

**SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
SGRC OFFICE • 1725 SOUTH GA PARKWAY, WEST • WAYCROSS, GA
MARCH 23, 2023
11:00 A.M.**

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME: Chair Joyce Evans called the meeting to order and welcomed members and guests.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Chair Evans called upon Matt Seale to give the invocation, and then he led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

<u>Atkinson County</u>	<u>Bacon County</u>	<u>Ben Hill County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liles, Parker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Taylor, Shane	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Taylor, Steve
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Johnson, Robert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Taylor, Larry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Holt, Jason
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone, Robbie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coley, Lisa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dunn, Jason
<u>Berrien County</u>	<u>Brantley County</u>	<u>Brooks County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Griner, Robert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harris, Skipper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Folsom, Patrick
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brown, Travis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maefield, Barbara	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Morgan, Don
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smart, Lisa	Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deshazior, Zurich
<u>Charlton County</u>	<u>Clinch County</u>	<u>Coffee County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Everett, James	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moylan, Henry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 'Steen, Ted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gowen, Lee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blicht, Brooks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paulk, Tony
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hardee, Willie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Adam
<u>Cook County</u>	<u>Echols County</u>	<u>Irwin County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Robinson, Debra	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corbett, Stanley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carver, Scott
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Duke, Buddy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hudgins, Horace
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bennett, Derry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Garner, Cheryl	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paulk, Mona
<u>Lanier County</u>	<u>Lowndes County</u>	<u>Pierce County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fender, Dennis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evans, Joyce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bennett, Neal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Darsey, Bill	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Miller-Cody, Vivian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brooks, Keith
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payton, Anthony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paul, Steven
<u>Tift County</u>	<u>Turner County</u>	<u>Ware County</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> McBrayer, Tony	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whiddon, Dana	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thrift, Elmer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Smith, Julie	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lumpkin, Sandra	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> James, Michael-Angelo
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Giddens, Brandi	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> King, Barbara

<u>Governor's Office</u>	<u>Lt. Governor's Office</u>	<u>Speaker's Office</u>
Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stone, Keith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Seale, Matt
Vacant		
Vacant		

Staff Present

Elizabeth Backe,
 Courson, Scott
 Cribb, Lisa
 Hendricks, Tonia
 Hobbs, Kimberly
 Lovett, Roberta
 Strom, Chris
 Vining, Kim

Guests Present

Brockington, Frankie
 Chism, Lissi & six Ware County High FFA Members
 James, Jaelyn
 Peacock, Kelly
 Poppell, Katelyn
 Westberry, Diane
 White, Charles

INSTALLATION OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS: Chair Evans invited the new council member in attendance to come forward and take the oath as an incoming SGRC council member. The new member installed was Henry Moylan, Clinch County Chair.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 23, 2023 MEETING MINUTES: Chair Evans reminded those present that the February minutes had been emailed to members and included in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Barbara Maefield made a motion to approve the February 23, 2023 meeting minutes. Travis Brown seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF FEBRUARY 2023 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE REPORT: Chair Evans reminded those present that a copy of the February 2023 Revenue and Expenditure Report had been emailed to council members and included in their council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Michael-Angelo James made a motion to accept the February 2023 financial report. Barbara King seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

WARE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL FFA COMPETITION TEAM H-2A TEMPORARY AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM: Chair Evans called upon SGRC Business Services/Sector Partnership Coordinator Amy Jones to introduce Lissi Chism and the Ware County High FFA Competition Team. Ms. Chism is the Ware County Agricultural Education Teacher. The six-member Ware County High FFA Ag Issues Competition Team accompanied her. Ms. Chism explained that the team would compete at a state-level FFA event on April 14, 2023. As a requirement of the state competition, the team is required to present their Ag Issue to at least five formal groups that may be affected by or impacted by their topic. The six-member team proceeded with a PowerPoint presentation (copy attached and made a part of these minutes) on the H-2A and Adverse Effect Wage Rate Roundtable Discussion: H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program – How does the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) impact the agriculture industry overall? The FFA competition team explained what the H-2A program is and its history. They detailed the benefits and risks associated with the program and gave logical personal experience examples to highlight both. After their presentation, the team answered questions from the audience.

Ms. Chism then thanked Chair Evans and the SGRC Council for the opportunity to have her team present their competition discussion topic.

GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS: ACTIVITIES OF

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS IN GEORGIA: Chair Evans called upon SGRC Assistant Executive Director Chris Strom to introduce Katelyn Poppell to speak to the council. Ms. Poppell is the Southeast Regional Program Manager for the Georgia Association of Conservation Districts (GACD). She shared a PowerPoint presentation (copy attached and made a part of these minutes) highlighting activities of the Conservation Districts in Georgia. The GACD is a nonprofit association that supports Georgia's 40 soil and water conservation districts. They provide legislative advocacy, training and partner with them for outreach and education. Members of the GACD volunteer to promote conservation, educate citizens about the importance of conservation, and inform policymakers about natural resource issues. Ms. Poppell shared that \$75 million in federal funding was provided to landowners and producers through Conservation Districts in 2022 for implementation on Georgia lands. After her presentation, Ms. Poppell answered questions from the audience, then thanked the council for their time.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES/UPDATES:

Grants: SGRC Community & Economic Development Assistant Director Tonia Hendricks directed council members to the project status list in their packets (copy attached and made part of these minutes). Ms. Hendricks stated that the list includes the status of current projects the Community & Economic Development department has in progress. She shared that Land Water Conservation Grant applications are due by May 31st and CDBG applications are due June 2nd. Ms. Hendricks also shared a flyer from the council packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes) detailing the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority's Request for Interest (RFI) pre-application stating a deadline of April 14th. RFI pre-applications are for consideration for (1). grant funding for lead service line inventory projects in disadvantaged communities or (2). loan funding for lead service line inventory and or lead service line replacement projects. She encouraged those present to review the project list to see the scope of projects in progress throughout our region. She then advised them to contact SGRC Community & Economic Development staff regarding any project listed or potential projects they may be interested in for their communities.

Planning: SGRC Planning and Transportation Director Elizabeth Backe referred those present to a handout listing the various plans that local governments are required to submit and the deadlines for submission (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). She encouraged council members to review the upcoming deadlines for their communities and contact SGRC Planning staff with any questions.

Ms. Backe also shared that the Regional Plan Update for 2023 would be presented at the April council meeting for transmittal to DCA for approval. She shared that the Regional Plan Update for 2023 was available on the SGRC website: <https://www.sgrc.us/regional-plan.html>.

Division Reports: SGRC Executive Director Lisa Cribb referred those present to the division reports in their packets (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). Ms. Cribb asked those present to review the reports to see what the RC is doing in the region each month.

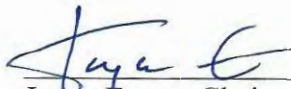
Ms. Cribb also directed members to a flyer in their packet (copy attached and made a part of these minutes). She shared that the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) would be hosting

Digital Connectivity Listening Sessions to gather feedback to help make the internet more accessible to everyone. She stated that a notice would be emailed to council members with the listening session dates and times when they are made available from GTA.

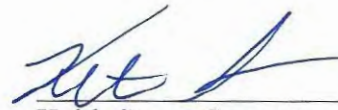
QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- 1.) **Recognition of Guests:** Chair Evans recognized Kelly Peacock, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College Dean of Adult Education Services and Charles White from Congressman Austin Scott's office. Chair Evans asked if either guest had any announcements. Charles White shared that Congressman Austin Scott's office announced the Spring 2023 mobile office hours throughout the 8th district. Mr. White shared that the mobile office dates for the SGRC area would be: April 24th in Berrien and Lowndes Counties; April 26th in Coffee County; April 27th in Clinch County and Echols Counties. He shared that the dates could be found on Congressman Scott's website: <https://austinscott.house.gov/press-releases?ID=62E942C1-8CF7-4DC1-B293-88C4C37E8208>.
- 2.) **Recognition of Representation:** Chair Evans recognized Charlton, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce and Ware counties for having 100% representation at the council meeting.
- 3.) **ACCG Update:** James Everett stated that the 2023 ACCG Annual Conference would be held April 27th – 30th in Savannah, GA.
- 4.) **GMA Update:** Barbara Maefield announced that the GMA's Spring District 11 meeting would be held on April 11th in Fitzgerald.

ADJOURN: As there was no further business to conduct, Chair Evans asked Michael-Angelo James to bless the meal, and the meeting adjourned.



Joyce Evans, Chair



Keith Stone, Secretary