



MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 14, 2026

9:00 AM

Alexander Building - Board Room

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Chairman Mike Newberry, Vice Chairman William Davis, Secretary-Treasurer Steve Singletary, and Sam Hattaway

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Averitt, Alex Welch, Judy Savage, Hank Jester, Shauna Jordan, Scott Cochran, Charlie Sol, Will Caudill, Prenall Freeman, Susanne Reynolds and Buck Willis.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Newberry and he opened with prayer.

Meeting minutes for August 3, 2026 and the special called meeting for August 10, 2026 were presented. A motion to approve both meeting minutes as presented was made by William Davis and seconded by Sam Hattaway. All voted in favor. The current financials were presented and Reynolds discussed that a check had been written to the Chamber of Commerce for the remaining balance in the GCB - FLEX Account. The account will be closed as soon as the Chamber creates a FLEX checking account and deposits the funds. A motion to approve as presented was made by Sam Hattaway and seconded by William Davis. All voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS: The Development Authority invited the Early County Tax Assessor to explain property taxes to the board and guests. **Understanding Property Taxes w / Shauna Jordan, Tax Assessor:** (See attached overview of the presentation.) Reynolds spoke briefly with the board about the need to plan for the **Development Authority of Early County Budget FY2027** with the anticipation of receiving the administrative fee from QTS Data Centers by December 20, 2026. This will allow the Development Authority not to be a burden on the taxpayers or local government. It will be financially able to fund itself with PILOT payment administrative fees. No action was taken, only discussion about moving forward to remove "economic development / development authority" as a line item in the county budget. Newberry asked Davis and Singletary if they would work with Reynolds to develop a budget and plan to move forward as a self-sustaining Development Authority. Reynolds presented a policy draft for "Economic Development Project Management." This will help the board and its community partners in the management of future economic development projects (see attached). Reynolds also presented a draft resolution for a "Strategic Incentives Program w / Industrial Districts." Since the county has no zoning, this will help navigate industrial developments to appropriate locations with the use of incentives. She explained she was still working on obtaining property owner consent to list the former mill site and the former Inman Electric site as parcels for an industrial district. The Early County Industrial Park is also proposed as an Industrial Development District. No action was taken on either document, only discussions. Reynolds will work with the property owners and Mr. Bill Mills on formalizing the documents for the board's consideration at its next meeting. Reynolds presented two **sponsorship requests** to the board. **The South GeorgiaLEADS Regional Leadership Initiative** is hosting a session in Early County in November. This is the first time Early County has been selected to host a session. She

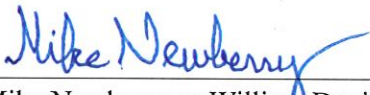
requested the Development Authority provide breakfast for the session in the amount of \$250 sponsorship. A motion to approve as presented was made by William Davis and seconded by Sam Hattaway. All voted in favor. Reynolds also presented a sponsorship request in the amount of \$250 for the **First Baptist Early Childhood Learning Center benefit dinner**. She spoke with Emily Jackson, Director for the Center, and she stated the Center would eventually employ several teachers and there were 9 students already signed up. They plan to expand each year and offer scholarships to students. A motion to approve as presented was made by Sam Hattaway and seconded by Steve Singletary. All voted in favor.

OTHER UPDATES: During the Director's Report, Reynolds listed the conferences and speaking engagements she would be involved with over the next month including: GA Chamber Rural Prosperity Summit Panelist, InfraDay Southeast Panelist and attendance at the GA Economic Developers Association Annual Conference.

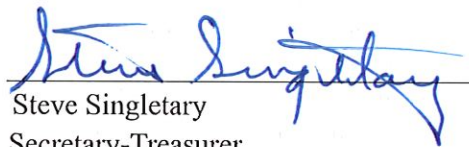
PUBLIC COMMENTS: Judy Savage expressed concerns with the enforcement of code in Downtown Blakely. Reynolds explained the ordinances and other initiatives that were currently in place and advocated for by the Downtown Development Authority / Main Street Blakely and the Historic Preservation Commission of Blakely. **Pranell Freeman** apologized for being late to the meeting and invited the board to attend an informational community session hosted by Unapologetic Leaders. **Mark Averitt** had questions for Shauna Jordan, but she had already left the meeting. Newberry told him he could reach out to Jordan directly for answers pertaining to the Board of Assessors processes, etc.

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

Meeting minutes were recorded by Susanne Reynolds, Director for the Development Authority of Early County; and Steve Singletary, Secretary-Treasurer.



Mike Newberry or William Davis
Chairman or Vice Chairman



Steve Singletary
Secretary-Treasurer