpst – Regional Planner

Nick Kouloungis – I.T. Director

Brent Lanford – Deputy Director

Laura Mathis – Deputy Director

Ralph Nix – Executive Director

Carol Payton – Executive Secretary

Crystal Vaughn – Senior Finance Specialist

Mitchell Worthington – Finance Specialist

CALL TO ORDER

Council Chairman Charlie Westberry called the November 13, 2014 meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Secretary Carol Payton called the roll and indicated that a quorum was present with 24 voting and nine non-voting members present.

OPENING CEREMONIES

a. Invocation

Crawford County member Paul Chapman gave the invocation.

b. Welcome

Chairman Westberry welcomed everyone to the November meeting.

c. Introduction of Guests

The following guests were recognized:

Ken Neil – Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker, LLC  
Russell Lipford – Clifton, Lipford, Hardison & Parker, LLC  
Ned Sanders – Clean Air Coalition Chairman  
Bill Stembridge – Office of Congressman Saxby Chambliss  
Elaine Westberry – Spouse of Council Chair Charlie Westberry

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST SPEAKER

Wilkinson County Commission Chair Dennis Holder introduced Mike Beatty who was the former Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs from 2003 to 2013. Mr. Beatty now serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Great Promise Partnership.

GUEST SPEAKER – Mike Beatty, Great Promise Partnership

Mr. Beatty thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak. He took a few moments and reminisced about his years of working with the Regional Commissions in his role as Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

Mike Beatty is now involved with another exciting program called the Great Promise Partnership (GPP). This 501©(3) program began in January of 2012. On August 1, 2013, GPP became affiliated with the Georgia Department of Economic Development Workforce Division. The program works with youth that are at risk of not graduating from high school, with the promise that if they will continue their education, they will receive support for their efforts and help to prepare for further education, military service, or the workforce after graduation. These at-risk applicants are screened by school officials using certain indicators and criteria.

Great Promise Partnership was designated cooperatively by the DCA and numerous public and private sector leaders. It was modeled after the 12 for Life program at Southwire Company in Carrollton, Georgia. GPP's 12 for Life Workplace allows teens 16 and older to spend part of the day at school and part of the day at the job site. The participants benefit from on-the-job training at real entry-level jobs, mentoring, life and career skill sessions and service learning projects. Students may also earn pay raises based on job and academic performance, attendance, and behavior.

Another module is the GPP Workprep which engages at-risk high school students in bi-weekly, after-school sessions that include life skills training, leadership development, college and career

planning, and face-time with community and state leaders. This program is hosted at local school sites and include a service-learning project.

In conclusion, Mr. Beatty entertained any questions about the Great Partnership Program and encouraged everyone to visit the website ([www.gppartnership.org](http://www.gppartnership.org)).

#### REPORT FROM BUDGET, AUDIT, AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

a. Presentation of FY 2014 Audit

Committee Chair Butch Hall said the Committee met prior to the Council meeting and reviewed the Draft Audit Report in detail, and it was approved for presentation to the full Council. Mr. Hall called on Ken Neil and Russell Lipford of Clifton, Lipford, Hardison and Parker to present the FY 2014 Audit.

Russell Lipford began by noting that this is a CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2014. A CAFR is the most exhaustive kind of reporting that a government entity can do. This report will be submitted to the Government Finance Officers Association for consideration of a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This certificate is awarded based on adherence to reporting and presentation standards. Less than one percent of governments who file a CAFR receive this certificate. Mr. Lipford said he feels confident that the Middle Georgia RC will receive another Certificate of Achievement as it has for the past 19 years because this report is in complete compliance. The audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*.

There are four sections that are included in the report; they include the Introductory Section, Financial Section, Statistical Section and Other Information, and the Single Audit Section. Some of the areas that were highlighted include: Independent Auditor's report, Government wide Statement, Balance Sheet, Notes to the Statement, and Required Communications. Included in the Independent Auditor's report is the Auditor's opinion which, for the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, is an Unmodified Opinion with no audit findings. This is the highest opinion a CPA can give for financial statements.

A copy of the audit was provided to each Council Member. Council members were strongly encouraged to take time to read the Letter of Transmittal and the Management's Discussion and Analysis. These two documents provide a narrative and subjective overview of the entire operations of the MGRC. They also provide the easiest way of understanding what is going on.

Mr. Neil asked if there were any questions concerning the audit, but none were asked.

Mr. Hall expressed appreciation to CLHP as well as MGRC staff for the work that was put into the audit. The Committee Chair said the Budget, Audit, and Personnel Committee recommends that the FY 2014 Audit be accepted as presented for distribution to the appropriate agencies. The Council unanimously approved the recommendation of the Committee.

b. Banking Services Proposal

Committee Chair Hall said the Regional Commission utilizes several banks in Middle Georgia to provide banking services. Upon notification that interest rates would drop significantly at one of the banking institutions utilized, staff solicited proposals for banking services. Six proposals were received and evaluated by staff. The Budget, Audit and Personnel Committee reviewed the responses and recommends that the accounts currently held by Certus Bank be transferred to United Bank effective January 1, 2015. These accounts include the MGRC escrow account, EDA Revolving Loan Fund and USDA Rural Development Revolving Loan Fund. In accordance with the Regional Commission's Accounting Procedures, this action requires approval by the Council.

The Council unanimously approved the recommendation of the Committee. Dick Bazemore asked that the record reflect that he abstained from voting.

c. Other

The Committee Chair reported on the following items that were discussed during the Committee meeting but did not require action of the Council:

- Authorization for staff to solicit proposals for audit services for a three-year period beginning with FY 2015.
- Need for a budget amendment in the first quarter of 2015 in order to reflect changes in revenues and expenditures.
- Report that Karen Thompson will join the MGRC Team as the new Director of Business Development on December 1. Also, Julie Hall has been appointed as Interim Aging Director.
- On-going response to the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts' audit of Regional Commissions.

Mr. Hall noted conclusion of the Report of the Budget, Audit, and Personnel Committee.

STANDARD ORDER OF BUSINESS

a. Approval of Minutes of October 9, 2014 Annual Meeting

There were no corrections to the minutes of the October 9, 2014 Annual Meeting, and they were unanimously approved on a motion by Robert Reichert and seconded by Ken Fowler.

b. Old Business

None to report.

c. New Business

1. Local Assistance Requests

MGRC staff member Crystal Gaillard presented the following local assistance requests that have been received since the October meeting:

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**Community: Baldwin County**

Project Title: Assistance to Firefighters Grant

Project Description: Preparation of an Assistance to Firefighters Grant application.

**Community: City of Byron**

Project Title: Recreational Trails Grant

Project Description: Preparation of Recreational Trails Grant application and subsequent administration of grant award.

**Community: Crawford County**

Project Title: Salary survey

Project Description: Conduct salary survey of similar populated counties for law enforcement, dispatchers, and jail personnel.

**Community: Crawford County**

Project Title: Payroll Plan Review

Project Description: Review current payroll plan as compared to similar populated counties.

**Community: City of Fort Valley**

Project Title: Recreational Trails Grant

Project Description: Preparation of Recreational Trails Grant application and subsequent administration of grant award.

**Community: City of Gordon**

Project Title: 2014/2015 Budget

Project Description: Preparation of 2014/2015 Budget for the city.

**Community: Houston County**

Project Title: Community Development Block Grant

Project Description: Preparation of a CDBG application for funding in the 2015 cycle for construction of a behavioral health/addictive disease facility.

**Community:**           **City of Irwinton**  
Project Title:           Nuisance Ordinance  
Project Description:   Update of Nuisance Ordinance.

**Community:**           **City of Irwinton**  
Project Title:           Personnel Classification System  
Project Description:   Development of organizational chart, pay classification system, job descriptions, and update of personnel policy.

**Community:**           **Jones County**  
Project Title:           2015 Community Development Block Grant  
Project Description:   Preparation of a CDBG application for funding in the 2015 cycle.

**Community:**           **Jones County**  
Project Title:           Urban Redevelopment Plan  
Project Description:   Update the Urban Redevelopment Plan.

**Community:**           **City of Perry**  
Project Title:           Recreational Trails Grant  
Project Description:   Preparation of Recreational Trails Grant application.

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The local assistance requests were unanimously approved on a motion by Richard Mullins and seconded by Shannon Hart.

2.       Report on Council Appointees for 2015

Chairman Westberry reported that the following appointments to the Middle Georgia RC Council have been received:

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**Baldwin County**

John Westmoreland – County member  
Richard Mullins – Municipal member  
Bill Millians – Non-public member  
Denese Shinholster – Associate member  
Matt Poyner – Associate member

**Houston County**

Tommy Stalnaker – County Member  
John Harley – Municipal Member  
George Slappey – Non-public Member  
Clifford Holmes – Associate Member  
Randy Toms – Associate Member

**Jones County**

Preston Hawkins – County Member  
Stephen Tingen – Municipal Member  
Jimmy Roberts – Non-public Member  
Frank Duke – Associate Member  
Francis Adams – Associate Member

**Pulaski County**

Butch Hall – County Member  
Henry Cravey – Municipal Member  
Lee Slade – Non-public Member  
James Colson – Associate Member  
Nicky Cabero – Associate Member

**Putnam County**

Billy Webster – County Member  
John Reid – Municipal Member  
Terry Schwindler – Non-public Member

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The Council appointments were unanimously approved on a motion by Dick Bazemore and seconded by Richard Mullins.

Chairman Westberry encouraged the remaining counties to submit their appointments as soon as possible.

**GOOD OF THE ORDER**

- a. Report from 2014 MGRC Annual Meeting and GARC Annual Conference



Ralph Nix reported that attendance at the 2014 MGRC annual meeting was the largest ever recorded with approximately 325 people. The average attendance is normally around 250.

The GARC Annual Conference was held November 5 – 7 at The King and Prince in St. Simons Island, Georgia. There were over 300 attendees from around the state. The Middle Georgia Regional Commission hosted a dinner on Thursday for participants from the Middle Georgia area as well as some agencies that the MGRC does business with. There were 43 in attendance in addition to the four staff members.

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Ralph Nix presented a copy of the book entitled *Courthouses of Georgia* that staff got at an event in Perry. He said it would be available after the meeting if anyone would like to look through it. He encouraged everyone to purchase one at Barnes and Noble or through amazon.com. Cost is \$35.

b. Report from Digital Economy Summit

Brent Lanford reported that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, in conjunction with the Georgia Technology Authority, hosted the first ever Digital Economy Summit on October 28 at Middle Georgia State College. This is part of the audio and visual planning process with the State of Georgia. There were approximately 225 participants for the event.

Guest speakers were Brian Shield, Vice President of Technology for the Boston Red Sox, and Travis Allen, a Kennesaw State College student and creator of the iSchool Initiative. The Digital Economy Summit is the third component of the partnership between MGRC and GTA's Digital Georgia Program which includes the development of Regional Digital Economy Plans and the creation of [SparkMacon](#), Macon's first makerspace.

There was panel discussion on crowdfunding which is an online, legitimate means of raising funds. Georgia is one of few states across the United States that has authorized crowdfunding. The use of crowdfunding as an instrument to fund start-up projects has become a multi-billion dollar industry. SparkMacon raised over \$11,000 in 30 days using crowdfunding.

Mr. Lanford commented that there was positive feedback so, hopefully, there will be a second summit next year. He expressed appreciation to everyone for either their attendance or support.

c. Middle Georgia Regional Leadership Championship Application Deadline

Laura Mathis referred to the handout that was included in everyone's packet. The Middle Georgia Regional Leadership Champions Program (MGRLC Program) is a collaborative effort of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, in partnership with the University of Georgia's J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. The program is designed to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders from across Middle

Georgia to develop enhanced leadership capacity within the region and actively engage in the creation of a future vision for Middle Georgia's growth.

Application deadline has been extended to December 1. If anyone has questions, she asked that she or Greg Boike be contacted.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

Ned Sanders, Chairman of the Clean Air Coalition, was present to discuss changes and challenges of the Coalition. The Coalition is comprised of seven Middle Georgia counties and 12 cities and has been in existence for 10 years. EPA, Region 4 in Atlanta, monitors the Clean Air Coalition for ground level ozone.

At the start of the Coalition in 2004, ozone levels were .085. It currently stands at .073. The current ozone standard is .075, which means the Middle Georgia area is two points under; therefore, the area is in attainment. In December, the EPA is under a court order to reduce those standards. It is believed that the ozone standard could be lowered to .070 or even .065, which could put the region back in non-attainment. This puts restrictions on new businesses coming in and on RAFB, which will have a negative impact on the next BRAC.

He indicated that the Clean Air Coalition will be asking local governments to pass an ordinance to legislatively mandate reductions. Mr. Sanders indicated that he would keep the Council apprised of any new information or changes.

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On behalf of the Crawford County Historical Society, Elaine Westberry presented a gift to MGRC staff member Kristi Harpst who has accepted another position in Charlotte, North Carolina. She thanked Ms. Harpst for her assistance over the last few years and noted that she has been a great asset.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Executive Committee will meet immediately following the Council meeting.
- b. Next meeting of the Council is January 8, 2015.

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The MGRC will be celebrating fifty years in 2015, and staff will be working on a celebration event.

#### ADJOURN

There being no further business, the November council meeting was adjourned until January, 2015.