

# GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION *COUNCIL MEETING*

June 26, 2025

## MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, June 26, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia located at 46 Plaza Way, Clayton, Georgia 30525. The meeting was hosted by the City of Clayton.

### CALL TO ORDER

GMRC Chairman Ken Schubring called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

### WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

The City of Clayton Mayor Pro Tem Stacy Fountain welcomed all in attendance and introduced Trudy Crunkleton, City of Clayton Manager; Amanda Harrold, City of Clayton Councilwoman; Claude Dillard, City of Dillard Mayor; Gary Fesperman, acting Manager for the City of Carnesville and the City of Dillard; and Jason Streetman, City of Sky Valley Manager.

### INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Courtney Umbehant recognized special guests Jesus Rubio, Northeast Georgia Outreach Representative for U. S. Senator Raphael Warnock; Salik Sohani, Northeast Georgia Director of Outreach and Immigration Affairs; Susie Leggett, Northeast Georgia Outreach Director for U. S. Senator Raphael Warnock; 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 Sunday Diner.

### PROGRAM

Cheryl Smith, Agritourism Manager for Georgia Department of Agriculture, provided an update on the Georgia Grown program.

A copy of the presentation can be found at <https://www.gmrc.ga.gov/gmrccouncil>.

## 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 May 29, 2025 Council meeting. Craig Bryant 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 reported that the Economic Development Administration (EDA) officially released the Fiscal Year 2025 Disaster Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) which makes approximately \$1.45 billion available to eligible disaster-impacted communities. EDA's mission is to support locally driven economic recovery and disaster resilience efforts in communities affected by FEMA-declared disasters in 2023 and 2024.

Communities can apply through three funding pathways based on their specific recovery needs and readiness:

- Readiness Path – capacity building and strategic planning projects that set the stage for future investment.
- Implementation Path – construction and non-construction projects that drive recovery and economic growth.
- Industry Transformation Path – large, coalition-led portfolios that transform regional economies through targeted industry development.

Eligible counties as well as their municipalities in the Georgia Mountains Region include Banks, Dawson, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, and White counties. Interested communities should reach out to the GMRC's Economic Development Department

Mrs. Feldman congratulated and introduced the incoming GMRC Officers - Courtney Umbehant, Council Chairman; Ron Matheson, Council Vice-Chairman; and James Addison, Council Secretary. Mrs. Feldman also thanked Cliff Bradshaw for his service as the GMRC Council Secretary.

Executive Director Heather Feldman announced that Salik Sohani would be leaving U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock's Office. Mr. Sohani introduced Senator Warnock's Northeast Georgia Outreach Director, Susie Leggett and Northeast Georgia Outreach Representative, Jesus Rubio to the Council and advised members to reach out to either of them should they ever need assistance.

Mrs. Feldman also announced that Faith Bryan, GMRC Information Services Director, will be retiring on December 12, 2025.

The June meeting would be Chairman Ken Schubring's last meeting as a Council member. Executive Director Feldman thanked him for his years of service and commitment to the GMRC.

#### OLD BUSINESS

None

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### FY25 Budget Amendment

Council members received a copy of all pertinent information regarding the proposed budget amendments prior to the meeting. Finance Committee Chairman Bill Chafin provided details on the amendments that were to be made.

Chairman Schubring asked for a motion to approve the budget amendments. Bill Chafin made the motion, and Doug Wayne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

##### GMRC Private Sector Appointments

Pursuant to the GMRC bylaws, all private sector appointees must be certified prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> annually to coincide with the beginning of the GMRC's Fiscal Year. All 49 member governments received notification that appointments would need to be renewed or reappointed this year. Nominations provided are as follows for FY26:

<b>County</b>	<b>Appointee</b>
Banks	Vicki Boling Jones
Dawson	Kevin Herrit
Franklin	Leslie McFarlin
Habersham	
Hall	Deborah Mack
Hart	Bill Chafin
Lumpkin	Tony Owens
Rabun	Doug Wayne
Stephens	James Addison
Towns	Michael Courey
Union	Kristen Bentley
White	Lauren Williams

Executive Director Feldman explained that Habersham County would be providing a private sector appointee nominee at a later date.

Chairman Ken Schubring asked for a motion to approve the private sector appointment nominees as presented. Sam Couvillon made the motion, and Craig Bryant seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.


#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The July meeting will be held in Union County and will be GMRC Council Training.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

  
Courtney Umbehant, Chairman

  
James Addison, 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	A
	Sandra Garrison	P	P	X	P	A	P	P	P	A	E	P	A
	Vicki Boling Jones	(R)	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	A	E	P	P
DAWSON	Billy Thurmond	P	P	X	P	P	A	P	A	P	E	P	A
	John Walden	A	A	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	(P)	P	A
	Kevin Herrit	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
FRANKLIN	Cory Pulliam	P	A	X	P	E	A	N-E	P	A	(P)	P	(P)
	Courtney Umbehant**	A	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P
	Leslie McFarlin	A	P	X	P	A	P	P	A	P	A	(R)	P
HABERSHAM	Jimmy Tench	P	P	X	P	P	P	N-E	E	E	E	A	E
	Stephanie Abnagno	P	A	X	A	P	A	A	N-E	P	E	P	E
	Ken Schubring*	P	P	X	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
HALL	David Gibbs	E	(R)	X	E	E	A	N-P	E	E	E	A	E
	Sam Couvillon	P	P	X	R	P	P	(R)	P	A	E	P	P
	Deborah Mack	P	P	X	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	P
HART	Jeff Brown	A	(R)	X	A	A	A	(P)	E	A	E	P	A
	Dan Leard	P	P	X	A	A	A	P	P	A	A	P	P
	Bill Chafin	P	A	X	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	(R)	P
LUMPKIN	Chris Dockery	(R)	A	X	P	A	(R)	(R)	(R)	(R)	E	A	(R)
	JoAnne Taylor	A	A	X	P	P	A	P	(P)	A	P	P	(P)
	Tony Owens	A	V	X	V	N-P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A

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

P = PRESENT      A = ABSENT      (R) = REPRESENTED      (P) PROXY VOTE      E = EXCUSED      N = NEW MEMBER      X = NO MEETING

\* Chairman  
\*\* Vice Chairman  
\*\*\* Secretary