

GNRC

Greater Nashville Regional Council
44 Vantage Way, Suite 450
Nashville, Tennessee 37228

GNRC Regional Council Meeting
Wednesday, February 15, 2023, 10:15 a.m.
at TN State Library & Archives
1001 Rep. John Lewis Way N
Nashville, TN 37201

MINUTES

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Diana Alarcon	Davidson County
Rogers Anderson	Williamson County
Andy Barlow	Mt. Juliet
Rick Bell	Lebanon
Lynn Bowles	Sumner County Social Equity Rep
Paige Brown	Gallatin
Mike Callis	Portland
Joe Carr	Rutherford County
Jamie Clary	Hendersonville
Steve Collie	Oak Hill
Margot Fosnes	Robertson Co. Business Rep
Hali Gallik	Nolensville
Wes Golden	Montgomery County
Gerald Herman	White House
Randall Hutto	Wilson County
John Isbell	Sumner County
David Leath	Westmoreland
Jack McCall	Trousdale County
Kerry McCarver	Cheatham County
Kel McDowell	Williamson County Bus. Rep
Ken McLawhon	Thompson's Station
Ken Moore	Franklin
Ted Moore	Humphreys County
Andrew Pieri	Millersville
Joe Pitts	Clarksville
Mary Esther Reed	Smyrna
Bob Rial	Dickson County
Jerome Terrell	Cheatham County
Billy Vogle	Robertson County

CALL TO ORDER

Board President Mayor Bob Rial called the Regional Council Meeting to order at 10:21 a.m. on Wednesday, February 15, 2023.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 19, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

Mayor Ken Moore moved to approve the October 19, 2022 meeting minutes. Mayor Joe Pitts seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 14, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

Mayor Moore moved to approve the December 14, 2022 meeting minutes with Mayor Pitts seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. FY 2024 GNRC Regional Dues Estimates

Mr. Michael Skipper, GNRC Executive Director, said that the GNRC general membership dues account for approximately 4% of GNRC's \$18M FY 23 budget and are a critical part of securing funding from state and federal grant programs that support local social services, infrastructure improvements, and economic and community development projects.

The regional dues are assessed on a per capita basis (37 cents) and based on 2021 population estimates from the American Community Survey (ACS), which is a U.S. Census Bureau tool.

- FY 2024 dues allocations comprise:
 - 27.5 cents for required program match and subsidy
 - 3.5 cents for government affairs
 - 2.5 cents for cash reserves
 - 2.0 cents for capital fund
 - 1.5 cents for non-reimbursables
- Jurisdictions participating in the Nashville Area MPO are assessed an additional 28 cents per capita for federally required matching funds
- Dues proposed to be approved with GNRC's budget in June
- Dues to be invoiced in July and payable by September

The general membership and program dues are an essential element of the GNRC budget and provide benefits including the following to local governments across Middle Tennessee.

- Dues provide required matching dollars to leverage more than \$15M in grant funds from the TN Dept of Economic and Community Development,

TN Dept of Transportation, TN Commission on Aging and Disability, TN Arts Commission, TN Dept of Tourist Development, U.S. Economic Development Administration, U.S. Dept of Agriculture, among others.

- Of GNRC's \$18M FY 23 budget, nearly \$6M dollars are sent directly to local communities and agencies in order to 1) support senior centers and to provide meals, transportation, and in-home services for older adults, 2) fund arts projects and tourism marketing, and 3) provide technical assistance to municipal and county governments pursuing State and federal grant opportunities
- Dues help pay for the programming that keeps local governments, TDOT and transit agencies eligible for more than \$260M+ per year in federal transportation grants
- Dues pay for expenses that are not reimbursable by state and federal grants

More information about GNRC's budget is available at www.gnrc.org/budget

Ms. Diana Alarcon asked if this is an increase over last year. Mr. Skipper the dues did not increase in FY23 and said the projected 2 cent increase over the current rate will not be final until the June budget is adopted.

Mayor Joe Carr asked for some historical data regarding what the jurisdictions are getting as a return on investment from their dues. Mr. Skipper said he can put this information together and email it to him. Ms. Alarcon and Mayor David Leath asked for this information also.

ACTION ITEMS:

a. Resolution GNRC 2023-06 Endorsing the Annual Update to the Area Plan for Aging and Disability Services

Mr. Skipper said that the Area Plan is a good example of the use of dues for aging and disability services. The area plan is created every four years and receives yearly updates.

Ms. Sara Fowler, Director of Aging and Disability Services, said that the GNRC is designated by the Federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the TN Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD) as an Area Agency on Aging and Disability (AAAD) for the purposes of coordinating state and federally funded programs and services for older and disabled adults across Middle Tennessee.

The Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965 was the first federal level initiative aimed at providing comprehensive service for older adults. It created the National Aging Network comprising the Administration on Aging on the federal level, State Units on Aging at the state level, and Area Agencies on Aging at the local level.

The OAA program areas with funding levels are 1) supportive services (\$1.7M), 2) nutrition services (\$2.8M), 3) disease prevention (\$100K), 4) family caregiver support (\$821K), and 5) ombudsman and elder abuse (\$89K).

Ms. Fowler said that our Area Plan works in concert with the Tennessee State Area Plan to support its goals. The state funded programs are 1) state support for OAA programs, 2) state OPTIONS program, and 3) the state Public Guardianship Program.

The Area Plan and GNRC's role is to:

- Establish goals, objectives, and priorities
- Procure and coordinate the provider network
- Serve as the gateway to information and assistance
- Screen individuals for eligibility
- Connect individuals to services
- Track service delivery and monitor quality

She said that the FY 2024 goals are to 1) expanded provision of in-home services, 2) maintained strong partnerships with senior centers, and 3) expanded programming.

GNRC is looking to increase capacity of our provider network, maintain exceptional customer service, and increase visibility of GNRC programs and services.

Ms. Fowler said that the staff wants to know what the needs are in each jurisdiction. She encouraged the members to take the survey at www.gnrc.org/survey/aging

Mayor Rogers Anderson said that county mayors have issues with elderly people who fall in homes. There is no service other than the volunteer fire department to help. Since there is not a revenue stream to support this help, it would be useful if some of the voucher money could be incorporated to support this service. Often, these are people who are repeat fallers. Ms. Fowler said that GNRC could be a resource to those emergency services by providing balance training or equipment.

Mayor Anderson said that maybe the 4-H or USDA could help with providing fresh vegetables.

Mayor Anderson said that some elderly also need assistance with tax preparation in their homes.

Mayor Moore said that we should all be proud of the work being done. He asked is there is any of the new money is going toward the guardianship program. Ms. Fowler said that the program is continually underfunded, and funds cannot be moved from another area to pay for guardianship. Mayor Anderson asked if ARPA money can be used. Ms. Fowler said no. Mr. Skipper said that federal funds cannot be used. He reiterated that this is an area in which dues are important and \$100-150K of members' dues will go to the guardianship program, and this is an area where costs cannot be further cut.

Mayor Mike Callis asked if there is a program that supplies smoke detectors for hard of hearing. Ms. Fowler said there are detectors for this but they must meet certain criteria.

Mr. Skipper said that he appreciates the staff for taking on more clients, but they can't continue to work at this pace. Legislative reimbursements rates for providers need to be discussed with the state representatives.

Mayor Pitts moved to approve Resolution 2023-06 Endorsing the Annual Update to the Area Plan for Aging and Disability Service. Mayor Billy Vogle seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

b. Resolution GNRC 2023-07 Authorizing an Application to U.S. EDA for the Recapitalization of the GNRC Revolving Loan Fund

Mr. Michael Mills, Director of Economic and Community Development, said that the revolving loan fund (RLF) assists small businesses. He said that the Mid-Cumberland Development Corporation (MADC), a non-profit established by GNRC in the 1980s is the arm that helps administer the program. When GNRC capitalized the RLF the grant requirement was 50-50% cash match. EDA is currently accepting applications to take 20% instead of 50% for recapitalization of the loan program. The cash will leverage up to \$3B in federal funds, which will give MADDC \$3.75M to loan out if the application is approved.

Mr. Mills noted that this is a very competitive grant program, and recapitalization is not guaranteed. This match will be 80% federal and 20% local.

Mr. Skipper said that this resolution allows GNRC to submit the application and should GNRC be awarded the grant, another resolution authorizing the RLF plan would be needed.

Mayor Moore asked if there are a lot of requirements by the federal government for those borrowing money. Mr. Skipper said that it depends on the loan program. Mr. Mills said that the way the RLF is set up to provide gap financing and requires a borrower to have a traditional lender in place. The MADDC Board must approve loans, and the program is set up to help make businesses possible that cannot secure bank loans. Mayor Kerry McCarver asked what percentage of default in the program. Mr. Mills said that there is a performance matrix that the federal funder imposes on the business and the borrower must provide one job per \$10,000. There is no specific statement in any of the guidelines that say the loan is in jeopardy if this percentage is exceeded. This is up to the board to decide. Right now there is only one loan that is in default.

Ms. Candi Henry, Chief Legal Counsel, said that the RLF sets the parameters for the lending and provides a lot of flexibility on loans. She said that currently the loans are capped at \$250K. The focus is on job creation. She said that the default rate is very low. The public/private partnership of the loan is one of the best uses of the injection of government money because the loan program can be self-supporting. When the borrowers pay back the capital with interest, that revenue supports the continuation of the lending program. Plus, the nature of the fund is for the borrower to become a self-supporting business.

Mayor Moore moved to approve Resolution GNRC 2023-07 Authorizing and Application to U.S. EDA for the Recapitalization of the GNRC Revolving Loan Fund with Mayor Pitts seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution GNRC 2023-08 Endorsing Proposals to Increase Transportation Funding and Accelerate Project Delivery

Mr. Skipper said that it is important to support the Governor's proposal to increase transportation funding and to accelerate the project delivery process. He said that the state transferred \$3.3B to support transportation investments.

He said that the Transportation Modernization Act (TMA) ensures TDOT must coordinate with local communities. Mayor Moore thanked the staff for the resolution as this gives the opportunity to start improving the backlog of projects for the lagging infrastructure in our area.

Ms. Diana Alarcon asked to amend to defer the resolution as there needs to be more discussion to understand where the funds are going to be used. She said that Metro Nashville wants more multi-modal projects to be part of this. She said that the legislation is too vague. There needs to be more details on how the system will connect with the multi-modal system that Metro is designing.

Mr. Skipper agreed that there are concerns about how money is to be used. He said that it is his understanding that it is not the intent of the Governor or TDOT to bring forward a list of projects at this time. The resolution in support of the enabling legislation for the projects the state may implement. He said GNRC understands the concern as to where the money is spent but it is important to keep our eye on the ball and there is a provision in the resolution requiring TDOT to coordinate with communities.

Ms. Alarcon said that, since no legislation has been seen to support multi-modal projects, this might be a missed opportunity to support our metropolitan region. She said that they are looking for the amounts dedicated to the region to support transportation and traffic growth and the multi-modal aspect of building out the transit system throughout the region.

Ms. Alarcon moved to defer this resolution. There was not a second.

Mayor Callis said that the resolution as written is appropriate for what we need to do and we need to support the legislation.

Mayor Wes Golden said that he supports the increase in funding but asks for support from this group to widen I-24 toward Clarksville. This part of I-24 has been neglected for a long time.

Mayor Moore said that time is important, and it will probably be next year before projects are listed. But we must move forward and be part of crafting what is necessary for the General Assembly and also in supporting the Commissioner in what is a real opportunity in solving our transportation problem.

Mayor Moore moved to approve the Resolution GNRC 2023-08 Endorsing Proposals to Increase Transportation funding and Accelerate Project Delivery. Mayor Pitts seconded. The motion passed with Ms. Alarcon voting no.

Mayor Mary Esther Reed said she appreciates the support of the project delivery but noted that the mayors need to educate the citizens on it to get them behind it.

REGULAR REPORTS

a) CHAIR'S REPORT

Mayor Rial said that a Solid Waste Strike Force has been established. The first meeting is this week. An update will be given to this group at the next meeting. TDEC Commissioner Soyer will also be on the Strike Force.

Mayor Rial said that member dues to GNRC are important as they leverage more money for the region.

b) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Skipper thanked Ms. Alarcon for expressing her views. He said that a cover letter will be attached to the resolution and will present our questions and concerns about how this would be handled in the future. We all share these concerns.

Mr. Skipper said that the Volunteer Program's impact is substantial. Ms. Rebecca Nofi manages GNRC's volunteer program. Ms. Nofi presented highlights of the 2022 volunteer impact. She said that in 2022 GNRC had 1,134 active volunteers with 18,116 hours served. The value of this time is \$542,574. Mr. Skipper thanked her for her leadership. For more information www.gnrc.org/volunteer

Mr. Skipper said that all 80 GNRC staffers are now in one office at 44 Vantage Way, Nashville.

He said that the upcoming meeting are:

- Feb. 17: Solid Waste Strike Force
 - State of Solid Waste Report
 - Strike Force priorities and expectation
- March 15: Transportation Policy Board
 - Board Member Orientation
 - Adoption of Plan and TIP Amendments
- April 19: Regional Council Body
 - Kickoff of Annual Update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
 - Presentation of the Vital Signs Report

OTHER BUSINESS

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lou Edwards
Recording Secretary