



MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 2, 2025

9:00 am

Alexander Building

Bynum Conference Room

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mike Newberry, William Davis, Dee Grist, Sam Hattaway, Steve Singletary, Dr. Shanice Richardson and Eric Harris.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Susanne Reynolds and Mayor Travis Wimbush

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Newberry.

The minutes for the March 3, 2025 meeting and current treasury/financial report was reviewed and approved on a motion by Eric Harris and second by William Davis. All voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS: A discussion was held by the board to open a checking account specific for the GA/Early FLEX program. This will help keep funds separate from the general account, etc. A motion to open a checking account for the GA/Early FLEX program at Georgia Community Bank was made by Eric Harris and seconded by William Davis. All voted in favor.

Reynolds gave each board member the Early Co. Growth Scholarship applications. Eric Harris asked if they could take home to review. The board is to send the top 2 applicants by email or text within the next two weeks, so applicants can be notified. No action was taken.

Reynolds discussed the importance of developing a Local Economic Development Strategic Plan of Action. The Development Authority of Early County would need to approve the plan and then take it to the Early Co. Board of Commissioners for their approval. This will help the county and economic development work better together and be on the same page. If there is no plan, how can we navigate a better local economy?

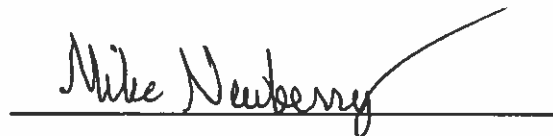
Reynolds addressed the Georgia-Pacific Cedar Springs Mill Closure. The Development Authority and County have released statements to the press. The Development Authority's statement is as follows: *Since the early '60s, the paper mill has been a cornerstone of our community, providing jobs to hundreds of families and contributing to the economic stability of Early County. We understand the anxiety and uncertainty this creates for our workforce and the families who rely on these jobs. The Development Authority is committed to supporting all affected individuals during this transition, while working with local and state leadership to blaze a new path forward for a better tomorrow in Early County.* Reynolds also mentioned working with GP public relations on a career/resource fair.

OTHER UPDATES: Chairman Report - Newberry asked Reynolds to write an article on the PILOT programs associated with the solar panel projects for clarification on how they benefit the county and development authority. Director Report - Steve Jackson has mowed and baled hay in the industrial park. An impact study is being developed by Dr. David Bridges. Other - Eric Harris expressed the need for a younger generation to be involved in plans to address local economic issues. He commented that Early County has the only hospital between Columbus and Colquitt and we need something more than agriculture to keep people in Early County. There also needs to be signage bringing people into town.

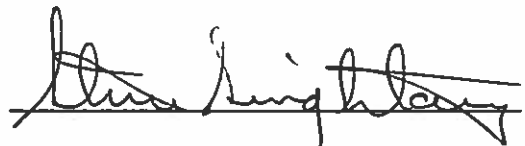
PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mayor Travis Wimbus thanked the board for what they do and how it is needed for all entities to "row in the same direction." The community needs a plan and a joint leadership meeting should be held, so we can start working better together. The time has come to have meetings that last longer than 15 minutes. Real planning and implementation needs to occur. The community needs a unified message.

A motion to adjourn was made by Sam Hattaway and seconded by Dee Grist. All voted in favor.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Susanne Reynolds, Director for the Development Authority of Early County.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Newberry", written over a horizontal line.

Mike Newberry or William Davis
Chairman or Vice-Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Singletary", written over a horizontal line.

Steve Singletary
Secretary-Treasurer