

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION COUNCIL MEETING

June 25, 2026

MINUTES

The GMRC Council held its regular monthly meeting on Thursday, June 25, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Reflections Event Center located at 201 Black Mountain Road, Toccoa, Georgia 30577. The meeting was co-hosted by the City of Toccoa and Stephens County.

CALL TO ORDER

GMRC Secretary James Addison called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and thanked the City of Toccoa and Stephens County for hosting the meeting.

WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

The Mayor of Toccoa, Evan Hellenga, welcomed all in attendance and introduced City of Toccoa Commissioners Terry Carter and Gail Fry as well as the City Manager, Fredda Wheeler. Mr. Hellenga also introduced Christian Hamilton, Stephens County Administrator, and Stephens County Commissioners Craig Oglesby and Tara Simmons.

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Secretary Addison recognized special guests Kathy Papa, Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and Mike Fisher, WGI.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/DINNER

Mr. David Lee gave a devotion and invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PROGRAM

Gilbert Barrett, President/CEO of Farmers Exchange, presented an informative program on the landscape of Georgia's agricultural industry.

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 May 28, 2026 Council meeting. Doug Wayne made a motion to approve the minutes as written, and Tara Simmons seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Feldman was saddened to hear of the passing of Martha Zoller, a long-time community leader and respected voice for the region.

Executive Director Feldman was happy to see three former long-serving Council members in attendance. Mrs. Feldman thanked them for coming and introduced the immediate past GMRC Council Chairman, Mr. Ken Schubring, as well as Mr. Jim Conley and Mr. David Austin.

Executive Director Feldman reported that GMA announced that GMRC had officially been re-certified as an Organization of Ethics, as voted on by the Council in March of 2026.

Mrs. Feldman thanked the City of Cornelia for hosting the last Region 2 Quarterly City and County Managers Meeting and advised those in attendance that the next meeting would be held on August 12, 2026 at the White County Parks and Recreation Center.

On Thursday, October 15, 2026 GMRC will host a reception from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. for all Council members to have the opportunity to meet staff and fellow members that they may not have had the opportunity to meet yet.

Executive Director Feldman reported that the June meeting would be Ms. Deborah Mack's last Council meeting as a member. Ms. Mack served on the Council for 17 years representing Hall County as their Private Sector Appointee and served on several committees over the years. Deborah Mack served as the GMRC Chaplain and provided great words of wisdom. She was a three-time GMRC Award winner – Appointed Official of the Year in 2015 and Council Member of the Year in 2020 and 2023. Deborah Mack will be greatly missed.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

GMRC Private Sector Appointments

Executive Director Feldman explained that pursuant to the GMRC bylaws, all private sector appointees must be certified prior to July 1st 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. The nominations presented for FY27 were as follows:

County	Appointee
Banks	Vicki Boling Jones
Dawson	
Franklin	Leslie McFarlin
Habersham	Lawrence Bridges
Hall	Angela Middleton
Hart	Bill Chafin
Lumpkin	
Rabun	Doug Wayne
Stephens	James Addison
Towns	Michael Courey
Union	Kristen Bentley
White	Lauren Williams

The Dawson County and Lumpkin County appointments will be voted on when names are provided. Secretary Addison asked for a motion to approve the GMRC Private Sector Appointees as presented. Angela Whidby made the motion and Doug Wayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

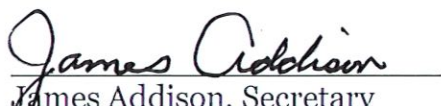
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The July meeting will be hosted by Union County and the City of Blairsville and include Council Member Training.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.


 Courtney Umbehant, Chairman


 James Addison, Secretary

GMRC COUNCIL
ATTENDANCE SHEET
2025-2026

Page 1

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
BANKS	Chris Ausburn	P	A	A	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P	A
	Todd Templeton	P	P	A	P	P	P	N-P	A	P	P	A	A
	Vicki Boling Jones	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	A	A	P	P
DAWSON	Billy Thurmond	A	(P)	(R)	(P)	A	A	(R)	(P)	A	P	P	A
	John Walden	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	(P)
	VACANT	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	(P)	V	V
FRANKLIN	Cory Pulliam	P	P	P	(R)	P	P	(R)	P	P	(R)	P	P
	Courtney Umbhant*	P	P	(P)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	A
	Leslie McFarlin	P	P	P	E	A	P	(R)	(R)	P	P	(R)	A
HABERSHAM	Kelly Woodall	A	P	A	P	A	P	N-P	A	P	(P)	P	A
	VACANT	P	P	A	A	A	A	V	V	V	V	V	V
	Lawrence Bridges	V	V	V	N-P	A	P	P	A	P	P	P	P
HALL	David Gibbs	A	E	E	A	E	A	P	E	E	A	(P)	E
	Jonathan Elliott	P	A	A	A	P	P	N-P	E	P	P	P	(P)
	Deborah Mack	P	P	P	P	P	P	A	P	A	P	A	A
HART	VACANT	A	A	A	A	A	A	V	V	V	V	V	V
	VACANT	A	A	A	A	A	A	V	V	V	V	V	V
	Bill Chafin	P	P	P	P	P	P	(P)	P	P	P	A	A
LUMPKIN	Rhett Stringer	(R)	(R)	A	P	A	A	(R)	V	V	N-A	A	(R) - N
	Sam Norton	P	A	P	P	A	A	N-P	A	P	P	A	A
	VACANT	P	A	P	P	P	P	V	V	V	V	V	V

GMRC COUNCIL
ATTENDANCE SHEET
2025-2026

Page 2

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

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