

**Habersham County Development Authority**  
**Thursday, September 10, 2026 @ 3:30 p.m.**  
**Executive Conference Room**  
**130 Jacob's Way Clarkesville, GA 30523**

The Habersham County Development Authority held a regular meeting on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room of the Habersham County Administration building located at 130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA, 30523.

**Members Present:** Jim Butterworth (via telephone), Jeff Bruns, Sidney Roland, David Lovvorn, Allen Whitener

**Members Not Present:** Bryan Ferguson

**Others Present:** Tim Sims, Patti McLarty, Janney Sanders, Alex Robinson, Mike Beecham

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Alex Robinson, who served as Chair.

**Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Sidney Roland gave the invocation, and Alex Robinson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Agenda**

A MOTION was made by Sidney Roland, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted 5-0 to approve the agenda as presented.

**Approval of Minutes**

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by David Lovvorn, and approved 5-0 to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2026 regular meeting.

**Old Business**

- **Executive Director Update –**
  - **Pad 7** – Construction materials are on site, and work is progressing. The first building is in the final stages of permitting, with four prospects currently inquiring. The Authority continues to communicate with the City of Baldwin regarding the permitting process. Discussions regarding Pad 5 also continue, with plans to move forward with additional buildings once the first building completes permitting.
  - **Phase 2** – The Authority contracted with DCCM to complete a master plan for Phase 2. The plan includes three buildings: two along Duncan Bridge Road anticipated at approximately 80,000 to 90,000 square feet each, and a third adjacent to the Clearview Enterprises property anticipated at approximately 20,000 square feet (with potential to be larger).
  - **Business Recruitment** – Alex attended Georgia Power's Retail Recruitment Training in Warner Robins in August, which covered presentations from large retailers, commercial developers, community placemaking developers, and real estate agents. Project conversations continue regarding Project Apple, and two new project inquiries have been received, with a site tour expected soon for one prospect.
  - **Workforce Development** – The inaugural Chick-fil-A Leader Academy was launched at Habersham Central High School with 23 participating students from Beta Club, FFA, and FBLA. The year-long program was created by Chick-fil-A Corporate, funded by Chick-fil-A Cornelia, and facilitated by Alex Robinson, concluding with a community impact project. The Habersham Works

program held a committee workshop and condensed its schedule to better support Success Academy students, pursue pre-apprenticeship/WorkSource grants, and provide additional certification opportunities.

- **Heavy Metal in Motion** – Scheduled for October 8, 2026, this inaugural fifth-grade career exploration event will introduce students to careers in construction, utilities, first response/Emergency Services, and manufacturing through hands-on equipment interaction. The annual South Habersham Middle School Industry Tour was also confirmed, and Alex facilitated the three-day STEM Empowerment Camp for middle school girls with Rotary and NGTC.
- **Existing Industry Programs** – The Partnership Habersham Industry Committee is being finalized. Alex coordinated a multi-jurisdictional meeting regarding the Less Developed Census Tract designation, which offers Tier 1 state tax credits (for creating 5+ jobs) to qualifying businesses in designated areas like the airport business park and Highway 365 corridor. Three existing industry meetings have been conducted since the last board meeting.
- **Strategic Plan** – The plan is in the adoption phase and is expected to be presented for adoption at the October meeting. Alex is coordinating with Partnership Habersham so both boards can adopt the plan without post-public record revisions. Partnership Habersham will launch the plan at its 10-year reception on October 20, 2026 (5:30–8:00 p.m.).
- **Training and Regional Activities** – Alex attended the GEDA Development Authority Summit in July, the Joint Development Authority meeting in August, and the Georgia Mountain Regional Commission economic development summit at no cost to the Authority.
- **Municipal Engagement** – Partnership Habersham is leading the property tax reduction/local option sales tax advocacy campaign while the County leads the education component. Alex continues serving on Cornelia's Georgia Initiative for Community Housing Committee to develop an infill housing booklet.

- **Project Timeline Update –**

- **Higgins Building** – Alex reached out to offer permitting support. Baldwin continues working through plan revisions. The project remains active.
- **Pad 7** – Final stages of permitting with several interested prospects.
- **Pad 5** – The Authority decided not to move forward with buying back the property. Communication continues with the developer regarding site expectations.
- **Pad 6B** – Construction continues with a prospective tenant. Issues regarding interior permitting due to code and personnel changes are actively being addressed.
- **Business Park Signage** – Received an estimate to update existing signage with uniform lettering instead of logos. Alex is discussing the update with property owners and requesting they form a property association to handle maintenance.
- **Cornelia Hotel Development** – Currently in year two of tax abatement; staff is following up on the required annual report from the development.
- **Airport Business Park Master Plan** – Underway, with a site visit planned for next week.
- **Project Ridgeline** – Discussions continue. Alex noted Franklin County's recent announcement of a \$1.2B Walmart fulfillment center (1,000 jobs) as an example of potential industrial development leveraging access to the Gainesville Inland Port.

**New Business**

None

**Public Comment**

None

**Other Reports**

None

A MOTION was made by Sidney Roland, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted 5-0 to enter into Executive Session at 3:54 p.m.

**Executive Session – Property Acquisition & Disposal, pursuant to O.C.G.A §50-14-3 (b)(1);  
Pending Litigation, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-14-2(1)**

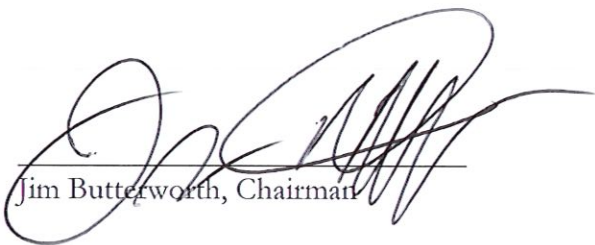
A MOTION was made by Sidney Roland, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted 5-0 to exit Executive Session at 4:28 p.m.

**Next Meeting**

The next regular meeting is Thursday, October 8, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room of the Habersham County Administration building.

**Adjourn**

A MOTION was made by Allen Whitener, seconded by Sidney Roland, and voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

  
Jim Butterworth, Chairman

  
Attest: ~~Sidney Roland, Secretary~~  
Bryan Ferguson, Vice