

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION *COUNCIL MEETING*

November 13, 2025

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, November 13, 2025 at 6:00 p.m., at the Towns County Recreation & Conference Center, 150 Foster Park Road, Young Harris, GA 30582. The meeting was hosted by Towns County.

CALL TO ORDER

GMRC Chairman Courtney Umbehant called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and thanked Towns County for their partnership with GMRC.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Towns County Recreation Department Director Stuart Nichols welcomed all to Towns County on behalf of Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw. Mr. Nichols recognized and thanked the Towns County staff in attendance; Alisa Richards, Administrative Assistant; Brenda McKinney, County Clerk; Brooke Moss, Human Resources; and Andrea Anderson, Finance Director.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

GMRC Council Vice-Chairman Ron Matheson recognized special guests; Kathy Papa, Georgia Department of Community Affairs; Luke Hetland, North Georgia Field Director for Lt. Governor Burt Jones; and Connor Land, Field Representative for Congressman Andrew Clyde.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

GMRC Council Chaplain Deborah Mack gave the devotion, invocation, and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance. Dinner was catered by The Happy Hog.

PROGRAM

Clay Pilgrim of Rushton explained that they were only able to present a Draft GMRC FY25 Audit Report at the time of the meeting as the Office of Management and Budget must issue a compliance supplement prior to the audit being finalized. Since the government had been in a shutdown, Rushton was unable to obtain the compliance supplement. However, Rushton does not anticipate that the compliance supplement will change the results of the audit findings. Mr. Pilgrim also reported on the GASB reporting changes that would affect local governments in future audits.

Mr. Pilgrim's presentation can be found at <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/gmrccouncil>.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND ATTENDANCE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

GMRC Secretary James Addison asked for any comments or a motion regarding the minutes and attendance report for the October 30, 2025 Council meeting. Stacy Fountain made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Kevin Herrit seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Chairman's Report

GMRC Council Chairman Courtney Umbehant reported that the sessions at the GARC Annual Conference were highly informative and beneficial for him both as an Elected Official and as a GMRC Council Officer. Mr. Umbehant commended Executive Director Feldman, GMRC staff, and the Council for the quality of work they all put in – helping make GMRC one of the premier Regional Commissions in the state. Chairman Umbehant also stated that, as a mayor, he feels that GMRC is the best partner that a city or county could have and utilize.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Heather Feldman thanked the GMRC Officers, Council Member Kevin Herrit, and their spouses for attending the GARC Annual Conference. Mrs. Feldman also felt that the sessions were informative. Mrs. Feldman echoed the Chairman's sentiments and thanked the staff and the GMRC Council for the roles they play in supporting her and the GMRC.

Mrs. Feldman reminded those in attendance that Faith Bryan's retirement reception would be on Thursday, November 20th from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the GMRC office if they would like to stop in. Mrs. Feldman and Ms. Bryan are working on the transition of duties. Faith Bryan's retirement date is December 12, 2025.

Mrs. Feldman reminded all in attendance to purchase their tickets to the Annual Meeting. The date is December 5, 2025 and she looks forward to seeing everybody there.

Executive Director Feldman announced that Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, via WorkSource Georgia Mountains, was awarded the Top State for Talent Grant and will be receiving \$250,000 for the Apprenticeship Program. The goal of the initiative is to create new pathways to sustainable employment while supporting local businesses and business workforce needs. The intent would be to create around 100 new apprenticeship positions throughout the region. Interested parties should reach out to WorkSource Georgia Mountains Director Whitney Blair at wblair@gmrc.ga.gov.

Annual Meeting Update

GMRC Annual Meeting Chairwoman Vicki Boling Jones reminded those in attendance that the Annual Meeting would be held on Friday, December 5, 2025 and encouraged them to get their tickets if they had not already. Mrs. Boling Jones reported on the sponsorships that GMRC had to date. The meeting will be held at The Boathouse at Lake Lanier Olympic Park in Gainesville, Georgia with a reception starting at 4:30 p.m. and the meeting and awards dinner starting at 6:00 p.m. Vicki Boling Jones also encouraged the communities to bring door prizes with them. The chairwoman thanked GMRC staff for their work in putting together a great event.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

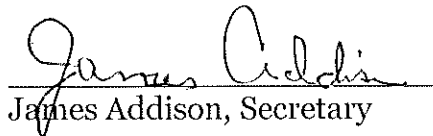
The December meeting will be the GMRC Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner at The Boathouse at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.



Courtney Umbehant, Chairman



James Addison, Secretary

**GMRC COUNCIL
ATTENDANCE SHEET
2025-2026**

Page 1

COUNTY	COUNCIL MEMBER	July 25	Aug 25	Sept 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	March 26	April 26	May 26	June 26
BANKS	Chris Ausburn	P	A	A	P	P							
	Sandra Garrison	P	P	A	P	P							
	Vicki Boling Jones	A	P	P	P	P							
DAWSON	Billy Thurmond	A	(P)	(R)	(P)	A							
	John Walden	P	P	P	P	P							
	Kevin Herrit	P	P	P	P	P							
FRANKLIN	Cory Pulliam	P	P	P	(R)	P							
	Courtney Umbehant*	P	P	(P)	P	P							
	Leslie McFarlin	P	P	P	E	A							
HABERSHAM	Jimmy Tench	A	P	A	P	A							
	Stephanie Almagno	P	P	A	A	A							
	Lawrence Bridges	V	V	V	N-P	A							
HALL	David Gibbs	A	E	E	A	E							
	Sam Couvillon	P	A	A	A	P							
	Deborah Mack	P	P	P	P	P							
HART	Jeff Brown	A	A	A	A	A							
	Dan Leard	A	A	A	A	A							
	Bill Chafin	P	P	P	P	P							
LUMPKIN	Chris Dockery	(R)	(R)	A	P	A							
	JoAnne Taylor	P	A	P	P	A							
	Tony Owens	P	A	P	P	P							

**GMRC COUNCIL
ATTENDANCE SHEET
2025-2026**

Page 2

COUNTY	COUNCIL MEMBER	July 25	Aug 25	Sept 25	Oct 25	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	March 26	April 26	May 26	June 26
RABUN	Scott Crane	A	P	P	A	P							
	Stacy Fountain	P	P	P	P	P							
	Douglas Wayne	P	P	P	P	A							
STEPHENS	Tara Simmons	P	P	E	P	A							
	Ron Matheson**	P	P	E	P	P							
	James Addison***	P	P	A	P	P							
TOWNS	Cliff Bradshaw	(P)	P	P	A	(R)							
	Andrea Gibby	A	A	(R)	A	A							
	Michael Courey	N-P	P	P	P	A							
UNION	Harold Collins	P	A	P	P	A							
	Buddy Moore	P	P	P	P	A							
	Kristen Bentley	N-P	(P)	(R)	(R)	P							
WHITE	Craig Bryant	P	P	P	P	A							
	Nan Bowen	P	P	P	P	P							
	Lauren Williams	P	P	P	P	P							
GOV APPT.	Kim Waters	P	P	P	P	A							
	Angela Whidby	(P)	P	P	(P)	(R)							
	VACANT	V	V	V	V	V							
LT. GOV APPT.	David Lee	P	P	P	P	P							
SPEAKER APPT.	VACANT	V	V	V	V	V							

P = PRESENT

A = ABSENT

(R) = REPRESENTED

(P) PROXY VOTE

V = VACANCY

E = EXCUSED

N = NEW MEMBER

X = NO MEETING

* Chairman

** Vice Chairman

*** Secretary