

MINUTES

Middle Georgia Regional Commission
Council Meeting
Thursday, May 14, 2015, 6:00 p.m.
175 Emery Highway, Suite C, Macon, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT:

BALDWIN COUNTY

John Westmoreland
Richard Mullins, Jr.
Matt Poyner
Denese Shinholster

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Paul Chapman
Becky Smith
Charlie Westberry
Robert Ray

HOUSTON COUNTY

Tommy Stalnaker
John Harley
George Slappey

JONES COUNTY

Preston Hawkins
Jimmy Roberts
Francis Adams
Frank Duke

MACON-BIBB COUNTY

Robert Reichert

MONROE COUNTY

Dick Bazemore
Edd Norris

PEACH COUNTY

Melvin Walker
Alfredia Walker
James Richardson
James Khoury

PULASKI COUNTY

Henry Cravey
Lee Slade
James Colson

PUTNAM COUNTY

Billy Webster
John Reid

TWIGGS COUNTY

Shannon Hart
Joyce Mitchum

WILKINSON COUNTY

Mark Dupree
Charles Brack
Marty Dominy
C. L. Brooks

GUESTS PRESENT:

Bubber Epps – Georgia State Representative, District 144

STAFF PRESENT:

Ralph Nix – Executive Director
Laura Mathis – Deputy Director
Brent Lanford – Deputy Director
Matt Garvin - Finance Director
Sheknita Davis – Workforce Development Director
Nick Kouloungis, Technology Services Director
Daniel Cummings – Sr. Government Services Specialist
Crystal Gaillard - Government Services Specialist
Annie Barnes - Government Services Specialist
Greg Boike – Government Services Specialist
Cam Yearty - Government Services Specialist
Kevin Brown – Attorney
Kim Stanton – Executive Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Council Chairman Charlie Westberry called the May 14, 2015 meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Executive Secretary Kim Stanton called the roll and indicated that a quorum was present with 22 voting and 11 non-voting members present.

OPENING CEREMONIES

a. Invocation

Crawford County Council Member Paul Chapman gave the invocation.

b. Welcome

Chairman Westberry welcomed everyone to the May 14, 2015 Council meeting.

c. Introduction of Guests

Chairman Westberry welcomed the Georgia State Representative Bubber Epps of District 144 to the Regional Commission Council Meeting

STANDARD ORDER OF BUSINESS

a. Approval of Minutes of April 9, 2015 Council Meeting

There were no corrections to the minutes of the April 9, 2015 Council meeting and they were unanimously approved on a motion by Henry Cravey and second by Mark Dupree.

b. Old Business

None to report

c. New Business

1. Local Assistance Requests

MGRC staff member Greg Boike presented the following local assistance requests that have been received since the April Council meeting:

Community: Baldwin County

Project Title: Community Policing Development Program

Project Description: Preparation of a grant application for the Community Policing Development Program.

Community: Baldwin County

Project Title: COPS Hiring Program

Project Description: Preparation of a grant application for the COPS Hiring Grant Program.

Community: Baldwin County

Project Title: Body Worn Camera Partnership Grant

Project Description: Preparation of a grant application for the Body Worn Camera Partnership Program.

Community: City of Byron

Project Title: Georgia Municipal Association Banner Contest

Project Description: Assistance in submitting paperwork for Local Arts Initiative.

Community: Crawford County

Project Title: USDA Grant Application

Project Description: Preparation of a USDA Rural Business Development Grant to support economic development

Community: **City of Eatonton**
Project Title: Bulletproof Vest Grant
Project Description: Preparation of an application for a Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant.

Community: **Jones County**
Project Title: Master Plan Development
Project Description: Assistance in development of a Master Plan for the Historic Tanyard.

Community: **Wilkinson County**
Project Title: Hotel Motel Tax
Project Description: Assistance in implementing a hotel motel tax for Wilkinson County.

Mr. Boike also reported on several projects which were previously approved and have been completed. These projects included:

- 7 of communities (Jeffersonville, Irwinton, Ivey, Gray, Byron, Crawford County and Jones County) all submitted CDBG applications on April 1.
- 3 communities received Recreational Trail Grants – Byron, Fort Valley, and Peach County. Byron also received a Georgia Humanities Grant.
- 38 former employees of Fresenius Medical Care were assisted in finding new areas of employment throughout the region.
- The Development Authority of Jeffersonville and Twiggs County launched a brand new website. You can visit them at <http://growtwiggscounty.com>.

Nick Kouloungis reported that since the last Regional Commission meeting, the IT Department has deployed new web sites for Monroe County and the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions, six or seven more websites will be implemented soon.

The local assistance requests were unanimously approved on a motion by Richard Bazemore and second by Joyce Mitchum.

* * * * *

2. DRI # 2492 Riverside Center and DRI # 2497 Lullwater Village

Crystal Gaillard reported that Macon-Bibb County submitted DRI #2497 for project Lullwater Village, a retail center comprising of approximately 314,000 square feet of commercial development with seven out-parcels. A review of the project (DRI #1690) had previously been completed for the project in 2007 but construction was delayed. It was determined that the project would not require additional review at this time.

Macon-Bibb County submitted DRI#2492 for project Riverside Center, a 415,515 square foot commercial facility consisting of retail stores and restaurants ranging in size from 1,200 square feet to 30,000 square feet and a 55,000 square foot movie theatre. It was determined that the project would require regional review. The regional review was conducted during the month of May.

3. Resolution to Authorize Submission of Sector Partnership Grant

Sheknita Davis reported on the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (SPNEG), which is a discretionary grants awarded by the Secretary of Labor to provide employment-related services for dislocated workers. Ms. Davis stated that the Regional Commission and the Middle Georgia Consortium were approached to partner with the State of Georgia on the submission of an application. The funding is intended to temporarily expand the capacity to serve dislocated workers, and meet the increased demand for employment and training services, with the goal of quickly reemploying laid-off workers and enhancing their employability and earnings. Ms. Davis stated that the Workforce Investment Board is supportive of the project.

WHEREAS, the US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Advisory System released Training and Employment Guidance Letter NO. 31-14 – Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant; and

WHEREAS, Georgia Department of Economic Development Workforce Division desires to partner with Middle Georgia Regional Commission Workforce Area 10 and Middle Georgia Consortium Area 11 to apply for funding to serve dislocated workers and long term unemployed; and

WHEREAS, the grant is in alignment with the strategic plan of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, the Macon–Bibb Workforce Investment Board, and the Middle Georgia Consortium; and

WHEREAS, the Macon–Bibb Workforce Board approved partnership with Georgia Department of Economic Development Workforce Division and the Middle Georgia Consortium to apply for the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission concurs with the Macon-Bibb County Workforce Investment Board in a partnership application for the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant and authorize staff to prepare and submit the application with all of the required signatures.

The Resolution authorizing the submission of a Sector Partnership Grant was unanimously approved on a motion by Mark Dupree and second by Melvin Walker.

4. Transportation Funding Act of 2015

As requested at the April Council meeting, Laura Mathis gave a presentation on the Transportation Funding Act of 2015 which modified and expanded the sales tax for the purpose of funding transportation projects that was originally created by the Transportation Investment Act of 2010 (TIA 2010). The Transportation Funding Act of 2015 offers two mechanisms for funding transportation at the local level: a regional sales tax and a county sales tax.

Ms. Mathis highlighted the two mechanisms for funding and the initiation process for both the regional sales tax and the county sales tax:

- Regional Transportation Sales Tax
 - Available beginning July 1, 2015 until law changes
 - Follows TIA Regional Sales Tax 2010 process, RC boundaries
 - Up to 1 percent
 - 75 percent to investment list projects (with 30 percent to STIP projects)
 - 25 percent to local governments for transportation projects
- County Transportation Sales Tax
 - Available beginning July 1, 2017 until law changes
 - Up to 1 percent
 - 30 percent must go to STIP projects if there is a County-City IGA

Ms. Mathis described the regional initiation process. After July 1, 2015, if a majority of the counties in the Middle Georgia region pass resolutions to initiate the process, then the entire region will go through the process outlined in the Transportation Investment Act of 2010. The Middle Georgia region has 11 counties, therefore, at least six must be supportive of the effort. No additional action is required to initiate the process. If the region initiates the process, a decision on whether to call for the election will be made at a later date by the Regional Roundtable.

Ms. Mathis stated that the Transportation Funding Act of 2015 includes a provision that if, after July 1, 2017, any county in the region has implemented a County Transportation Sales Tax, then the region may not implement a Regional Transportation Sales Tax until the county tax ends. This does not apply to any current or future Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).

Ms. Mathis described the county initiation process, which is available after July 1, 2017:

1. A county desiring to levy a county transportation sales tax must meet with the qualified municipalities to discuss projects and the proposed tax rate. The notice must occur 10 days prior to the meeting and the meeting must be 30 days prior to the call for the referendum. After meeting, county can call for the referendum.

2. Cities representing at least 90 percent of the land mass of the county and at least 60 percent of the municipal population may call for a meeting with the county to discuss projects and the proposed tax rate. The notice must occur 10 days prior to the meeting and the meeting must be 30 days prior to the call for the referendum. After meeting, cities that represent at least 90 percent of the land mass of the county and at least 60 percent of the county population can call for a referendum.

Ralph Nix noted that multiple counties can enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement, but each county would have to go through the initiation process, independent of each other and the voters in each county would have to approve the referendum. Ms. Mathis noted that if at any time, the region has implemented a Regional Transportation Sales Tax, then all counties in the region are prohibited from implementing a County Transportation Sales Tax. This does not apply to any current or future Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST).

5. DHS Coordinated of Transportation for FY2016

Ms. Mathis reported that the Regional Commission has issued a request for proposal for DHS; a part of the transportation funding program that serves clients at senior centers, Department of Family and Children Services, Department of Labor, and Developmental Disability. A different approach was used this year in the solicitation process allowing bidders to propose on sub-groups or counties or the entire region. The proposals are due in by June 5, 2015. The contract should be awarded by June 11, 2015 and service to begin July 1, 2015.

* * * * *

GOOD OF THE ORDER

1. Building Renovations

Ralph Nix gave an update on the renovation and expansion into the space next to the Regional Commission. Construction is underway and moving right along and should be completed in late June or early July.

2. Regional Leadership Champions

Laura Mathis gave an update on the Regional Leadership Champions Program. The program is a partnership between the Regional Commission and the Fanning Institute, with funding support from OEA. Ms. Mathis mentioned that the May meeting was in Eatonton at the Plaza Arts Center. The June session will be in Macon-Bibb County at the Amerson Water Works. The program will not meet in July. The commissioning ceremony will be the last session in August, and it will be held at the Museum of Aviation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Robert Reichert reported that the Amerson Water Works in Macon will have a grand re-opening on May 30, 2015.

Donovan Head, Field Representative for Congressman Austin Scott announced that there will be a Grant Fair and Workshop, May 27, 2015 at CGTC in Warner Robins from 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., registration is at 1:30 p.m. The workshop is to assist in navigating through state and federal funds for your community. Twelve agencies will be on hand with information about their available programs and grants, FEMA, DCA, USDA, GSA, Public and Human Services, DOL, DOE, DOJ, Georgia Economic Development, GDOT, and the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. Donovan Head can be contacted at 478-971-1776.

Council Chair Westberry stated that the Budget, Audit, and Personnel Committee will meet on June 2, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. and the June Council Meeting will be June 11, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the May Council meeting was adjourned until June 11, 2015.