

**Habersham County Development Authority  
Thursday, September 11, 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, September 11, 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, David Lovvorn, Sidney Roland, Mike Franklin, Jeff Bruns, Allen Whitener

**Members Not Present:** Bryan Ferguson

**Others Present:** Tim Sims, Kiani Holden, Patti McLarty, Janney Sanders, Mike Beecham, Rope Roberts, Media

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Jim Butterworth.

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

The invocation was given by Jim Butterworth, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jim Butterworth.

**Approval of Agenda**

A MOTION was made by Mike Franklin, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted 6-0 to amend the agenda by removing Executive Session, and to approve the agenda as amended.

**Approval of Minutes**

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted 6-0 to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2025 Regular meeting.

**Old Business**

1. Airport Business Park Update –
  - GTS Customs Letter – Jim explained that GTS Customs has not paid any of the bills associated with the business park common services and owe a balance of \$915.73. GTS falls under the covenants of the business park. Last month, the board asked Matt Skilling to prepare a letter for GTS Customs owner Brian Williams. Janney Sanders said that Matt Skilling had mentioned the letter to GTS Customs but had not had the opportunity to complete the letter and was not available for today's meeting. The board made a collective decision to hold off on sending the letter to GTS Customs for now.
2. Phase II Business Park Update – Rope Roberts and Bryan Ferguson are trying to arrange a meeting with SteelCell regarding an available lot in Phase II that would be contiguous with their property in Airport Business Park.

3. Administrative Update – Patti McLarty gave the update. She reached out to Don Higgins on Pad 8 regarding his past due invoices for the business park common expenses. The invoices for the first three quarters were paid by Mr. Higgins, but no payments have been made since. Mr. Higgins told Patti that he did not agree to pay these expenses, and he wasn't sure how the first three invoices had been paid as they must have slipped by him and been paid by his office. He made it clear that no more payments would be made toward the expenses. Mr. Higgins owes \$447.90. There is also a remaining balance of \$268.84 owed by Wade Rhodes. Patti has sent several emails and past due notices to Mr. Rhodes that have been unanswered. Jim asked if the Development Authority should also send letters to Mr. Higgins and Mr. Rhodes. Rope Roberts suggested that we look at our covenants carefully for Phase II to avoid this problem in the future. Jim said it is a double-edged sword – we could stop paying for the streetlights as we have stopped paying for the landscaping, but do we want our business park to be overgrown and without lights? Patti reminded the board that the Development Authority still pays a \$420 monthly bill to HEMC that we cannot currently collect for. The Development Authority paid a \$26k downpayment for the streetlight installation and hardware, and the remaining balance of that is around \$19k. If that balance were to be paid in full, the monthly EMC bill for the streetlights would be minimal. Jim added that the challenge is that the Development Authority is responsible for the commitment made to HEMC. David Lovvorn said that the Development Authority committed to putting up the streetlights, and we are obligated to pay for it. It should then be up to the owners whether they want the poles lit or not, and they should pay for it if they do. Janney suggested that we do not send past due letters until after the HEMC balance is paid. Jim said we do need to pursue that money at some point. Patti also informed the board that the newly approved covenants for Phase II have been recorded.
4. Partnership Habersham Update – Rope Roberts gave the update. They are in the final stages of hiring a new Economic Development Director and they hope to have an announcement by next month. He thanked Jim Butterworth and Bryan Ferguson for serving on the interview committee and for their input. Partnership Habersham is doing their part on SPLOST – flyers will be given out at the fair, at the Chamber meeting, and around the community. They have placed ads in The Northeast Georgian and on outdoor digital ads. 250 yard signs have been ordered and will be placed around the county. Rope offered a sign to anyone on the board who has a business and wants to show their support. The focus will be on a YES vote. Many of our cities have cancelled their council election for November, so we will have a lower voter turnout than expected. We hope that the voters who do come out to vote will vote YES. Rope said that SPLOST saves the average property owner in Habersham County \$1,575 per year on their property taxes.

### **New Business**

1. Consider/Approve continuation of streetlight billing (Tabled from August 14, 2025 meeting) – MOTION by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Mike Franklin, and voted 6-0 for Patti McLarty to obtain the payoff of the streetlight hardware and installation from HEMC and to process the invoice for payment to HEMC.

### **Other Reports**

1. Discussion of Investment Strategies – Kiani Holden provided the rates of interest we are currently earning on our bank and investment accounts. The Wells Fargo account has a

4.18% annual yield, and the current account balance is \$590,903. The SouthState Bank checking account earns .08% and the balance as of June 30, 2025 was \$239,000. The Georgia Fund One account earns 4.372% and had a balance of \$565,792 on June 30, 2025. The Georgia Fund One account earned \$25,894 in interest during FY2025. Mike Franklin gave Tim some information on the fiduciary accounts his church has, and he said they are currently earning 18.28% over the last 18 months. Tim will look into fiduciary accounts for local governments to see if we would qualify. Jeff Bruns asked what our operating expenses are for a 90-day period. Kiani said they are minimal. Jeff suggested moving most of our money out of the SouthState account into the Georgia Fund One account. Tim said it would only take two days to have access to the money if we needed it. Tim said he could transfer up to 80% of the balance in the checking account to the Georgia Fund One account. The board agreed that we don't want any risk associated with the Development Authority's investments.

**Public Comment**

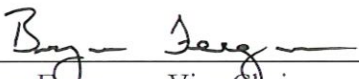
None

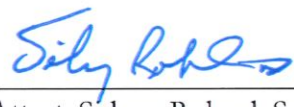
**Next Meeting**

The next regular meeting is Thursday, October 9, 2025, at 3:30 p.m.

**Adjourn**

A MOTION was made by consensus to adjourn the meeting at 4:41 p.m.

  
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Bryan Ferguson, Vice Chair

  
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Attest: Sidney Roland, Secretary