

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COUNCIL MEETING
August 31, 2023

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, August 31, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Habersham EMC located at 6135 GA-115, Clarkesville, GA 30523. The meeting is being sponsored by Habersham County.

CALL TO ORDER

GMRC Chairman Ken Schubring called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and welcomed all attendees.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

Habersham County Commissioner Bruce Palmer welcomed all in attendance and introduced Habersham County Commissioners Jimmy Tench and Bruce Harkness. Commissioner Palmer also introduced Habersham County Manager Alicia Vaughn.

Alicia Vaughn introduced the Habersham County staff that were present and thanked everybody for coming. Habersham County staff present were; Lynn Smith, E-911 Director; Chief Jeffery Adams, Habersham County Emergency Services; Mike Bramlett, Facility Maintenance Director; Will Reagan, Risk Manager; Patti McLarty, Administrative Assistant; Brandalin Carnes, County Clerk; Madi Hicks, Animal Control Director; Rob Moore, Public Information Officer; Mike Beechum, Planning and Development; Tracy Williamson, IT Director; Laurel Ellison, Board of Elections and Registration; Brooke Whitmire, Parks and Recreation Director; Johnny Vickers, Interim Landfill Director; Tim Sims, CFO; and Kathy Holcomb, Senior Center Director.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Vice-Chairman Courtney Umbehant recognized special guests; Mike Fisher, WGI; Cheryl Smith, Georgia Department of Agriculture; and Luke Hetland, North Georgia Field Director for Lt. Governor Burt Jones.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

Ms. Deborah Mack gave the devotion, invocation, and followed with the Pledge of Allegiance. Dinner was catered by Wolf Creek BBQ.

PROGRAM

Jessica Simmons, Deputy Chief Information Officer for Broadband and Special Projects, from Georgia Technology Authority provided a program update.

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

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 July 27, 2023 Council meeting. Jim Conley made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Doug Wayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Chairman's Report

The Chairman did not have a report and yielded his time to Executive Director Feldman.

Executive Directors Report

Executive Director Feldman congratulated the City of Hartwell for being named Georgia Downtown of the Year. Ms. Feldman also congratulated the City of Dahlonega for being named one of America's Best Small Towns by Travel and Leisure Magazine.

The Georgia Association of Regional Commissions and Georgia Municipal Association have partnered together to provide free, professional training for local elected officials, local government staff and Regional Commission staff on grant writing and being grant-ready. If you are interested in learning more, please reach out to Ms. Feldman for the dates and session topics.

Ms. Feldman announced that Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (GARC) will be hosting their annual training November 8th through November 10th at the King and Prince in St. Simons.

The 2023 GPA Fall Conference will be held September 20th through September 22nd in Savannah. This is the Association's premier training and networking event for planning staff and officials to learn more about critical issues and trends. It also provides an abundance of informative sessions on a variety of topics that are all eligible for continuing education. For more information, please reach out to Adam Hazell, GMRC Planning Director.

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will be hosting its Fall Conference October 24-25 in Augusta, GA. This conference will take an in-depth look at workforce housing and other innovative topics.

The Georgia City and County Managers Association will be having their fall conference October 25th through October 27th in Dunwoody.

Executive Director Feldman recognized and thanked Alicia Page, GMRC Finance Director; Nona Turk, Senior Financial Assistant; and Cheryl Smith, Financial Assistant

for their hard work in ensuring a smooth audit process. Rushton and Company have provided the preliminary draft of the audit, and as of that date there have been no findings. Additionally, Finance, Admin, and WorkSource are all preparing for the upcoming Performance Audit for WorkSource with Technical College System of Georgia.

Executive Director Feldman thanked the City of Cornelia for hosting the quarterly Region 2 City and County Managers meeting. The meeting had a great attendance and received reports from ACCG, and DCA.

Georgia Mountains Works held its first Workforce Development Forum on Winning at Work-Based Learning (WBL) on August 17th. Speakers shared tips to successfully incorporate WBL into your company, including the basics of Work-Based Learning, gaining leadership support to get involved, and best practices once you've hired a student. Kubota Vice President Phil Sutton was also a panelist sharing his experience growing a skilled workforce through Work-Based Learning.

Ms. Feldman announced that the GMRC's 61st Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, December 1st at the Dillard House with a reception beginning at 4:30 p.m. and dinner and awards beginning at 6:00 p.m. The Annual Meeting Committee has already been hard at work planning for a wonderful evening.

Economic Development Report

GMRC Economic Development Director Patrick Larson provided the Council with an update from the Economic Development department.

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

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

GMRC Meeting Date Resolution

Chairman Ken Schubring explained to the Council that GMRC was recently approached by one of its counties with a conflict between their County Commission meeting and the GMRC Council meeting causing them to be unavailable to attend the GMRC meetings.

In June, the Executive Committee met with the County Administrator to better understand their situation and at which time the Executive Committee was asked if the GMRC would be willing to change their meeting date to allow them to be able to participate.

The GMRC wants all communities to have the same representation and the Executive Committee has reviewed all meeting schedules of all cities and counties with

participation on the Council. It was determined that there would be conflicts on every day except Wednesday, but Wednesdays are typically for church functions.

Given the historical use of the last Thursday of month, which has been the meeting date of the GMRC for at least 30 years, there is great concern that changing the meeting date may disrupt the Commission's exceptional attendance record, which is a benefit to the entire 12-county region.

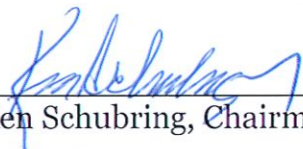
Chairman Schubring asked for a motion to approve the resolution as presented to keep the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission Council meetings on the last Thursday of every month with the exception of November and December annually. David Austin made the motion and Mike Eason seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Schubring announced that the September Council Meeting will be held in White County.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.



Ken Schubring, Chairman



Bruce Palmer, Secretary

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