



Date: September 18, 2025

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Trumps Catering

Minutes

Members Present:

Marty Clark
Michael Coile
Pat Graham
Daniel Graves
Doug Haynie
Bruce Henry
Joe Hicks
Todd Higdon
John Howard
Tommie Jennings
Janet Jones
Deborah Krause
Terry Lawler
Dee Lindsey
Wendell McNeal
Carol Myers
Bill Palmer
Jay Paul
Fred Perriman
Shane Short
Brad Tucker

Members Absent:

Ronnie Boggs
Phil Brock
John Daniell
David Eady
Dodd Ferrelle
Kelly Girtz
Serra Hall
David Hunt
Jesse Johnson
Demond Mason
Blake McCormack
Billy Pittard
Tony Rogers
Amy Stone
David Thompson
DeAshley Thurman
William Trimier

Guests Present:

David Chester, Collins GA-10
Beth Eavenson, DCA
Stephen Goad, North High Shoals
Ted Guest
Susie Leggett, Senator Warnock's Office
Grace Martin, Bogart
Sallie Painter, Collins-GA-10

Staff Present:

Amber Bailey
Mark Beatty
Michele Kelley
Eva Kennedy
Sophia Primer

Call to Order

Chairperson Shane Short called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He asked that everyone rise and join him in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Guests or visitors were invited to introduce themselves.

Chairperson Short informed the attendees that the August 21, 2025 minutes were distributed prior to the meeting. He called for a motion to approve the minutes unless there were any additions or corrections. A motion was made by Mayor John Howard and seconded by Mr. Todd Higdon to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.



Items of Local Interest

Chairperson Short announced that today, three counties would report on items of local interest. These include Walton, Barrow and Clarke Counties. He invited the county representatives to provide their reports.

Walton County – Shane Short

- The groundbreaking for the \$5 Billion Rivian project occurred on September 16. This will create 7,500 jobs at the plant and an additional 500 jobs will be created at the new headquarters in Atlanta.

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Barrow County- Pat Graham

- Barrow County property tax bills will be mailed out soon. The County rolled back the millage rate to revenue neutral for the twelfth consecutive year.
- A SPLOST referendum will be on the ballot in March. The County and cities are working on their project lists. The County plans to include a level one project for an administrative building for the Sheriff and the County.
- This is a municipal election year and there are contested races in five of the six counties (Auburn, Bethlehem, Braselton, Carl and Winder). Statham Mayor, Debi Krause is the only Mayor running uncontested in the Barrow County.
- A County wide planning project called Vision 2050 is underway and should take approximately a year. The project is headed by the Economic Development Director, Mike Coan and Chamber of Commerce President, Tommie Jennings. Denis Deal with the Sassafras Group is coordinating the project. Citizens, business leaders, and elected officials from across the county will provide input into what they want to see in Barrow County over the next twenty-five years.

Clarke County- Carol Myers

- Mayor Girtz and five County Commissioners along with the Chamber of Commerce attended a conference in Gainesville, Florida to discuss the economic development efforts and community partnerships in the area.
- Crime has continued to decline. The number of burglaries, motor vehicle thefts and assaults have all gone down and there have not been any murders this year.
- Bob Cowell has been hired as Athens' new County Manager.
- The current TSPLOST will be ending soon and TSPLOST 2026 will be on the ballot in Spring of 2026.
- The revised future land use map will be completed soon.

Audit & Finance – Mayor Fred Perriman

The members of the Audit & Finance Committee met earlier today and reviewed one item that required Council action today.



The Committee reviewed the July 2025 financial statements for the 1st month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in excess of expenditures by \$292,676.13.

Mayor Perriman made motions to recommend Council approval of the July 2025 financial statements and was seconded by Mr. Terry Lawler. The motion passed unanimously

Program of Work – Mayor Debi Krause

Mayor Krause said the Program-of-Work Committee met prior to today's Council meeting and reviewed one (1) project request that required Council action today.

- A request to assist the City of Social Circle with amending the Future Land Use element of their Comprehensive Plan for a fee of \$3,000.

Based on recommendations by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, Mayor Krause made motions to approve this project request for inclusion in the FY26 program-of-work and was seconded by Mr. Tommie Jennings. The motions passed unanimously.

Planning and Government Services – Mayor John Howard

Mayor Howard said the PGS Committee met prior to today's Council meeting and reviewed one (1) item that required Council action today.

- The PGS Division intends to apply for the Georgia Department of Transportation for Program 5304 Transit Planning funds for the 2027 fiscal year. These funds will be used to provide transit planning services to jurisdictions of the region. The FY27 application includes a formula-based request of \$112,543 in federal funds, \$14,068 in state funds and \$14,068 as a matching contribution of Regional Commission funds.

Based on the recommendation of the PGS Committee, Mayor Howard made motions to approve the authorizing resolution to submit the grant application and was seconded by Mr. Marty Clark. The motions passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report – Eva Kennedy

Executive Director Eva Kennedy greeted the Council and thanked everyone for their attendance. She had no items that required Council action.

Coming Next Month

Executive Director Kennedy mentioned that a few bylaws amendments would be presented for Council to consider at the next meeting.

She also informed the Council that a proposed Seed Grant application would be presented. The NEGRC has been requested to serve as the applicant. This is a joint effort with several counties in our region, CSRC and GMRC.

A round table will be hosted before the October 16 Council meeting.



Executive Director Kennedy informed the Council that statewide aerial imagery was available to local elected official and employees.

Executive Director Kennedy discussed the Memory Café, and gave more information provided by Aging Division staff member Katrina Ogbe.

September is Workforce Development month and Carol Cofer, Workforce Division Director, recorded an interview discussing her forty-three years in Workforce Development. Carol will be retiring on September 19, 2025.

New NEGRC Staff

Executive Director Kennedy stated that all open positions have been filled. She announced that Amy Jones of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission was hired as the new Workforce Development Director and would start on September 25, 2025.

Annette Miller was recently hired as the new Administrative Assistant. Aaron Castro was hired in the PGS Division as the new GIS Transportation Intern.

Transportation

Executive Director Kennedy stated that the various funding sources that allow for statewide transit planning, regional transit development plans and transit assistance for local governments. She discussed the differences in 5304 (statewide planning, 5311 (rural transit), 5307 (urban transit) and 5310 (seniors & individuals with disabilities). She stated that no changes in funding have been announced yet and urged Council members to communicate the importance of these programs to our federal partners. The transportation service areas have also recently changed. Verida, Inc. was awarded the four-year transportation contract for most of the northern part of Georgia. Verida, Inc. will have to work with the local governments and private contractors that have their own fleets of vehicles. Executive Director Kennedy stressed the importance of coming together and discussing our region's needs for transportation of seniors, disabled individuals as well as the workforce. The transportation round table will be held at 11:00am on October 16 prior to the Council meeting to discuss regional transportation needs and what may change at the state and federal levels.

Carol Cofer Retirement Party and Next Council Meeting

Executive Director Kennedy invited the Council members to attend Carol Cofer's retirement party on Friday, September 19 at the NEGRC from 2-4 p.m.

Other Business

There was no other business.



Adjournment

With no further business before the Council, Chairman Short reminded members that the next Council meeting would be held on Thursday, October 16 at noon. The meeting was adjourned at 12:56 p.m.

Amber Bailey
Amber Bailey, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

10/16/2025
Date Approved