



Date: March 19, 2026

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Trumps Catering

Minutes

Members Present:

John Daniell
Dodd Ferrelle
Pat Graham
Doug Haynie
Bruce Henry
Joe Hicks
Todd Higdon
John Howard
Janet Jones
Deborah Krause
Terry Lawler
Dee Lindsey
Blake McCormack
Carol Myers
Bill Palmer
Jay Paul
Fred Perriman
Tony Rogers
Shane Short
Brad Tucker

Members Absent:

Phil Brock
Marty Clark
Michael Coile
David Eady
Kelly Girtz
Daniel Graves
Serra Hall
David Hunt
Tommie Jennings
Jesse Johnson
Demond Mason
Wendell McNeal
Amy Stone
David Thompson
DeAshley Thurman
William Trimier

Guests Present:

Wendy Bond, Winterville
Grace Martin, Bogart
Sallie Painter, Collins-Ga-10
Ben McDaniel, DAWC
John Ward, Walton County
Murriel Wiley, Jackson County

Staff Present:

Amber Bailey
Mark Beatty
Amy Jones
Eva Kennedy
Sophia Primer
Vickie Scotland

Call to Order

Chairperson Shane Short called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Chairperson Short informed the attendees that the February 19, 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 Mr. Terry Lawler and seconded by Mr. Blake McCormack to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.



Items of Local Interest

Chairperson Short announced that today, Oglethorpe County and Walton County would report on items of local interest. He invited the county representatives to present their reports.

Oglethorpe County – Jay Paul

- Work on the C&D Landfill expansion is progressing.
- There is a proposed expansion of the quick EMS response vehicles to provide 24/7 operations.
Several roads are being resurfaced in the county.
- The Commission meeting room is longer big enough, so the courthouse has been used.
- House Bill 1182 will address sludge dumping and will enforce parking rules along roadways.

Walton County – John Ward

- The population has grown to 112,806.
- The new jail and sheriff's administration complex has been open for six months now. It was a \$152 million project that increased from 376 beds to almost 900 beds.
- Grove Park has been completed. It has 5 synthetic turf softball fields, an amphitheater, two playgrounds, pickle ball courts and walking trails.
- Hard Labor Creek Reservoir is about a third of the way completed. This will be Walton County's first in county water since they currently purchase water from Newton County.
- Impact fees increased to the max allowed of \$3,635.
- An employee health clinic is open and saving the county \$2-3 million a year and has resulted in lower overall health insurance costs.
- Rivian has submitted building plans and has just announced a \$1.25 billion partnership with Uber to provide 50,000 robotaxis that will be built.
- A new Ice facility was purchased in Social Circle for \$128 million.
- 3 commission and 3 board of education seats are available. All 3 board of education seats are uncontested.
- Monroe-Athens Tech will hold a groundbreaking for a \$9.8 million renovation and expansion project.
- The overall budget has grown to over \$100 million and reserves have increased.

Audit & Finance Committee – Fred Perriman

The Audit & Finance Committee met earlier today and reviewed one item that required Council action. The Committee reviewed the January 2026 financial statements for the 7th month of the fiscal year that reported revenues in excess of expenditures by \$422,945.07. There is currently 55% of the budget remaining this fiscal year.

Mr. Fred Perriman made motions to recommend Council approval of the January 2026 financial statement as presented and was seconded by Mr. Bill Palmer.



Programming and Government Services – John Howard

The PGS Committee met earlier today, and the following project request required action:

The Town of Buckhead requested assistance with preparing an AARP Community Challenge Grant application. The fee for this assistance is \$500.

The three (3) project closeouts include:

- A closeout for grant writing assistance for the Town of Buckhead. There was a \$500 fee for this assistance.
- Two closeouts for assistance preparing local comprehensive plan updates for the cities of Mansfield and Porterdale. There was a fee of \$1,500 for Mansfield and a fee of \$20,000 for Porterdale for the assistance.

Based on recommendations by the Executive Director followed by the Committee's review, Mr. Howard made motions to approve these project requests for inclusion in the FY26 Program-of-Work and was seconded by Mr. Dee Lindsey. 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.

Congratulations

Executive Director Kennedy congratulated Oconee County and the city of Monroe on their Georgia Outdoor Steward Program (GOSP) awards. Executive Director Kennedy stated that the Seed Grant application completed was recently awarded. Elbert, Madison and Oglethorpe counties are part of that partnership. Madison County received an Appalachian Regional Commission for \$2 million.

NEGRC

Executive Director Kennedy stated that performance reviews were being conducted and thanked the Personnel Committee for their assistance with the new form. Demolition is almost complete and work is on schedule and within the \$2.2 million budget. She thanked the Building Committee for their work. She shared photos and other updates on the renovations.

Workforce

Executive Director Kennedy recapped the Workforce Round Table that was held prior to the Council meeting and discussed the programs that provide funding for this division. She discussed the mobile units and the services the Workforce Division provides to three categories of workers: youth and young adults, adults and dislocated workers and special populations. 643 individuals have been served in the region, and 209 different employers have benefitted from this program.



Legislative Update

Executive Director Kennedy shared a legislative update following crossover day.

Other Business

Members discussed the current version of HB1116.

Adjournment

With no further business before the Council, Chairman Short adjourned the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Amber Bailey
Amber Bailey, Executive Assistant
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

04/16/26
Date Approved