Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission



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*“Improving the Quality of Life for the Citizens of*

*Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Dale, Geneva, Henry and Houston Counties”*

**MINUTES**

**SEARP&DC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**JUNE 8, 2023**

**3:00 PM**

The **THIRD** regularly scheduled meeting of the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission Board of Directors for **FISCAL YEAR 2023** convened on **June 8, 2023** at **3:00 PM.** The meeting was held on the sixth floor of the Houston County Administration Building.

**Board Officers:** Chairman Lori Wilcoxon (Houston County), Second Vice Chairman Mark Blankenship (Dale County), and Secretary/Treasurer Rod Morgan (Coffee County).

**Executive Committee Members**: Earl Gilmore (Barbour County), Thomas Crossley (Barbour County), Rob Hinson (Geneva County), and David Money (Henry County).

**Board of Directors**: Rachel Smith (Barbour County), Tom Maddox (Coffee County), Terry Holley (Covington County), Steve McKinnon (Dale County), Frankie Wilson (Dale County), Kelli Brannon (Geneva County), David Hayes (Geneva County), Henry Grimsley (Henry County), Jimmy Money (Henry County), Brandon Shoupe (Houston County), Kimberly Trotter (Houston County), Michael Smith (Houston County) and Kevin Dorsey (Houston County).

### ITEM 1: Call to Order / Invocation / Establishment of Quorum – Chairperson Wilcoxon

Chairperson Wilcoxon called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM and asked Rod Morgan to begin the meeting with prayer. She welcomed everyone and introduced new board member David Hayes, Mayor of Geneva and Guest Speaker Melanie Hill, Office of U.S. Senator Katie Britt.

### ITEM 2: Guest Speaker Melanie Hill, Office of U.S. Senator Katie Britt

Ms. Hill, Field Representative informed the Board that U.S. Senator Katie Britt is a proud to champion hardworking as a United States Senator for the great state of Alabama. Most recently, Katie worked to grow food-paying jobs and opportunity for all Alabamians while standing up for small and rural businesses. A passion first instilled by her parents, both small businesses owners in her native Wiregrass. She stated she strongly believes that no child’s zip code should determine their opportunity in life. A practicing attorney by trade, Katie is a graduate of the University of Alabama and the University of Alabama School of Law. She previously served as the chief of staff to Alabama’s then-senior U. S. Senator and has served on numerous boards and committees. Ms. Hill stated she has known Senator Britt since she was 7 years old. “Katie can be in the middle of a tornado listening to you and make you think you are the only person in the world”. She noted that her cards would be available and to please feel free to contact her.

**ITEM 3: Review and Approval of Minutes from the form March 9, 2023 & May 4, 2023 – Lori Wilcoxon**

Thomas Crossley made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Terry Holley seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

**ITEM 4: Report of Officers, Committees, and Departments**

1. **Executive Committee Report**
2. **FY 2022 Audit Review – Josh Riley, McDaniel & Associates**

Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of FY 2022 Audit Review. Earl Gilmore made a motion to approve the Audit. Steve McKinnon seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

1. **Resolution # 471 Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Certification – Rachel Armstrong**

Ms. Armstrong informed the Board that the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission has conducted its Revolving Loan Fund Program for the past year's reporting period ending September 30, 2020. The SEARP&DC’s Revolving Loan Fund Loan Administration Board has reviewed the RLF's performance for the preceding year relative to the area's adjustment strategy and the RLF Plan. The RLF Plan is consistent with and supportive of the area's current economic adjustment strategy and the RLF is being operated in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in the RLF Plan, and the loan portfolio meets the standards contained therein, by the SEARP&DC’s Revolving Loan Fund Loan Administration Board that this Board certifies the Revolving Loan Fund Program meets the annual certification requirements as required in Section VIII.D, of the Economic Development Administration's Revolving Loan Fund Administration Manual dated March 15, 1993. Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of Resolution #471. Earl Gilmore made a motion to approve the Resolution. Steve McKinnon seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

1. **New Job to Classification Plan – Janitor (Head Start) - Wendy Cook**

Ms. Cook informed the Board that she was requesting their approval to add a new job position (Janitor) to the Head Start department. She stated under the general supervision of the Center Director, the employee serves as a cleaner for cleaning the centers to include hallways, classrooms, lunchrooms, offices, any additional rooms and all facilities in a timely manner while ensuring all areas remain neat and organized. Will perform various cleaning duties throughout the center. This position is considered security-sensitive and is subject to a pre-employment background check and random drug screening. Some travel within the seven (7) county catchment area may be required. Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of the New Job Classification Plan. Terry Holley made a motion to approve the new job classification. Rod Morgan seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

1. **Adoption of New Organizational Chart - Wendy Cook**

Ms. Cook informed the Board that a new Organizational Chart was being updated to reflect the new jobs that have been created at SEARP&DC and from the Program of Work (POW), the Human Resources Consulting division of the Government and Economic Development Institute (GEDI/HR) through Auburn University. Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and adoption of the new Organizational Chart. Earl Gilmore made a motion to approve. Frankie Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

1. **Employee Handbook Revision - Policy 220 Timekeeping and Schedules – Wendy**

**Cook**

Ms. Cook informed the Board that Policy 220 Timekeeping and Schedules was being updated for the Wiregrass Transit Staff. Wiregrass Transit office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Drivers **and Dispatchers** will be scheduled between **the hours of** 5:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Employees will be entitled to a one-hour meal period. She stated that the words in red was the changes to the policy. Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of the Policy 220 Timekeeping and Schedules. Thomas Crossley made a motion to approve revisions to Policy 220. Frankie Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

1. **Revisions to By-Laws – Scott Farmer**

Mr. Farmer recommended to the Board the following Revisions to the By-Laws:

 ARTICLE I

 PURPOSE

SECTION 1. For the purpose of forming a Regional Planning and Development Commission in accordance with Act Number 1126, Regular Session, 1969, of the Legislature of Alabama, the undersigned have associated themselves together and have consented to and adopted this written agreement to constitute a Regional Planning and Development Commission upon the certification hereof by the Governor pursuant to the aforesaid law. The Commission shall implement and carry out the provisions of Act Number ~~1128~~ 1126 of the State of Alabama, enacted on September 13, 1969, and the provisions of the Public Works And Economic Development Act of 1965, Public Law 89-138, as promulgated by the 89th Congress of the United States of America and all subsequently enacted federal and state legislation related these powers, purposes, and duties.

 ARTICLE VI

THE REPRESENTATIVES - THEIR POWERS AND DUTIES

SECTION 5. The Commission shall adopt Rules of Procedure as required by Alabama’s Open Meetings Act (Act No. 2005-40, Act 2015-340, Act 2015-475, Act 2022-421). These rules shall set forth procedures for conducting meetings, including notice, and related matters. A majority of the number of representatives fixed by these By-Laws shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but less than a quorum shall have the power to adjourn any meeting from time to time; and the meeting may be held as adjourned without further notice. The acts of the majority of the representatives present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Commission.

SECTION 8. The Commission shall elect officers of the Commission and said Officers shall be elected annually at the regular annual meeting of the Commission held on the second Thursday of each September, or other scheduled September meeting.

ARTICLE VII

REQUIREMENT OF NOTICE

SECTION 1. ~~Personal delivery of notice of a meeting or deposit of the same in the United States mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, addressed to a representative of the Commission, at the last address given to the Secretary, as shown on the books of the Commission, or to his last known address if the same does not appear upon the books of the Commission, for the requisite length of time specified in these By-Laws, prior to a meeting, shall consti­tute due notice to a representative, of any Commission meeting.~~ Notices of meetings shall be mailed or emailed to each representative provided to the mailing or email address filed with the Commission.

THESE BY-LAWS ADOPTED BY the members of THE SOUTHEAST ALABAMA REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION on the **8th day of June, 2023.**

Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of the SEARP&DC revised By-Laws. Thomas Crossley made a motion to approve the By-Laws. Frankie Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

1. **Revisions to Rules of Procedure – Scott Farmer**

Mr. Farmer recommended to the Board the following Revision to Rules of Procedure:

**Revised: June 8, 2023**

**I. Scope of Rules.**

1. The following Rules of Procedures were duly adopted by the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission as required by the Alabama Open Meetings Act (Act 2005-40, Act 2015-340, Act 2015-475, Act 2022-421) and shall govern the conduct of the meetings of the Commission beginning on the 1st day of October, 2005.

**II. Access to Meeting Facilities.**

A. Meetings Open to Public. All regular meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public as required by the Alabama Open Meetings Act ~~(Act 2005-40)~~.

**III. ~~Quorum~~ Meetings.**

B. Public Notice. Meeting notices must absolutely contain the time, date, and place of the meeting. A general description of the nature and purpose of the meeting should also be contained in the notice. Notice is to be given as soon as possible, OMA deadlines are absolute, statutory minimums. The OMA’s notice deadlines are broken into three categories: 7-day requirements, 1-day requirements, and 1-hour requirements. Reference ~~OMA Section 3~~ §36-25a-3 of The Code of Alabama 1975 for clarification.

~~D~~E. Loss of Quorum. In the event that a board member departs a Commission meeting prior to adjournment, and the departure causes a loss of quorum, no further official action may be taken until or unless a quorum is restored, except to vote on a motion to adjourn. If, after a reasonable time not to exceed 15 minutes, the Commission still lacks a quorum of its members, the meeting shall be automatically adjourned.

~~E~~F. Failure to Obtain Quorum. Should no quorum attend within 30 minutes after the time appointed for the beginning of the meeting of the Commission, the Chair or the Vice Chair, or in their absence, another Board member, in order of seniority, shall announce that no quorum was present and that the meeting is cancelled. The names of the members present for the meeting shall be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Commission.

G. Participation by Electronic Communications. Special and emergency meetings of the Commission may utilize provisions of §36-25A-5.1 of The Code of Alabama 1975 to allow participation by electronic communications.

1. A meeting by means of telephone conference, video conference, or other similar communications shall allow all members participating to hear each other at the same time. The means of access to the electronic communication shall be published in the meeting notice.
2. A physical location shall be available for persons wishing to be physically present, at which any interested member of the public shall be able to hear all persons participating remotely, and that location shall be published in meeting notice. There shall be at least three members of the Commission physically present at the physical meeting location.
3. The means of access shall allow members of the public to hear the meeting. There is no requirement to allow the public to participate by electronic means to any extent beyond being able to hear the meeting.
4. Any vote taken at a meeting conducted by these provisions shall be taken as a roll call vote that allows each participant to vote individually in a manner audible to all persons participating or present at the physical location.
5. If the electronic communications fail or are in any way interrupted during a meeting otherwise in compliance with §36-25A-5.1 of The Code of Alabama 1975, that failure shall not be grounds to challenge any action taken during the meeting.

**IV. Presiding Officer**

4. Call to order any member of the Board who violates any of these procedures.

~~6~~5. Expedite business in every way compatible with the rights of the members.

~~7~~6. Remain objective. The Chair must remain objective, however, as a representative member of the Board, he/she may vote on matters before the Board.

~~8~~7. Declare the meeting adjourned when the Commission so votes, when a quorum is no longer present, or at any time in the event of an emergency affecting the safety of those present.

Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of the SEARP&DC revised Rules of Procedure. Steve McKinnon made a motion to approve. Terry Holley seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

1. **Nominating Committee – Glenda Chancey**

Ms. Chancey read the nominations from the Executive Committee for the Nominating Committee. The nominations were as follows: Earl Gilmore (Barbour County), Rod Morgan (Coffee County), Sammy Glover (Covington County), Mark Blankenship (Dale County), Rob Hinson (Geneva County), David Money (Henry County), and Matt Parker (Houston County). Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of the Nomination Committee. Terry Holley made a motion to approve the Nominations. Earl Gilmore seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

### Agency Administration

* 1. **FY 2023 Reports**
	2. **Finance Department – Judith Tate**

Ms. Tate stated that she would like to thank Brittany Bingham for all of her hard work in the Finance Department. She stated the Agency’s Wide Budget report runs from October 2022-April 2023. The year-to-date percentage of the budget is 45.51%. She stated that the Finance Department continues to assist our programs through a variety of tasks such as payrolls, accounts payable, billing, reporting to our funding sources, daily deposits and many other tasks. She also presented a detailed budget report and credit card expenditure for the agency.

* 1. **Head Start – Jackie Daniels**

Ms. Daniels informed the following information to the Board:

**Enrollment:**

We had 89 children that transitioned from Head Start to Kindergarten and 156 children are eligible to return. The staff is working to obtain full enrollment by August 2023, but at this time our acceptance for enrollment is at 70%.

**Outcomes:**

* The outcomes from child assessment for the Fall to the Spring shows great progress from the beginning to the end of the year.
* Improvements were in all areas, the below expectation decreased while meet & exceeds expectations increased.
* Our Fall outcomes show our areas of strength was in Social-Emotional & Literacy and our area of weakness was in Language & Cognitive.
* Our Spring results shows our area of strength was in Social- Emotional & Math, while our area of weakness was in Language & Cognitive.

**Projects:**

WRCD project has been completed in Florala and now they are working on the Geneva center to build an outside gardening & reading area, as well as delivering additional supplies to all centers.

The Alabama Quality STARS has been providing support for each the centers to increase their STAR rating with DHR licenses. Andalusia & Geneva has gained additional STARS. Eufaula, Florala, and Opp will be assessed in the Fall.

**Updates:**

The centers went on Field Trips to various places in their local communities; such as the libraries, police stations, fire departments and local parks. The children and their families enjoyed the trips and received library cards, books and hats from the facilities.

The centers conducted their END OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION from May 18-25.

Center Directors has begun the process for the annual Program Information Report (PIR) and we will be working to finalize & submit it by August. Now, we are making plans for our 2023-2024 school term with the Annual Pre-Service training in July.

* 1. **Executive Director – Scott Farmer**

Mr. Farmer introduced the new Planner, Chris Rush. He informed the Board the following information:

* Facility Update:
	+ - Requested ALDOT to see if all federal interest can be transferred to FTA, since two sources of funding (ALDOT and FTA) will be required.
* Redistricting:
	+ - * + Provided guidance to City of Geneva (for 2025 Municipal Election)
* Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):
	+ - * City of Elba HMGP

Assisted the City in closing out its acquisition/demolition project pertaining to floodprone structures.

* + - City of Hartford HMGP
			* Working with the City on two generator grants.
* CED:
	+ - Working with CED Department on BUILD Grant and Fort Novosel Compatible Land Use Study implementation.
	+ Assisting in the review of Section 5310 applications.
	+ Administering 2022 Florala CDBG Planning Grant.
* Head Start:
	+ - * Attending monthly meetings with Office of Head Start Point of Contact and called

 meetings with Office of Head Start Regional Program Manager (with HSCED management, HR, and Finance).

* + - Worked with HR on Key Hire process of Director.
		- Assisting HSECD management with Headland facility situation and other programmatic needs.
		- Assisted HSECD management in the submission of the 2023 COLA/QI application.
* Wiregrass Transit:
	+ Assisting management with completion of FY 2022 National Transit Database (NTD) Report.
* Conferences, Workshops, Events, or Webinars attended:
* AARC Executive Committee Meetings (Multiple)
* AUSA Luncheon (Enterprise)
* Ozark Technology Center Advisory Board (Ozark)
* Wiregrass Professional Series – State of the Base (Dothan Area Chamber of Commerce)
* SouthEast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) Annual Conference (Savannah, GA)
* Federal Funding Update
	+ FY 2024 (President’s Budget) (Formula Funding)
		- Head Start: $1.1B increase from FY 2023
		- Transit: $356M increase from FY 2023
		- SCSEP: $1.5M increase from FY 2023
		- CDBG: No change from FY 2023
		- EDA (Partnership Planning): $1M decrease from FY 2023
		- EDA (Public Works): No change from FY 2023

**ITEM 4: New Business**

Mr. Farmer informed that Board that he would like to get the approval to send bids out to local banks. He stated he would like to form a subcommittee to review the bids. That committee proposed was Lori Wilcoxon, Rod Morgan, and Mark Blankenship. Board members were involved in the discussion and participated in the development and approval of Bank subcommittee. David Money made a motion to approve the Committee. Terry Holley seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

**ITEM 5: Announcements and/or Other Business**

Mr. Farmer informed the Board that Annual Meeting will be September 28, 2023 at the Enterprise Civic Center at 11:00 a.m. He also stated the September Board meeting would be moved from September 14 to September 28th at the Enterprise Civic Center. Executive Committee would be at 10:00 a.m. and Board would be at 10:30 a.m.

**ITEM 6: Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Chairperson Executive Assistant