

Habersham County Development Authority
Thursday, June 12, 2025 @ 3:30 pm
Executive Conference Room
130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523

The Habersham County Development Authority held a regular meeting on Thursday, June 12, 2025, at 3:30 p.m. in the Executive conference room in the Habersham County Administration Building located at 130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA, 30523.

Members Present: Jim Butterworth, Bryan Ferguson, Sidney Roland, Mike Franklin, Jeff Bruns, Allen Whitener, David Lovvorn

Members Not Present: None

Others Present: Tim Sims, Kiani Holden, Matt Skilling, Jim Woodward via TEAMS, Tommy Thurmond, Media

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Jim Butterworth.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance were led by Jim Butterworth.

Approval of Agenda

A MOTION was made by Mike Franklin, seconded by Sidney Roland, and voted 7-0 to amend the agenda by removing the two items under Other Reports, and to approve the agenda as amended.

Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Sidney Roland, seconded by Mike Franklin, and voted 7-0 to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2025 Regular meeting.

Old Business

1. Airport Business Park Update – Don and D Higgins were invited to today's meeting to discuss their building but were unable to attend. They will be invited to the July meeting.
2. Phase II Business Park Update – Bryan Ferguson brought two renderings for a proposed layout for Phase II. The service was provided at no charge by Georgia EMC. Mike Franklin asked if ground has been broken on the recently sold Pyratich site. Materials have been delivered to the site, but it is unknown if they have begun construction. Jim Butterworth said the members may need to take turns following up on things since we don't currently have an Economic Development director.
3. Administrative Update – Patti McLarty gave the update. There are several past due invoices, and Patti will send out notices next week to collect the balances owed from 2024. She informed the board that she doesn't think Windstream/Kinetic or GTS Customs will pay, but she will follow up with Windstream. The Development Authority continues to incur expenses for streetlights. We are no longer paying for landscaping or lawn maintenance. Jim has reached out to Baldwin a few times to discuss the city helping

with expenses or providing lawn service. He has not been able to meet with them yet. Patti reminded the board that we sent a letter to the business owners at the end of 2024 that 4th quarter of 2024 would be the last bill they would receive from the Development Authority. The letter also advised them to create an association to manage the expenses. Jim said we need to remember that the business park has our name on it, and if we turn over the \$19,000 balance of the streetlight installation over to them and they default, HEMC will be out a lot of money that the Development Authority signed up for. Mike Franklin offered to go with Jim to meet with Baldwin. That way we could figure out what we need to do about landscaping and then we could make a decision about the lights. Jeff Bruns asked what portion of the streetlight bill is paying down the debt versus the monthly cost for the service itself. He added that continuing to bill the owners is helping to cover that debt without the Development Authority covering all of it. Jim added that he would think the owners care about having lights (and keeping their grass cut) but maybe if we keep doing it for them, they will continue to “kick it down the road.” Jim asked Matt Skilling if we should send a letter to GTS Customs if they refuse to pay. Jim asked the board two questions: 1) Do we want to pay off the \$19,000 balance or turn the account over to the owners? 2) Do we want to engage Matt to send a letter to GTS Customs? Jim asked if there was a consensus of the group. Mike Franklin asked if we should wait until Matt reviews the letter to make sure we can legally do that. Matt said he would feel more comfortable if he read the letter first.

4. Partnership Habersham Update – Tommy Thurmond gave the update. They are currently working on the job description for the Executive Director position. It has been over 5 years since the position was open, so Partnership Habersham has been working on re-evaluating the role and working with the Development Authority to make sure their needs are covered as well. The job will be posted once the job description is completed. Tommy said there have already been people inquiring about the position. Jim Butterworth said he believes it's in the best interest of both Partnership Habersham and the Development Authority to share an Executive Director so that we don't have diverging interests in economic development and workforce development. Mike Franklin added that he is in favor of the partnership because they give us the opportunity to press forward without a single entity or municipality having to step forward, because their work is community wide.

New Business

1. Consider/Approve continuation of streetlight billing – Bryan Ferguson recused himself from the discussion and vote. Motion to continue billing the business park owners for streetlights by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Sidney Roland. The motion was tabled by consensus (6-0) until the July meeting.
2. Consider/Discuss updated business park covenants for Phase II – Matt Skilling said the covenants for Phase II are basically the same as the Phase I covenants with the following changes: 1) A more detailed requirement for a true association and having dues and assessments 2) A \$500 per month penalty after six months if construction of a building does not begin. Motion to approve updated business park covenants for Phase II by Sidney Roland, seconded by David Lovvorn, and voted 7-0 to approve the updated business park covenants for Phase II.

Other Reports

None

Public Comment

None

Motion by Mike Franklin, seconded by Sidney Roland, and voted 7-0 to enter Executive Session for the purposes of Property Acquisition & Disposal, pursuant to O.C.G.A §50-14-3 (b)(1), and Litigation, pursuant to O.C.G.A §50-14-2

Executive Session

Motion by Mike Franklin, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted 7-0 to exit Executive Session at 4:57 p.m.

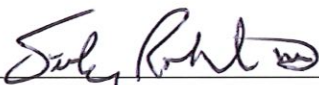
Next Meeting

The next regular meeting is Thursday, July 10, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

Adjourn

A MOTION was made by Mike Franklin, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted 7-0 to adjourn the meeting at 4:58 p.m.


Bryan Ferguson, Vice Chair


Attest: Sidney Roland, Secretary