Minutes

Board of Commissioners
Republican Party Special Called Meeting
Saturday, September 6, 2014
9:00-10:15 A.M.

Location:	Fayette County Republican Party Headquarters 174 North Glynn Street Fayetteville, Georgia 30214
Attending Commissioners:	Steve Brown, Chairman Charles Oddo, Vice Chairman Allen McCarty, Commissioner Randy Ognio, Commissioner
Special Guest:	Field Searcy
County Staff Attending:	Floyd L. Jones, County Clerk

Call to Order by Chairman Scott Fabricius- Fayette County Republican Party

Republican Party Chairman Scott Fabricius called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Commissioner Allen McCarty offered the Invocation. Mr. Tyrone Jones led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Kimberly Sandwich sang the National Anthem.

1. **Various notifications pertaining to the Fayette County Republican Party.**

   Chairman Scott Fabricius welcomed newcomers, currently elected office holders, and those running for office to the meeting. A report and various announcements were given regarding events involving the Fayette County Republican Party.

2. **Discussion by the Board of Commissioners on various county-related issues including regionalism and its effects in Fayette County, and discussion on other opportunities and concerns pertaining to Fayette County.**

   At 9:22 a.m., Event Chairman and Executive Board Member of the Fayette County Republican Party Linda Sandwich introduced the Fayette County Commissioners and Mr. Field Searcy, a Cobb County citizen who represents RepealRegionalism.com to the audience.

   Fayette County Commissioner Chairman Steve Brown and Mr. Searcy gave a PowerPoint presentation on the topic of regionalism and concerns they have with regional government in Georgia. The Commissioners and Mr. Searcy then answered questions from the audience.

Randy Hough: Mr. Hough asked when regionalism came into place, how was it allowed to happen, and who was the Governor of Georgia when this happened. Mr. Searcy replied that the regional governmental structure was introduced by House Bill 12616 in 2008, and that it was supported by elected people who were not "policy-wonks." He stated that Georgia House Bill 277 of House Bill 1216 and it extended regional government. Chairman Brown added that federal funds are the "crack cocaine of politics", and that regional government was incentivized with federal funds that they do not want to lose. He also spoke about suggestions he has given at the regional government to no longer be dependent on federal funds.

Bob Ross: Mr. Ross asked if there were any legislative proposals at the Georgia General Assembly that would address the problems with regionalism. Chairman Brown replied that Representative Ed Setzler (R-Acworth) introduced a bill that did not go anywhere. He stated that the bill would change the regional taxation format that would allow counties to partner with counties and to choose who they want to partner with in order to address mutual issues. He explained that if every Fayette County voter voted against regional taxation but the metropolitan Atlanta region voted for a regional tax, then Fayette County's citizens would be required to pay the tax. Fayette County Commission Vice Chairman Charles Oddo added that there was movement with the Association County Commissioners Georgia (ACCG) to address the concerns with regionalism.

Scott Fabricius: Republican Party Chairman Scott Fabricius asked, since Fayette County is forced to be a part of a regional commission, if Fayette County should switch to a different regional commission. He asked Chairman Brown what he thought about that possibility and how difficult it would be. Chairman Brown replied that Fayette County is a satellite county in the Atlanta Regional Commission; unlike Fulton and DeKalb Counties that are locked into the Atlanta Regional Commission. He acknowledged that some had talked about Fayette County going to the Three Rivers Regional Commission. He suggested that if Fayette County finds itself in a mandatory regional taxation situation where it is forced to pay regional taxes, it was his personal opinion that Fayette County should seriously look at heading to another region. He explained that the reason was because Fayette County would then be one of the larger counties in the new region and it would have more power since it would be generating a lot more of the income in that region. He stated that was the only scenario that he would look at to move to the Three Rivers Regional Commission.

Tyrone Jones: 1st Vice Chairman of the Fayette County Republican Party Tyrone Jones asked how many people have traveled to the northeastern corridor of the United States, and he explained that in that area of the country there were many toll roads that were increasingly becoming more expensive to utilize. He asked if toll roads could be utilized to offset costs. Chairman Brown agreed that alternative forms of funding for transportation could be explored, and he stated that people needed to be held accountable for lifestyle decisions that incur costs on the public road system.

Bill Ryan: Mr. Ryan suggested that there are many people who love to live in the same location where they work, but that it was something that was prohibited by the County Board of Commissioners. He asked why the Board would not change the laws to allow them to live where they work. Chairman Brown replied that there will be a lot of office space and a lot of residential space, but rarely do people work next to where they live since they will often drive somewhere else to work. He stated that you cannot force people to work near to where they live, but efforts could be made to fund those decisions that increase costs. Dr. Bill Hudson spoke out from the audience saying if regionalism is not stopped then the County Commissioners, mayors, and ultimately the people will not have a say in their government any longer.

Darwin Edwards: Mr. Edwards stated that the nation needed a George Washington who will give a map on where to go and how to get people involved. Chairman Brown replied that on the Fayette County Republican Party website there was a good write-up on regionalism. Mr. Searcy added that people could go to www.RepealRegionalism.com for articles on regionalism in Georgia. It was also suggested that the citizens should contact their state representatives and senators concerning regionalism. Chairman Brown urged the people to send emails to their senators and representatives.

Alberta Lucas: Ms. Lucas asked how regional government can tax people's lifestyles. Mr. Searcy replied that the Georgia Department of Community Affairs was set up by the Georgia General Assembly and when it created the regions, it stated that there was a one dollar per capita tax paid to the regional commissions. He stated that if the T-SPLOST had passed in 2012, it would have stood up as a sales tax for state government. It was explained that the regional commission includes the County Commission Chairman from each county and one mayor from each county, but that the result is the loss of local government and representational government. Chairman Brown added that the citizen representatives for regional commissioners are unelected and unaccountable to the people, and given the dynamics involved with the regional commission's setup, they are the most powerful block in the regional commission.

Dr. Bill Hudson: Dr. Hudson recalled that Commissioner Oddo had spoken about the ACCG's effort to address regional commissions, but he spoke about representatives from the Georgia Department of Transportation is telling one story to legislatures while telling everyone else a different story about their stance on regional government and federal grants.

Linda Sandwich: Ms. Sandwich suggested that everyone could keep an eye on a bill that would take all Georgia's taxpayers money and would require the state legislation to decide what money would be sent to the federal government. She said currently the money goes to the federal government who then returns the money through grants with strings attached on how to spend the money. She then drew a distinction between those who draw income from government means and how that income is provided from those who pay taxes through private businesses.

Commissioner Randy Ognio: Commissioner Ognio stated that Chairman Brown is a great representative at the Atlanta Regional Commission. He added that he had some disagreement with Chairman Brown about when to move Fayette County out of the Atlanta Regional Commission since it would be harder to make that transition after a regional tax is implemented. He explained that the effort to move from one regional commission to another would take some thinking and discussion. He then thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Commissioner Allen McCarty: Commissioner McCarty stated that if the people are not capable of governing themselves then they are already in trouble. He stated that the Commissioners represent the citizens, not regional commissions. He explained that the County has a balanced budget, has an AAA Bond Rating, and that the movie industry has come to the county; providing additional tax funds. He said he wanted to make things work for the citizens of Fayette County, and he wanted to ensure that the citizens of Fayette County were not working for a regional commission.

Commissioner Oddo: Commissioner Oddo pointed out that about two years ago there was nearly a complete turnover for the County Commissioners and county staff. He complimented County Administrator Steve Rapson for his efforts in obtaining the AAA Bond Rating. He explained that change is difficult and that sometimes the struggle is like a salmon swimming upstream. He said the Fayette County Board of Commissioners is listening to the comments. He said the County Commission is trying to represent the people and he appreciated their attendance and questions.

Chairman Brown: Chairman Brown asked the audience to go to www.myfayettegop.org, find the issues section, and read about regionalism. He asked people to email Mr. Doug Hooker at the Atlanta Regional Commission at www.atlantaregional.com. It was pointed out that Chairman Brown, Tyrone Mayor Eric Dial, and citizen representative Bob Reeves represent Fayette County at the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Jan Trammel: Ms. Trammell stated that this meeting had been very informative and asked for a similar meeting to be held in the future. Ms. Sandwich replied that the next meeting would be for the Board of Education members.

Dr. Bill Hudson: Dr. Hudson repeated that if regionalism is not stopped government would become less accountable. Chairman Brown replied that the effort was to create a regional government system for the Minneapolis-St. Paul region in Minnesota. Chairman Brown added that Mr. Myron Orfield is the architect of regional government and that the people should look him up on the internet.

Scott Fabricius: Chairman Fabricius asked if the bylaws for the regional commissions could be amended in order to address those elected people who represent their jurisdictions by proxy. Chairman Brown replied, "Good luck."

Greg Dunn: Former Fayette County Commission Chairman Greg Dunn said he appreciated Chairman Brown's work at the Atlanta Regional Commission. He pointed out that the elected officials put the non-elected officials in charge, and that the current Attorney General of the State of Georgia was the one who led the charge in that matter. He also pointed out that the people elected their first Republican Governor and Senate for the first time, but that the Republican Georgia General Assembly will not engage on this matter. He stated that when help is requested there is silence. Ms. Sandwich replied that it meant that the people would need to "fire its current legislature." Mr. Dunn suggested that one of the issues that need to be addressed with the upcoming election for Governor and Senator is where they stand on this issue.

Bill Poole: Mr. Poole stated that the Democrats built the bureaucracy over the past seventy years and that the Republicans are maintaining the bureaucracy. Ms. Sandwich replied that when people get in power they do what they can to maintain their power. She suggested that the people need to engage with their governments.

The Board did not vote or give any direction during the panel discussion or at the meeting. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation, identified as "Attachment 1," follows these minutes and is made an official part hereof.

Adjournment

Ms. Sandwich closed the panel discussion at 10:22 a.m. and thanked the Fayette County Board of Commissioners for participating at the meeting.

Fayette County Republican Chairman Scott Fabricius thanked the Commissioners and Mr. Searcy for the information and stated it was disturbing. There was then a drawing for the raffle.

The meeting adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

Floyd L. Jones, County Clerk	Steve Brown, Chairman

The foregoing minutes were duly approved at an official meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Fayette County, Georgia, held on the 25th day of September 2014.

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Floyd L. Jones, County Clerk