

MINUTES

Middle Georgia Regional Commission
Council Meeting
Thursday, May 12, 2016, 6:00 p.m.
175 Emery Highway, Suite C, Macon, Georgia

MEMBERS PRESENT

BALDWIN COUNTY

John Westmoreland
Richard Mullins
Williams Millians
Denese Shinholster

CRAWFORD COUNTY

Charlie Westberry
Robert Ray
Paul Chapman

HOUSTON COUNTY

John Harley

JONES COUNTY

Francis Adams
Jimmy Roberts

MACON-BIBB COUNTY

Robert Reichert
Chuck O'Neal

MONROE COUNTY

Dick Bazemore
Eric Wilson
Melvin Lawrence

PEACH COUNTY

Barbara Williams
Alfredia Walker
James Richardson
James Khoury
Melvin Walker

PULASKI COUNTY

Butch Hall
James Colson
Lee Slade
Tim Young

PUTNAM COUNTY

Terry Schwindler

TWIGGS COUNTY

Kathryn Epps
Shannon Hart

WILKINSON COUNTY

Mark Dupree
Marty Dominy
C. L. Brooks
Jonathan Jackson
Charles Brack

MIDDLE GEORGIA

Charles Sims

GUESTS PRESENT:

Donovan Head, Field Representative for Austin Scott
Tonya Mole, Field Representative for DCA
Michelle Sands, Field Representative for Sanford Bishop
Jay Smith, Field Representative for Senator David Perdue
Andrew Ross, Field Representative for Senator Johnny Isakson
Tyler Brack, guest of Charles Brack

STAFF PRESENT:

Ralph Nix – Executive Director
Laura Mathis – Deputy Director
Brent Lanford – Deputy Director
Jen Doran – Office Manager
Greg Boike - Sr. Government Services Specialist
Crystal Gaillard - Government Services Specialist
Jonathan Connell - Government Services Specialist
Sam Perren - Government Services Specialist
Kimberly Lowe - Government Services Specialist
Daniel Dobbins - Government Services Specialist
Donnell Word - Government Services Specialist
Cam Yearty - Government Services Specialist
Robert O’Neil – Technology Services Specialist
Sheknita Davis – Workforce Development Director
Karen Thompson – Director of Business Development
Mitchell Worthington – Finance Specialist
Matt Garvin - Finance Officer
Kim Stanton – Executive Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Council Chairman Butch Hall called the May 12, 2016 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 21 voting and 12 non-voting members present.

OPENING CEREMONIES

- a. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Monroe County Council Member Dick Bazemore gave the invocation and the Council followed with the Pledge of Allegiance.

b. Welcome

Chairman Hall welcomed everyone to the May 12, 2016 Council meeting.

c. Introduction of New Members/Guests

Chairman Hall acknowledged the following guests at the Regional Commission Council Meeting:

Donovan Head, Field Representative for Austin Scott
Tonya Mole, Field Representative for DCA
Michelle Sands, Field Representative for Sanford Bishop
Jay Smith, Field Representative for Senator David Perdue
Andrew Ross, Field Representative for Senator Johnny Isakson
Tyler Brack, guest of Charles Brack

GUEST SPEAKER

Tiffany Andrews, CEO, Forsyth-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak. She discussed the assets of Middle Georgia to statewide project managers, site location consultants and other interested parties. The Middle Georgia Economic Alliance is comprised of the following counties: Baldwin, Crawford, Houston, Jones, Macon-Bibb, Monroe, Peach, Pulaski, Putnam, Twiggs, and Wilkinson. Ms. Andrews gave a presentation that highlights Middle Georgia being centrally located, which offers the strategic advantage of being equally close to a wider variety of resources for growth and prosperity.

STANDARD ORDER OF BUSINESS

a. Approval of Minutes of April 14, 2016 Council meeting

There were no corrections to the minutes of the April 14, 2016 Council meeting. They were unanimously approved on a motion by Mark Dupree and second by Lee Slade.

b. Old Business

None

c. New Business

i. Adoption of Regional Plan

Greg Boike reported that Middle Georgia Regional Commission staff has been working since mid-2015 on required five-year updates to the Regional Plan. This update is entitled: *2016-2036 Plan for ... A Thriving Middle Georgia*, and consists of the Regional Assessment, Stakeholder Involvement Program, and Regional Agenda. In order for the plan to become final, it must be adopted by the MGRC Council. A full copy of the final Regional Plan is on the Middle Georgia Regional Commission's website at <http://www.middlegeorgiarc.org/regional-plan>.

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires every Regional Commission in the state to periodically update their Regional Plan in accordance with the state's Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning and Schedule for Regional Planning; and

WHEREAS, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission has completed technical work on updates to the Middle Georgia Regional Plan in accordance with the Regional Planning rules and procedures provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, a robust public input process was held throughout the development of the plan, including 18 stakeholder meetings across every county in the region, attended by more than 150 unique individuals; and

WHEREAS, regional stakeholders have identified a shared vision of a thriving Middle Georgia, a diverse region of opportunity, where people want to live, learn, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Assessment, Stakeholder Involvement Program, and Regional Agenda have all been transmitted to, and subsequently accepted by, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on the 12th day of May 2016, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council, meeting in regular session, hereby adopts the *2016-2036 Plan for ... A Thriving Middle Georgia*, to become effective immediately as a strategic planning and visioning document for the region.

The approval to adopt the Regional Plan was unanimously approved on a motion by Terry Schwindler and second by Shannon Hart.

ii. Local Assistance Requests

Donnell Word presented the following local assistance requests that have been received since the April Council meeting:

Community: **Baldwin County**
Project Title: Grant Assistance
Project Description: Preparation of a grant application for FEMA Fire Prevention.

Community: **Baldwin County**
Project Title: Grant Assistance
Project Description: Assistance in researching and obtaining grants to support Oak Hill's Community Garden.

Community: **Baldwin County**
Project Title: Grant Assistance
Project Description: Preparation of a grant for Family Drug Court Implementation and Enhancement Program Solicitation.

Community: **Baldwin County**
Project Title: Application Assistance
Project Description: Assistance with applying for the Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge.

Community: **City of Byron**
Project Title: Inventory Assistance
Project Description: Assistance with mapping and inventory of the City of Byron Cemetery to better manage the grounds and maintain an accurate database of lot availability.

Community: **City of Eatonton**
Project Title: Digital Mapping
Project Description: Assistance in creating digital map-based management system for the City cemeteries.

Community: **City of Forsyth**
Project Title: Grant Assistance
Project Description: Preparation of a grant for the Forsyth Farmer's Market.

Community: **City of Forsyth**
Project Title: Wayfinding Plan
Project Description: Preparation of a Wayfinding Plan that focuses on tourism and attractions.

Community: **City of Fort Valley**
Project Title: Application Assistance
Project Description: Assistance in completing an application to have the Old Hunt High Gymnasium placed on the historic register.

- Community:** **City of Hawkinsville**
Project Title: Grant Assistance
Project Description: Preparation of a TIGER Grant for street improvements for the City of Hawkinsville.
- Community:** **Jones County**
Project Title: Hazard Mitigation Plan
Project Description: Assistance with preparation of a Hazard Mitigation Plan which will cover the Animal Control facilities.
- Community:** **Jones County**
Project Title: Application Assistance
Project Description: Assistance with applying for the Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge.
- Community:** **City of Milledgeville**
Project Title: Mapping System
Project Description: Assistance with developing an interactive mapping system to be used for quick access to locate city property parcels, various city areas, city utilities, public safety information and aerial photos.
- Community:** **City of Perry**
Project Title: Website Assistance
Project Description: Assistance in maintaining the city's website, to include the New Year's Eve Event.
- Community:** **City of Perry**
Project Title: Master Plan
Project Description: Assistance with research and providing a list of qualified consultants the city can contact for the provision of a public arts master plan.
- Community:** **City of Perry**
Project Title: Request for Proposal
Project Description: Assistance with setting up an RFP process for a new phone system and serve as a resource to assist the city with technical questions or issues.
- Community:** **Putnam County**
Project Title: Strategic Plan
Project Description: Assistance in facilitating a Strategic Plan for economic development purposes.
- Community:** **Twiggs County**
Project Title: Grant Assistance
Project Description: Assistance with identifying funding sources for water and sewer improvements.

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

- Workforce Development's Educate, Empower, and Employ program (also known as E3), graduated 10 out of 11 students in the month of April. This program was focused on returning- citizens and women following a non-traditional career path. Upon graduation, three students found employment, and three are awaiting a hiring decision from Bluebird after being called to second interviews.
- Middle Georgia's Area Agency on Aging has been selected to be one of four AAA's in the state, to assist the Division of Aging Services in the completion of a grant. Staff will teach other states how to write sustainability plans, and the RC will be compensated for staff time and travel expenses for this effort.
- In 2015, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission and the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership at the University of Georgia partnered to start the Middle Georgia Regional Leadership Champions program, the first program of its kind in the state. Thirty-eight program participants were commissioned as regional leaders in August 2015. These leaders are now directing their efforts toward improving the region's economic prosperity, educational attainment, and quality of life. Additionally, the Regional Leadership Champions were highly involved as stakeholders in the development of the 2016 Middle Georgia Regional Plan.

The local assistance requests were unanimously approved on a motion by Lee Slade and second by Shannon Hart.

iii. Quarterly Financial Report for period ending March 31, 2016

Matt Garvin presented the Quarterly Financial Report for the period ending March 31, 2016. Mr. Garvin reported that that State Revenues are at 55 percent of budgeted revenues, local revenues stand at 64 percent of the budgeted revenues, federal revenues are at 56 percent of the budgeted revenues, and Expenditures are at 66 percent of budgeted expenditures.

iv. NADO Excellence in Regional Transportation Award

Cam Yearty reported that the MGRC recently had the opportunity to apply for National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) awards in Regional Transportation. These awards are the first ones that the MGRC received for Transportation. Mr. Yearty stated that two applications were submitted for consideration: the freight and logistics study and the mobility manager program. The MGRC will receive the awards in NADO Rural Transportation Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee in June. The projects are:

The Middle Georgia Regional Mobility Manager Program

Since 2012, the MGRC has worked with counties and transit partners to optimize transit service delivery throughout the region, with a goal of increased coordination among the region's Rural Public Transit and Human Services Transportation programs. Efforts in this program include regular meetings of the Rural and Human Services Transportation Advisory Committee, technical support to transit systems, and education and outreach efforts to populations with high transit-dependency.

Freight and Logistics Study

As a result of the community leadership, the MGRC was able to undertake the Freight and Logistics study, which was a result of intense cooperation between many partners, including our economic development partners throughout the region, especially in Macon-Bibb County and Houston County. A product of numerous meetings since 2010, the study identifies advantages and disadvantages of the regional transportation system which impact manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution center growth. The 21st Century Partnership was also a great partner in securing the funding from the DOD Office of Economic Adjustment to make the project happen.

v. Report from Executive Committee

Mayor Robert Reichert reported that the MGRC Executive Committee met today to serve as the Loan Review Committee to discuss two loans that are in default.

Jomas II, LLC (EDA loan #56) with an outstanding loan balance of \$251,071.58. After discussion the Executive Committee authorized action against the borrowers by using a third-party agency to recover funds on a contingency percentage fee basis.

Ocmulgee Traders Macon, LLC (EDA loan #77) with an outstanding balance of \$92,732.36. After discussion the Executive Committee authorized the loan to be written off against the loan loss reserve due to the business closing since there are no meaningful assets to pursue.

The ratification to write off EDA loan #77 was unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Charlie Westberry and second by Lee Slade.

Mayor Robert Reichert reported that the Executive Committee recommended that an attorney is needed to assist with prepare closing documents of EDA Revolving loan documents and with court filings. After further discussion, the committee authorized to retain the Martin Snow law firm.

vi. Report from Budget, Audit & Personnel Committee

Mayor Robert Reichert, chairman of the Budget, Audit & Personnel Committee asked MGRC Executive Director, Ralph Nix to speak.

Mr. Ralph Nix announced that he would be retiring as of June 30, 2016. Mr. Nix has enjoyed his 43 years of service at the MGRC. He mentioned that he wanted to start some projects that would benefit the community.

The motion to accept the retirement request, to plan a retirement celebration for Ralph Nix and to authorize the Audit, Budget & Personnel Committee to undertake the process to nominate a qualified candidate for the Executive Director position was unanimously approved as presented on a motion by Charlie Westberry and second by Shannon Hart.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Surplus property of the MGRC is available, contact Jen Doran.
- b. OEA Project Presentation will be Thursday, May 26, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.
- c. Senior Day Expo, May 19, 2016, Georgia National Fairgrounds, Perry, GA, 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- d. Next MGRC Meeting will be June 9, 2016.
- e. Next Budget, Audit & Personnel meeting will be May 20, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.
- f. Joint Mobile Office Hours 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Milledgeville, May 24, 2016
- g. First Annual Ocmulgee Water Trail Partnership Paddle Event, May 14, Dykes Landing in Cochran, GA to Mile Branch Landing in Hawkinsville, GA.
- h. Jug Fest, May 19 and 20, Roberta, GA.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the May Council meeting was adjourned until June 9, 2016.