

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING

April 30, 2026

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, April 30, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at The Boathouse at Lake Lanier Olympic Park located at 3105 Clarks Bridge Rd, Gainesville, GA 30506. The meeting was hosted by the City of Gainesville.

CALL TO ORDER

GMRC Chairman Courtney Umbehant called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. and thanked the City of Gainesville for hosting.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

City of Gainesville Mayor Zack Thompson welcomed all in attendance, recognized Georgia State Representative Lee Hawkins and thanked him for all he does and for coming. Mayor Thompson introduced City of Gainesville Council Members Barbara Brooks, Jonathan Elliott, and Bob Norton. Mr. Thompson also recognized City of Gainesville staff members Bryan Lackey, City Manager; Christina Santee, Public Relations Director; Alisa Grayson, City Clerk; and Dujuana Stringer, Deputy City Clerk.

Mayor Thompson expressed gratitude to the GMRC for the connections it provides to the cities and counties of the region, helping identify the resources that are needed to get things done.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Ron Matheson recognized special guests Lee Hawkins, Georgia State Representative; Cheryl Smith, Georgia Department of Agriculture; Kathy Papa, Georgia Department of Community Affairs; Mike Fisher, WGI; and Sallie Fuller, Field Representative for U.S. Representative Mike Collins.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

Ms. Deborah Mack gave a devotion, invocation, and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance. Dinner was catered by Cucina Milano.

PROGRAM

Megan Conville, Principal Analyst, for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, presentation a program on Applied Housing Research.

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 March 26, 2026 Council meeting. Stacy Fountain made a motion to approve the minutes as written, and Doug Wayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Chairman's Report

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

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Feldman announced that the 2026 GMRC Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner would be held on Friday, December 4, 2026 at The Boathouse at Lake Lanier Olympic Park.

Executive Director Feldman reported that the Gainesville Inland Port is set to open on May 4, 2026. Once open, the port will have a direct connection to Savannah's global ocean carrier network, local manufacturers — including poultry, heavy equipment, and forest product companies — can reach international markets more efficiently.

GMRC is updating its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Regional Plan and wants to hear input on priorities for the region regarding issues such as growth, housing, economic opportunity and more. GMRC has created a short survey that will be available through May. Adam Hazell or Patrick Larson can provide the survey link for those interested. GMRC will also host both online and in-person forums for community input.

Mrs. Feldman provided an update on the Aerial Photography/LiDAR project. Flights have been completed and NV5 is doing the initial processing of imagery. GMRC is hoping to receive the first round of images to review within the next few weeks. GMRC will also be reaching out to the participating governments to determine who needs assistance with that part of the process.

Executive Director Feldman reported that she gave a presentation to new Executive Directors at the Southeast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) Annual Conference on Personnel Policies and Procedures.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs' PlanFirst Program is now accepting nominations from interested communities. PlanFirst is DCA's program to recognize and reward communities that clearly demonstrate an established pattern of successfully implementing their local Comprehensive Plan. Nominations are due by May 15, 2026 and any community interested in applying may request the GMRC to write their application at no cost. Please contact Adam Hazell at 770-538-2617 or ahazell@gmrc.ga.gov.

Executive Director Feldman announced that the City of Cornelia would be hosting the Region 2 Quarterly City and County Managers' meeting on June 10, 2026 beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Community House.

GMRC's annual council member orientation will be held in conjunction with our July Council Meeting on July 30th. Mrs. Feldman advised the Council that GMRC has a fun and informational evening planned.

Quarterly Finance Report

Council members received the FY26 Quarter 3 Financial Report in their agenda packets prior to the meeting. GMRC Finance Director Alicia Page explained that the report is for the unaudited period ending March 31, 2026.

Mrs. Page went on to report that as of the end of the period, the year-to-date revenues total \$3,184,340 of which:

- \$2,477,652 or approximately 78% are federal and state funding
- \$486,559 or approximately 15% are member dues
- \$125,101 or approximately 4% are charges for services
- The remaining \$95,030 or 3% is from other revenues

At the end of the period, expenditures totaled \$3,010,684. Total transfers and matching obligations for the period were \$342,223. Leaving a total surplus of \$173,657 for the period end.

Factors that contribute to this surplus include:

- \$32,969 in investment income from the Regional Commission's two revolving loan funds. This income is invested back into the RLFs to grow the funds for future available lending

Chairman Umbehant asked for a motion to accept the FY26 Quarter 3 Financial Report. Bill Chafin made the motion to accept, and Sam Norton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

FY27 Proposed Draft Budget

The FY27 Proposed Draft Budget was sent to all Council members with their agenda packets prior to the meeting. GMRC Finance Committee Chairman Bill Chafin explained

that the Finance Committee has reviewed the FY27 Budget and recommends presenting it to the full Council for adoption during our May 2026 meeting. Highlights are as follows:

- The budget is being presented as a balanced budget and therefore the revenues equal the expenditures.
- The overall Revenues and Expenditures for the proposed FY27 Budget are projected to be \$5,893,273.
- There is an overall decrease of about 3% from the adopted FY26 Budget.
- The amount required to match grants and necessary transfers is \$570,867. This is a 9% reduction due to having a county that is designated at risk by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). This changed the ARC grant match from 50/50 funding to 70/30 funding.
- The budget supports 27 positions agencywide, 26 full-time employees and one part-time employee.
- The budget contains an up to 3% merit increase for all regular full-time and part-time employees based on their performance.
- Considering the amount of federal and state dollars to be received, the leveraging effect of local funds is significant. For every \$1.25 dollars paid in dues it is estimated the region will receive \$6.40 in federal and state funding.

GMRC Executive Assistant Gina Kessler will re-send the FY27 Draft Budget out to all Council members again on Monday, May 4, 2026 for review in preparation for the May 28, 2026 Council meeting.

RLF Loan Application #3085

All Council members received the deal summary and loan information in their agenda packets prior to the meeting. Senior Project Manager Laurin Yoder explained that the loan application and the voluntary contribution would be discussed simultaneously, but would be treated as two separate action items as the loan approval would require a resolution to make a voluntary contribution from GMRC's Traditional RLF into the CARES Act RLF in an amount up to \$40,000, as the full funding request was not available in the CARES Act RLF at this time.

Ms. Yoder went on to explain that an applicant had requested \$450,000 in funding. The applicant, Midland Revival, is a Georgia Limited Liability Company jointly owned by two owners that have successfully run a BBQ restaurant, food truck, and catering business for six years. Their current location does not provide adequate square footage to meet their long-term goals. In addition to a commercial kitchen, they want to diversify their menu and expand their operating hours by opening a new sports and blues bar and restaurant.

The borrowers have located a building in the Midland area of Gainesville, GA and entered into a lease agreement with the building's owner, which allows them to finish the building out of the restaurant. This lease is for five years, beginning July 2025 to July 2030 for \$7,000 per month (\$84,000 total) with a one-time five-year renewal option. In addition to building out the commercial kitchen, the borrowers are asking for funding to purchase a walk-in cooler and a hood vent for the kitchen, as well as furniture and fixtures for the dining room. They are also requesting funding for inventory and working capital.

The owners plan to operate as a family-friendly, social dining experience with live music and a varied menu for both lunch and dinner, Tuesday through Saturday. During lunch, it will offer a quiet environment ideal for business meetings, while evenings and weekends will feature a lively atmosphere with live entertainment. The business will retain five full-time positions and create 15 part-time positions. The management team, which includes the chef, operations manager, kitchen manager, and general manager, is already in place. Several of the part-time positions have also already been filled.

The following terms apply to the loan:

- Interest rate: Fixed 4.0%
- Term length: 10 years
- Amount: \$450,000
- Loan Purpose: Build-out/Equipment/Inventory/Working Capital
- Jobs Created/Retained: Five full-time and 15 part-time
- Collateral: Kitchen equipment, food truck, personal vehicles, life insurance policies, and the applicants will both provide a personal guaranty – GMRC will take 2nd on applicant's personal property
- Fund: CARES Act
- Special Conditions: 1) Consultation with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division - 2) Voluntary contribution from GMRC's Traditional RLF into the CARES Act RLF in an amount up to \$40,000

Chairman Courtney Umbehant asked of a motion to approve Loan Application #3085 to full Council for approval. Stacy Fountain made the motion to approve, and James Addison seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution of Voluntary Contribution

During discussions, Senior Project Manager Laurin Yoder explained the differences between GMRC's Traditional RLF and CARES Act RLF accounts and provided the committee with the details and terms of making the voluntary contribution.

Chairman Umbehant asked for a motion to approve a resolution to make a voluntary contribution from the Traditional RLF into the CARES Act RLF in an amount up to

\$40,000. John Walden made the motion and Deborah Mack seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

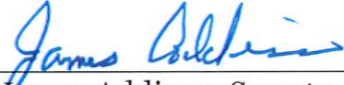
The May meeting will be hosted by Dawson County.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.



Courtney Umbehant, Chairman



James Addison, Secretary

GMRC COUNCIL
ATTENDANCE SHEET
2025-2026

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	A	E	A	P	A		
	Stacy Fountain	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
	Douglas Wayne	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	P	P		
STEPHENS	Tara Simmons	P	P	E	P	A	P	P	P	P	A		
	Ron Matheson**	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
	James Addison***	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
TOWNS	Cliff Bradshaw	(P)	P	P	A	(R)	P	(P)	P	P	P		
	Jay Chastain	A	A	(R)	A	A	A	N-A	P	P	A		
	Michael Courrey	N-P	P	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	(P)		
UNION	Harold Collins	P	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P		
	Buddy Moore	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	A	P		
	Kristen Bentley	N-P	(P)	(R)	(R)	P	P	P	P	A	P		
WHITE	Craig Bryant	P	P	P	P	(P)	P	P	P	P	P		
	Nan Bowen	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
	Lauren Williams	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
GOV APPT.	VACANT	P	P	P	P	A	P	P	V	V	V		
	VACANT	(P)	P	P	(P)	(R)	P	P	V	V	V		
	VACANT	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V		
LT. GOV APPT.	David Lee	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
SPEAKER APPT.	VACANT	V	V	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

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BANKS	Chris Ansburn	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	P		
	Todd Templeton	P	P	A	P	P	P	N-P	A	P	P		
	Vicki Boling Jones	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A		
	Billy Thurmond	A	(P)	(R)	(P)	A	A	(R)	(P)	A	P		
DAWSON	John Waiden	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
	Kevin Herritt	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	(P)		
	Cory Pulliam	P	P	P	(R)	P	P	(R)	P	P	(R)		
	Courtney Umbehant*	P	P	(P)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
FRANKLIN	Leslie McFarlin	P	P	P	E	A	P	(R)	(R)	P	P		
	Kelly Woodall	A	P	A	P	A	P	N-P	A	P	(P)		
	VACANT	P	P	A	A	A	A	V	V	V	V		
	Lawrence Bridges	V	V	V	N-P	A	P	P	A	P	P		
HALL	David Gibbs	A	E	E	A	E	A	P	E	E	A		
	Jonathan Elliott	P	A	A	A	P	P	N-P	E	P	P		
	Deborah Mack	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P		
	VACANT	A	A	A	A	A	A	V	V	V	V		
HART	VACANT	A	A	A	A	A	A	V	V	V	V		
	Bill Chafin	P	P	P	P	P	P	(P)	P	P	P		
	Jeff Moran	(R)	(R)	A	P	A	A	(R)	V	V	N-A		
	Sam Norton	P	A	P	P	A	A	N-P	A	P	P		
LUMPKIN	VACANT	P	A	P	P	P	P	V	V	V	V		