

MINUTES

Middle Georgia Regional Commission
Council Meeting
Thursday, September 11, 2014, 6:00 p.m.
175 Emery Highway, Suite C, Macon, GA

MEMBERS PRESENT:

BALDWIN COUNTY

Johnny Westmoreland
Bill Millians
Richard Mullins
Denese Shinholster

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Paul Chapman
Charlie Westberry

JONES COUNTY

Preston Hawkins
Jimmy Roberts
Francis Adams
Frank Duke

MONROE COUNTY

Michael Bilderback
Dick Bazemore
Edd Norris

PEACH COUNTY

Melvin Walker
Barbara Williams
Alfredia Walker

PULASKI COUNTY

Butch Hall
Henry Cravey
Lee Slade
Nicky Cabero

PUTNAM COUNTY

Billy Webster
John Reid
Terry Schwindler

TWIGGS COUNTY

Shannon Hart
Johnny Branan
Joyce Mitchum

MIDDLE GEORGIA

Hill Bentley

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Two

GUESTS PRESENT:

Natalie Culpepper – ESRI

Donovan Head – Office of Congressman Austin Scott

Colonel Christopher D. Hill - Commander of the 78th Air Base Wing and Installation Commander
of RAFB

Clifford Holmes – Warner Robins City Council

Michelle Sands – Office of Congressman Sanford Bishop

Bill Stenbridge – Office of Senator Saxby Chambliss

STAFF PRESENT:

Greg Boike – Government Services Specialist

Kevin Brown – Attorney

Jonathon Connell – Government Services Specialist

Daniel Cummings – Government Services Specialist

Sheknita Davis – Workforce Director

Crystal Gaillard – Government Services Specialist

Matt Garvin – Finance Officer

Kristi Harpst – Regional Planner

Nick Kouloungis – Technology Services Director

Brent Lanford – Deputy Director

Laura Mathis – Deputy Director

Ralph Nix – Executive Director

Carol Payton – Executive Secretary

Robert Smith – Government Services Specialist

Crystal Vaughn – Senior Finance Specialist

CALL TO ORDER

Council Chair Charlie Westberry called the September meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Secretary Carol Payton called the roll and indicated that a quorum was present with twenty-one voting and seven non-voting members in attendance.

OPENING CEREMONIES

a. Invocation

Crawford County Council member Paul Chapman gave the invocation for the evening.

b. Welcome

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Three

Chairman Westberry welcomed everyone to the September meeting. He gave a special welcome to Middle Georgia Council member Hill Bentley who had missed a few meetings due to illness.

INTRODUCTION OF GUEST SPEAKER

Bill Stembridge, from the Office of Senator Saxby Chambliss, introduced the guest speaker, Colonel Chris Hill, Commander of the 78th Air Base Wing and Installation Commander of RAFB. He currently commands 4,600+ personnel assigned to three groups: a communications directorate, an operations support squadron, a comptroller squadron, as well as ten wing staff agencies. Colonel Hill is directly responsible for logistics, medical, civil engineer, security and mission support functions in addition to managing facilities and equipment valued at \$6.9 billion and executing an operating budget of \$161.8 million. He is also responsible for the morale and welfare of 24,000 airmen and their family members.

* * * * *

Colonel Hill thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak. Out of his ten assignments, with two at RAFB, Colonel Hill and his family call Warner Robins home. The Colonel talked a few moments about his family, the warm reception they received upon arriving, and the spirit of community that is felt in the region.

The Colonel indicated that the purpose for his being with the Council was to give an update on RAFB and the activities currently happening there. He also said that he wanted this to be more of a discussion than a presentation. There are seven mission partners at the base, and they make up the largest industrial site in Georgia. RAFB is home and workplace to approximately 24,000 people of whom 15,000 are civil servants, 7,000 military personnel, and 1,500 to 2,000 contractors. Every military service is represented on the base including every category and component. Also represented are active duty, reserves, and guardsmen.

The largest of the seven mission partners is the Air Logistics Complex. He discussed the recent reorganization in the Air Force and the consolidated span of control. The activity of maintenance repair and overhaul is immovable and cannot be transferred. Robins is focused on this mission.

The next largest mission partner is battle management command and control and intelligence surveillance and recognizance wing, which is the J-Stars wing. This is operated by two wings – the Air National Guard (116th Air Control Wing) and the 461st Air Control Wing. These two units, working together, eclipsed a huge milestone in combat aviation. They have surpassed 100,000 hours of combat support operations since 9/11. The Department of Defense divides the globe into six combat areas, and there is not an area that J-Stars has not supported in the last year. If wide-area surveillance is needed anywhere in the world, the phone rings only at RAFB.

The next mission is the 5th Combat Communications group or the 5th MOB. This is the largest, organized communications cyber warfare air traffic control and landing system capable unit in the continental United States. This group can pack up and go anywhere in the world in 96 hours.

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Four

These are some of the most intelligent members who can set up their own cellular network, hard-line/land-line network, and cyber network (classified and un-classified) in the field or bare base environment.

The next unit discussed was the Marines – the Detachment Alpha Mag 49 is comprised of 300 Marines: 150 active-duty and 150 reservists. They fly four Apache helicopters and four Huey helicopters. They are a very important part of RAFB.

Another unit is the Defense Logistics Agency or DLA. DLA has five major mission areas on the base. The largest two are DLA aviation which gets “parts/pieces” to the depot area and DLA distribution. Approximately 70% of DLA distribution customers are off-installation, so they operate a huge transportation system which delivers all around the world. There are approximately 800 staff that work in DLA.

The last mission partner discussed was the Air Force Reserve Command – the largest major command in the United States Air Force that includes 72,000 members. They are part of every major mission that the Air Force owns. The Senior Military Officer at RAFB, Major General Richard Haddock, is the Vice Commander. There is not an active mission around the globe where there is not a reservist involved which is very important.

After the recap of the various mission partners at RAFB, the Colonel discussed current events. During the summer, RAFB was visited by the Inspector General and received a rating of “highly effective.” Other visitors included General Janet Wolfenbarger and the Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James. The “All Call” during Secretary James’ visit was held at the Museum of Aviation which was thoroughly enjoyed by the Secretary. Colonel Hill thanked everyone for their support of the museum. The museum is a very important community outreach and approximately 60,000 school-age children visit the museum every year.

The Colonel talked about S.T.E.M. or Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. There are approximately 1,700 engineers on base who are involved with the technical part of the upkeep and maintenance of the planes and equipment. There has been a lot of discussion lately on how to grow the “pie” of STEM graduates in the state of Georgia or grow the interested population of young people who want to pursue an academic degree in Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics. There is a STEM summit scheduled for Friday, September 12, with representatives from the Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Tech, University of Georgia, Mercer University, Georgia Southern, and representatives from school systems of six surrounding counties.

Some other areas of discussion included the relationship with the Union at the base as well as working with the MGRC and the Central Georgia Joint Development Authority on the encroachment issue. He thanked each of the organizations for their dedication to increase or enhance the military value of RAFB.

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Five

The next round of BRAC is scheduled for 2017. Colonel Hill indicated that the Air Force is committed to a three-depot strategy which Robins has. The goal is to prove that RAFB provides the best value for the American taxpayer.

Colonel Hill thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak.

PRESENTATION OF ESRI SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Brent Lanford introduced Natalie Culpepper of Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) who was in attendance to make an award presentation. All the Regional Commissions and any other agency/organization that is involved with Geographic Information Systems or digital/computer mapping use the software that ESRI produces. Ms. Culpepper is the State representative for ESRI.

Ms. Culpepper said she has been a partner with Regional Commissions for over ten years. Each year, State representatives are asked to submit names of companies/organizations who are involved in innovative work that is helping to make communities and the world a better place. Thousands of names are submitted each year. She submitted the Middle Georgia Regional Commission for their leadership in the State and to the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions. She presented to the Council the "2014 Special Achievement in GIS" Award.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW DHS TRANSPORTATION SUBCONTRACTOR

At the August meeting, Bob Rychel reported that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission has been the prime contractor in middle Georgia for the provision of DHS transportation. This is transportation that is funded through federal and state sources, and is for clients that are either elderly, low-income, or disabled. The program serves all eleven counties, and \$2.8 million goes into this program annually. Seventy-five vehicles are included in the program, and 150,000 trips are recorded annually.

The MGRC has always subcontracted this out. In Macon-Bibb County, the provider is the Macon-Bibb Economic Opportunity Council. The rest of the area has been served by the Middle Georgia Community Action Agency who stopped providing transportation services effective May 1.

An RFP was issued and on September 1, Transition Commute Solutions became the new provider in the ten-county area that was formerly served by the Community Action Agency. Mr. Rychel introduced James Brown and Rich Moordo of Transition Commute Solutions.

Mr. Brown said that their first focus was coming in and becoming part of the community. He noted that they are the provider of transportation services for Coastal Regional Commission and have been for approximately 1.5 years. It is their goal to make every effort to keep the funding that comes into the community in the community. He introduced Rich Moordo who lives in the middle Georgia area and will be the Program Manager.

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Six

Mr. Brown gave a brief history of the company and cited other initiatives with which they are currently involved. They recently joined the Clean Air Force which is part of the Clean Air Coalition. He discussed their efforts to modify the wheelchair lift.

Transition Commute Solutions sees transportation services as a huge factor in economic growth and development in helping to bring middle Georgia to the top. The demand for transportation services will be much higher in years to come as the United States becomes a "super-aged" country. There are approximately 185,000 trips in this region recorded each year, and they will participate in approximately 150,000 of those.

He discussed what their expectations are in the region and noted that they will provide the utmost and flawless customer service. The majority of the staff whom they hire are retired military because they already have the mindset of high expectations and standards. Also discussed was establishing a working relationship and partnership with the Middle Georgia Community Action Agency who provided the transportation services flawlessly for approximately 25 years.

Mr. Brown noted that the City of Warner Robins is the largest national Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) that does not have a transit system. He indicated that they are committed and will work tirelessly with the MGRC before the next round of BRAC to ensure there is a transit system there.

He thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak and for making them feel right at home in middle Georgia.

REPORT FROM THE BUDGET, AUDIT AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Butch Hall reported that the Committee met on September 4 to consider a number of issues and is presenting three recommendations for consideration by the Council. All of the recommendations were included in the packages which were mailed.

a. Personnel Policy Amendments

The Committee is recommending the addition of a new section to the Personnel Policy in light of the Safe Carry Protection Act of 2014 that went into effect July 1. The proposed policy affirms that employees are prohibited from bringing weapons into the building or in MGRC vehicles. The definition of weapon mirrors the Safe Carry Protection Act.

The second Personnel Policy recommendation is an amendment to Article IX Employee Benefits. Sections 1 and 2 are being amended, and the remaining sections are renumbered. The proposed changes include:

- Remove the dollar amount of the health insurance deductible since it can fluctuate from year to year.

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Seven

- Update the flexible spending account language to reflect current IRS code sections.
- Provide instructions to employees on how flexible spending accounts are implemented at the Regional Commission.

Committee Chair Hall said the Committee recommends approval of the Personnel Policy Amendments. There were no questions concerning the Committee's recommendation, and it was unanimously approved as presented.

b. Financial Procedures

MGRC staff prepared the Accounting Procedures Manual detailing the financial procedures for the Finance Department. The manual sets forth the internal controls in areas such as bank reconciliations, cash receipts, cash disbursements, periodic reports and payroll. The Committee has reviewed these procedures and recommends approval and adoption of the financial procedures as presented.

There were no questions concerning the financial procedures, and they were unanimously approved as presented.

c. Proposed Amendment #1 to the FY 2015 Budget

The Committee also reviewed Proposed Amendment #1 to the FY 2015 Budget. The following are changes to the revenues with a total overall increase of \$1,243,913:

- Decrease of \$8,539 in local revenues due to changes in local contracts.
- Decrease of \$11,505 in state revenues primarily due to the first amendment to the Aging contract.
- Increase of \$733,158 in federal revenues due to a new federal grant received by the MGRC.
- Increase of \$530,799 in pass-through revenues because of amendments to contracts.

On the expenditures side, there was an increase of \$481,737 due primarily to the addition of the new federal grant and an increase to pass-through expenditures in the amount of \$535,799. This leaves a balance of \$226,377 which is allocated to the fund balance. Future expenditures may be needed from the fund balance as implementation of the projects begin.

Mr. Hall said the Committee recommends approval of Budget Amendment #1 as presented. There being no questions or comments, the recommendation of the Budget Committee was approved.

d. Proposed Amendment to the FY 2015 Initial Work Program

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Eight

An amendment to the Work Program must be considered when there is a budget amendment. The Budget, Audit, and Personnel Committee is recommending an amendment to include the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) grant which has been awarded to the Regional Commission. No other changes were necessary.

The Council unanimously approved the recommendation of the Committee.

Committee Chairman Hall indicated that this concluded the report of the Committee.

STANDARD ORDER OF BUSINESS

a. Approval of Minutes of August 14, 2014 Council Meeting

There were no corrections or changes to the minutes of the August 14, 2014 Council meeting, and they were unanimously approved on a motion by Lee Slade, and seconded by Billy Webster.

b. Old Business

i. Nomination of GSBL Board Members

Laura Mathis reported that only one nomination has been received since the August meeting:

TWIGGS COUNTY

Jeff Stone – Post #2

The nomination was approved on a motion by Billy Webster and seconded by Henry Cravey. Nominations are still needed from Crawford County, Macon-Bibb County, and Monroe County.

ii. Update on Department of Audits and Accounts' Performance Audit of Regional Commissions

Executive Director Ralph Nix referenced the letter included in everyone's packet with regard to the Georgia Department of Audits review of Regional Commissions. It is required by law that the Department of Audits conduct a performance audit of Regional Commissions on a periodic basis. For the sake of time, Mr. Nix commented that he would not go over the Audit in detail but encouraged everyone to take time to read it. He also asked that everyone bear in mind that the MGRC has not yet been subject to the physical audit, so the only information in the audit report that applies to Middle Georgia is the balanced scorecard. The information contained in the balanced scorecard is based on generally available information on all 12 Regional Commissions. There will need to be adjustments/policy changes/amendments in the future.

Mr. Nix concluded by saying that if anyone has any questions or concerns to please contact the management staff.

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Nine

c. New Business

i. Local Assistance Requests

Jonathon Connell presented the following local assistance requests that have been received since the August meeting:

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Community: Baldwin County
Project Title: Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Grant
Project Description: Prepare CJCC grant application to purchase palm print enabled live scan systems.

Community: Crawford County
Project Title: Crawford County Development Authority
Project Description: Assist with hiring of a full-time Director for the Authority.

Community: City of Forsyth
Project Title: Charter Amendment
Project Description: Assist the City with the preparation of amendments to the City Charter.

Community: City of Forsyth
Project Title: Review of Ordinances
Project Description: Review existing ordinances related to dilapidated and derelict buildings and the enforcement process.

Community: City of Jeffersonville
Project Title: Business License Notice/City Tax Notice
Project Description: Assist with preparing these two notices.

Community: Macon-Bibb County
Project Title: Precinct Boundary Lines
Project Description: Assist with redrawing precinct boundary lines.

Community: Putnam County
Project Title: Retail Market Feasibility Study
Project Description: Develop county-wide Retail Market Feasibility Study for economic development purposes.

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Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Ten

The local assistance requests were unanimously approved on a motion by Jimmy Roberts and seconded by Bill Millians.

- ii. Resolution Approving Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update for Submission to the Economic Development Administration

Robert Smith noted that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission is designated as the Middle Georgia Economic Development District under the requirements and regulations of the Economic Development Administration. The EDA requires the districts to prepare and maintain a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or CEDS. This document contains a list of tentative goals and activities which will help the district move forward. It also allows the communities in each district to maintain eligibility for economic development grants. The staff is currently working on the five-year update to the CEDS for the period 2012 – 2017, which must be submitted by the September 30, 2014 deadline. The following Resolution No. RC-14-18 adopts the FY 2012 – 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update as the general guide for economic development activities and approves the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for submission to the Economic Development Administration in compliance with the requirements:

* * * * *

WHEREAS, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission (formerly the Middle Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission and the Middle Georgia Regional Development Center) has been a designated Economic Development District under the requirements and regulations of the Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) since 1978; and

WHEREAS, the member governments and citizens of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission have benefited through the resources and assistance available to designated districts and through numerous successful projects throughout the district; and

WHEREAS, the EDA requires qualifying districts to prepare a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to guide the region’s economic development programs and to remain eligible for EDA assistance and financial awards; and

WHEREAS, a Five-Year Plan for economic development was developed for the period of 2012 through 2017; and

WHEREAS, EDA requires an annual performance report to be submitted by September 30 each year during the planning period; and

WHEREAS, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council has determined that the CEDS’s current update reasonably reflects general and specific goals, projects, and desired outcomes.

Middle Georgia Regional Commission

September 11, 2014

Page Eleven

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council does hereby adopt the FY 2014 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Performance Report as the general guide for economic development activities and approves the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Performance Report for submission to the Economic Development Administration in compliance with the requirements.

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The Chairman called for a motion concerning the resolution. Henry Cravey made a motion that the resolution be approved. The motion was seconded by Lee Slade and unanimously approved.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- a. Appointment of Aging Services Committee Chair

The Chairman reported that the Aging Services Committee met before the Council meeting and nominated the following members as officers:

John Harley – Chair
Henry Cravey – Vice-Chair

Mr. Westberry said he concurs with the nominations; therefore, they are approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. **GSBL Annual Meeting** – Wednesday, September 17, 8:00 a.m., Middle Georgia RC
- b. **MGRC Annual Meeting** – Thursday, October 9, 6:00 p.m., Lake Tobesofkee
- c. **GARC Annual Meeting** – November 5 - 7, St. Simons Island

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Putnam County Commissioner Billy Webster reported, for the record, that the MGRC Annual Meeting is scheduled during the ACCG Annual Fall Conference; therefore, there may be several people who cannot attend.

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Brent Lanford reminded everyone of the Digital Economy Summit scheduled for Tuesday, October 28, at Middle Georgia State College. Cost is \$35 and will include breakfast, full lunch, and two breaks. He encouraged everyone to get the word out in their communities.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the September meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.