

# GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION *COUNCIL MEETING*

May 29, 2025

## MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, May 30, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Dawson County Junior High School located at 109 Allen Street, Dawsonville, Georgia 30534. The meeting was hosted by Dawson County.

### CALL TO ORDER

GMRC Chairman Ken Schubring called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

Mr. Schubring asked for a motion to amend the agenda to go into Executive Session.

David Lee made the motion to amend the agenda and Doug Wayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Dawson County Board of Commissioners Chairman Billy Thurmond welcomed all in attendance to Dawson County. Mr. Thurmond introduced the Dawson County staff that were in attendance: Dawson County Manager Joey Leverette and Public Relations Specialist Ehron Ostendorf. Chairman Thurmond also thanked the City of Dawsonville delegation that were in attendance for coming.

### INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Courtney Umbehant recognized special guests Mike Fisher, WGI; Jesus Rubio, Northeast Georgia Outreach Representative for U. S. Senator Raphael Warnock; Connor Land, Field Representative for Congressman Andrew Clyde; Cheryl Smith, Georgia Department of Agriculture; Tammy Rauch, WorkSource Georgia Regional Coordinator; Hope Iglehart, North Georgia Outreach Coordinator for U.S. Senator Jon Ossoff; Margaret Ryder, UGA Small Business Development Center; and Kathy Papa from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

### 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 Sandra Bottoms.

### PROGRAM

Kathy Papa from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs presented a program update.

A copy of Ms. Papa's presentation can be downloaded from GMRC's website.

#### CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND ATTENDANCE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

GMRC Chairman Ken Schubring asked for any comments or a motion regarding the minutes and attendance report for the April 24, 2025 Council meeting. Billy Thurmond made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Doug Wayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### REPORTS

##### Chairman's Report

Chairman Schubring did not have a report and deferred his time to Executive Director Feldman.

##### Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Feldman recognized Ms. Denise McKay, who served on the Council for 6 years as the Towns County Private Sector Appointee. The May meeting would be her final meeting as a GMRC Council member. Ms. McKay continuously supported the GMRC during her tenure through her involvement with staff on various projects as well as serving on the Revolving Loan Fund Committee.

Mrs. Feldman welcomed the newest member to the GMRC Council. Mr. Scott Crane, Rabun County Commissioner, had recently been appointed to the GMRC Council and would be replacing Kent Woerner.

GMRC was host to the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) annual Economic Development Conference in early May, which was held at Lake Lanier Islands. Topics included downtown development, cybersecurity, and federal-state-regional partnerships as well as an update from Georgia Department of Community Affairs Commissioner.

Executive Director Feldman reported that GMRC, in coordination with Georgia City and County Managers Association (GCCMA), recently had its Region 2 City and County Managers' meeting. Mrs. Feldman thanked the City of Flowery Branch for hosting the meeting at city hall and providing lunch for the group. There was a site visit to the Blue Ridge Connector Inland Port later that week, as part of the joint meeting. Mrs. Feldman thanked Bryan Lackey with the City of Gainesville for coordinating the effort.

Executive Director Feldman announced that at the recent Southeast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) conference, she was nominated and selected to serve as the Treasurer for the SERDI Board of Directors for a term of two years.

Mrs. Feldman also announced that she will serve as a mentor for the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for the upcoming year.

GMRC was notified by Rushton that they will be on site for their preliminary audit field work on June 24, 2025. The anticipated time for audit preparation will be July or August.

Executive Director Feldman announced that GMRC's upcoming July Council Meeting will be hosted by Union County and the City of Blairsville. In lieu of a program speaker, GMRC will have its annual Council Member Training.

### Economic Development Report

Economic Development Director Patrick Larson and Senior Project Manager Laurin Yoder provided an update on the GMRC Economic Development Department. Any community that has economic development needs should contact Mr. Larson at [plarson@gmrc.ga.gov](mailto:plarson@gmrc.ga.gov). Communities with local businesses interested in the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program, should contact Ms. Yoder at [lyoder@gmrc.ga.gov](mailto:lyoder@gmrc.ga.gov).

### OLD BUSINESS

#### Nominating Committee Presentation of Officers

In March, the GMRC Nominating Committee was appointed and activated to conduct a search for presenting a slate of GMRC officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary) for the term beginning on July 1, 2025 and ending on June 30, 2027.

Executive Director Feldman announced that the Nominating Committee recommended the following names:

- **Chairman:** Courtney Umbehant, Mayor, City of Lavonia
- **Vice-Chairman:** Ron Matheson, Commissioner, City of Toccoa
- **Secretary:** James Addison, Private Sector, Stephens County

Chairman Schubring explained that nominations would also be taken from the floor and asked for a motion to open the floor. JoAnne Taylor made the motion, and Deborah Mack seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Hearing no nominations, Angela Whidby made a motion to close the floor. Denise McKay seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Schubring asked for a motion to approve the slate of officers presented by the Nominating Committee. Kevin Herrit made the motion, and Doug Wayne seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Loan #3081

Council members received all pertinent information regarding Loan #3081 for review prior to the meeting. RLF Committee Vice-Chairwoman Denise McKay explained that an applicant had requested \$218,000 in RLF funding to aid in the purchase of a 1,245 square foot office condominium in Dawsonville. The applicant is a certified financial planner with an established clientele that is currently operating from the office condominium. The applicant will provide a personal guaranty, and GMRC would take the first and only position on the property.

The applicant receives a salary from their employer and the employer has agreed to pay the applicant an additional monthly stipend of \$1,560 to be used toward paying the monthly loan payment.

#### Terms:

- Interest rate: Fixed 4.0%
- Term length: 20 years
- Amount: \$218,000
- Loan Type: Real Estate Purchase
- Collateral: 1<sup>st</sup> Mortgage on Business Property
- Guaranty: Personal Guaranty from Owner
- Fund: CARES Act
- Special Condition: Appraisal with a minimum valuation of \$218,000

Ms. McKay advised the committee that the appraisal for the condominium was received before the meeting. The condominium was appraised for \$219,000.

Chairman Ken Schubring asked for a motion to approve Loan #3081 with the recommended terms. Kevin Herrit made the motion, and Nan Bowen seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

### Loan #3082

RLF Committee Vice-Chairwoman McKay explained to the Council that the Executive Committee voted to table the application for Loan #3082 at this time. Therefore, no action was taken.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Ken Schubring asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a potential legal issue. JoAnne Taylor made the motion, and James Addison seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

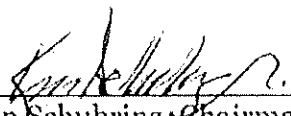
After discussion, JoAnne Taylor made a motion to exit the Executive Session. Craig Bryant seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

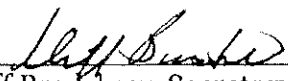
#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Schubring announced that the June Council meeting will be held in the City of Clayton on Thursday, June 26, 2025.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

  
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Ken Schubring, Chairman

  
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Cliff Bradshaw, Secretary

**GMRC COUNCIL  
ATTENDANCE SHEET  
2024-2025**

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COUNTY	COUNCIL MEMBER	July 24	Aug 24	Sept 24	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 25	Jan 25	Feb 25	March 25	April 25	May 25	June 25
BANKS	Chris Ausburn	(R)	P	X	P	A	P	P	P	A	E	P	
	Sandra Garrison	P	P	X	P	A	P	P	P	A	E	P	
	Vicki Boling Jones	(R)	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	A	E	P	
DAWSON	Billy Thurmond	P	P	X	P	P	A	P	A	P	E	P	
	John Walden	A	A	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	(P)	P	
	Kevin Herrit	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
FRANKLIN	Cory Pulliam	P	A	X	P	E	A	N-E	P	A	(P)	P	
	Courtney Umbehant**	A	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	
	Leslie McFarlin	A	P	X	P	A	P	P	A	P	A	(R)	
HABERSHAM	Jimmy Tench	P	P	X	P	P	P	N-E	E	E	E	A	
	Stephanie Almagno	P	A	X	A	P	A	A	N-E	P	E	P	
	Ken Schubring*	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
HALL	David Gibbs	E	(R)	X	E	E	A	N-P	E	E	E	A	
	Sam Couvillon	P	P	X	R	P	P	(R)	P	A	E	P	
	Deborah Mack	P	P	X	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	
HART	Jeff Brown	A	(R)	X	A	A	A	(P)	E	A	E	P	
	Dan Leard	P	P	X	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	P	
	Bill Chafin	P	A	X	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	(R)	
LUMPKIN	Chris Dockery	(R)	A	X	P	A	(R)	(R)	(R)	(R)	E	A	
	JoAnne Taylor	A	A	X	P	P	A	P	(P)	A	P	P	
	Tony Owens	A	V	X	V	N-P	A	P	A	P	A	P	

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RABUN	Scott Crane	A	(R)	X	(R)	(R)	A	(R)	A	A	E	N-P	
	Stacy Fountain	A	P	X	A	A	P	P	E	P	P	P	
	Douglas Wayne	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
STEPHENS	Tara Simmons	P	A	X	P	P	P	(R)	P	E	E	A	
	Ron Matheson	P	P	X	E	P	A	P	E	(P)	P	P	
	James Addison	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	
TOWNS	Cliff Bradshaw***	A	(P)	X	(P)	(R)	P	P	(R)	P	E	P	
	Andrea Gibby	(R)	(R)	X	(R)	(R)	A	(R)	(R)	(R)	A	(R)	
	Denise McKay	P	P	X	P	P	A	P	P	P	A	P	
UNION	Harold Collins	P	P	X	A	A	P	N-(R)	A	P	E	P	
	Buddy Moore	P	(P)	X	P	P	P	P	(R)	N-P	A	P	
	VACANT	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	V	
WHITE	Craig Bryant	N-P	P	X	P	(P)	P	P	P	P	E	P	
	Nan Bowen	P	P	X	P	(P)	P	P	P	(P)	(P)	P	
	Lauren Williams	N-P	P	X	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	
GOV APPT.	Kim Waters	(P)	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	A	E	P	
	Angela Whidby	P	P	X	(P)	(P)	P	P	P	(P)	P	P	
	VACANT	V	V	X	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	
LT. GOV APPT.	David Lee	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	
SPEAKER APPT.	VACANT	V	V	X	V	V	V	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