

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
November 16, 2023

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular monthly meeting on November 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame in the Gordon Pirkle Room at, 415 Hwy 53 East, Dawsonville, GA 30534. This meeting was hosted by the City of Dawsonville.

CALL TO ORDER

GMRC Chairman Ken Schubring called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. and welcomed all attendees.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

The City of Dawsonville Mayor Elect John Walden thanked everybody for coming and welcomed them to Dawsonville and the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame. Mr. Walden thanked and introduced the city staff that were present; Amanda Edmondson, Director of Downtown Development; Sara Beacham, Accounts Payable/Event Coordinator; and Bob Bolz, City Manager. Mr. Walden gave an update on Mayor Eason. Mayor Elect Walden extended a special thank you to GMRC and Dawson County for their support during this transitional time.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Chairman Ken Schubring recognized special guests; Cheryl Smith, Georgia Department of Agriculture; Mike Fisher, WGI; Kathy Papa, Department of Community Affairs; and David Lee, Jackson EMC.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

Council Member Jim Conley gave the devotion, invocation, and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance. Dinner was provided by Tam's Backstage.

PROGRAM

Clay Pilgrim from Rushton & Company presented the GMRC FY23 Annual Financial Report. Mr. Pilgrim thanked the GMRC Council for having him back, and thanked the GMRC staff for their cooperation, helpfulness, and friendliness during the audit process.

Chairman Schubring asked for a motion to accept the GMRC FY23 Annual Financial Report. Bill Chafin made the motion and Doug Wayne seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES AND ATTENDANCE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Secretary Bruce Palmer asked for any comments or a motion regarding the minutes and attendance report for the October 26, 2023 Council meeting. Doug Wayne made a motion to approve the minutes as written and George Wangemann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Chairman's Report

Chairman Schubring reported that he, along with Vice-Chairman Umbehant and Secretary Palmer, joined the GMRC staff at the Georgia Association of Regional Commissions. The Chairman felt that the meeting went well, and reported that Eric Wilson, Mayor of the City of Forsyth, was reelected as Chairman of the GARC.

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Feldman also reported that herself, along with GMRC Department Heads, attended the GARC Conference. The conference featured great speakers and presentations centered around transportation, workforce development, planning, and GIS. Ms. Feldman was honored to have Chairman Ken Schubring, Vice-Chairman Courtney Umbehant, and Secretary Bruce Palmer attend and represent the GMRC Council.

Ms. Feldman reported that the Georgia Academy for Workforce Development was also held the first week of November and many GMRC workforce and finance staff attended. The valuable information learned will be instrumental in advancing the region's workforce.

The GMRC is issuing a Request for Qualifications to hire a consultant in conjunction with the Ready LDD grant program. The consultant will assist the Economic Development Department in researching and preparing grant applications in conjunction with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. For more information, please contact Patrick Larson at 770-538-2611.

In preparation for the Annual Meeting, Heather Feldman and Gina Kessler went to the Dillard House earlier in the month to meet with the staff and finalize details of the event.

Executive Director Feldman will be attending and presiding over the Development District Association of Appalachia's (DDAA) Board Meeting December 4-6th in Huntsville, Alabama. Ms. Feldman is looking forward to the opportunity to network with the other Executive Directors and officers of the Appalachian Region.

Ms. Feldman reported that the GMRC had purchased portable banners to be able to take to events and promote the GMRC. If your community has a chamber event or any other event that you feel may benefit from learning what GMRC has to offer, please reach out and staff will be happy to attend.

Ms. Feldman thanked each Council member and regular attendees of the Council meetings for their commitment and support to GMRC in 2023. From working on committees, attending monthly meetings, and serving as officers, the staff feels the presence and support, and GMRC is grateful for the leadership you provide.

Additionally, Executive Director Feldman wanted to thank the staff. Ms. Feldman is impressed each and every day by their unwavering commitment to helping this region succeed. Whether it's writing grants, preparing maps, writing comp plans, or providing resources for our unemployed, underemployed, or at-risk youth, it takes everyone working together to make the wheels turn.

GMRC Economic Development Director Patrick Larson and Kathy Papa from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs presented Mitch Griggs, Union County Development Authority Director, with the big check for the ARC Grant award that the Development Authority received in the amount of \$62,500 to go towards the development of its Strategic Plan. Mr. Griggs thanked Patrick Larson for his work on the grant application.

OLD BUSINESS

Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner

GMRC Executive Assistant Gina Kessler reminded the Council that the Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner was just around the corner on December 1, 2023. The reception will start at 4:30 p.m. with dinner and awards to follow at 6:00 p.m. Ms. Kessler reminded the Council that the meeting is a ticketed event and that the tickets can be purchased online through Wednesday, November 29th. Ms. Kessler thanked the Council for their efforts in getting sponsors for the Annual Meeting; to date there were five Diamond Sponsors, one Platinum Sponsor, six Gold Sponsors, and six Silver Sponsors already secured. Sponsorship opportunities are available through Monday, November 27th. Executive Assistant Kessler thanked the Annual Meeting Committee for everything they have done, and will do, to help make this a great event.

GMRC Brownfield Project

GMRC Planning Director Adam Hazell reminded the Council that the GMRC Brownfield Project is underway and to reach out if there were properties in their community that they would like to see revitalized. If you would like more information on the Brownfield Project, please reach out to Adam Hazell at 770-538-2616.

NEW BUSINESS

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Ken Schubring announced that the December GMRC Council meeting is the Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner being held on Friday, December 1st at the Dillard House and that the January meeting will be held in Cornelia at the Community House.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.



Ken Schubring, Chairman



Bruce Palmer, Secretary

ATTENDANCE SHEET
2023-2024

COUNTY	COUNCIL MEMBER	July 23	Aug 23	Sept 23	Oct 23	Nov 23	Dec 23	Jan 24	Feb 24	March 24	April 24	May 24	June 24
BANKS	Chris Ausburn	P	(R)	A	(R)	P							
	Sandra Garrison	(P)	P	A	A	P							
	Vicki Boling Jones	P	P	P	P	P							
	Billy Thurmond	P	A	P	P	P							
DAWSON	Mike Eason	(P)	P	P	A	A							
	Kevin Herritt	A	P	P	P	P							
	Robert Franklin	P	A	A	A	A							
	Courtney Umbehant**	P	P	P	P	(P)							
FRANKLIN	Leslie McFarlin	P	P	P	A	P							
	Bruce Palmer***	P	P	P	P	P							
	VACANT	P	P	A	A	V							
	Ken Schubring*	P	P	P	P	P							
HALL	Richard Higgins	A	A	A	A	R							
	George Wangemann	P	P	P	P	P							
	Deborah Mack	P	P	P	P	A							
	Jeff Brown	A	P	A	A	P							
HART	Dan Leard	P	P	A	A	P							
	Bill Chafin	P	P	P	P	P							
	Chris Dockery	(R)	(R)	A	P	R							
	JoAnne Taylor	P	A	A	P	P							
LUMPKIN	Amy Booker	N	A	P	A	A							

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RABUN	Kent Woerner	(R)	A	A	(R)	(R)							
	Althea Bleckley	P	P	P	A	A							
	Douglas Wayne	P	P	A	P	P							
STEPHENS	Tara Simmons	P	A	P	P	A							
	David Austin	P	P	(R)	A	A							
	James Addison	P	E	P	P	P							
TOWNS	Cliff Bradshaw	P	P	P	(P)	(P)							
	Liz Ordiales	P	(R)	(R)	A	A							
	Denise McKay	R	P	P	P	P							
UNION	Lamar Paris	P	P	A	P	A							
	Jim Conley	P	P	(P)	P	P							
	Mitch Griggs	P	P	P	P	P							
WHITE	Travis Turner	(P)	(P)	P	(P)	A							
	Nan Bowen	P	P	P	P	P							
	Susan Cremering	A	P	P	P	A							
GOV APPT.	VACANT	V	V	V	V	V							
	Angela Whidby	P	A	P	P	A							
	VACANT	V	V	V	V	V							
LT. GOV APPT.	VACANT	V	V	V	V	V							
	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