



## MEETING MINUTES

Monday, Dec. 1, 2025- 9:00 am

Alexander Building - Bynum Conference Room

**BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Chairman Mike Newberry, Vice Chairman William Davis, Dee Grist, Secretary-Treasurer Steve Singletary, Dr. Shanice Richardson, Sam Hattaway and Eric Harris.

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Susanne Reynolds, Bill Mills, Hank Jester, Travis Wimbush, Beth Chandler and Charlie Sol.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Newberry. Prayer was led by County Commissioner Charlie Sol.

A motion to amend the agenda to remove the approval of the executive session minutes for Nov. 3, 2025, was made by Sam Hattaway and seconded by Eric Harris. All voted in favor. The executive session minutes will be considered the next time the board is in executive session.

The regular minutes for the Nov. 3, 2025 meeting and current financials were presented. A motion to approve was made by Sam Hattaway and seconded by Dee Grist. All voted in favor.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Chairman Newberry wanted to verify the board's approval that the fuel was included in the travel reimbursement for the data center tour. The board agreed and confirmed that the fuel was part of the travel cost associated with the trip to Atlanta. No further action was needed.

**NEW BUSINESS:** A discussion was held on the future industrial developments in Early County. The board discussed being proactive in planning for the future and to think about future developments, especially data centers in the county. Newberry mentioned that local Scott Cochran had spent a lot of time in data centers and spoke in favor of them and the value they bring to the community and from the technology side. It was mentioned that the development authority needs to be ready in how it approaches these projects. Eric Harris stated he didn't get to go on the tour, but is looking to the future and hopeful about it. Newberry discussed that water is a concern for an agriculture community and the board needs to be mindful of efficiency with these new developments. William Davis stated it was important to hold future developments accountable for efficiency, such as closed-loop systems. Bill Mills stated that any incentives offered can be tied to accountability. He has also spoken with other attorneys that are familiar with these types of projects and it has been recommended to have a moratorium placed on data center projects or large advanced manufacturing projects for 90 days until the county and/or city can develop an appropriate ordinance to navigate these developments. The board agreed that a county ordinance should be recommended. Eric Harris said the paper mill is gone and there will also be a group in opposition to anything. It is important to get on board with something productive or the county will not have anything for the future. No action was required.

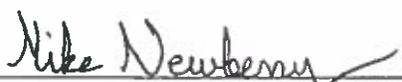


**OTHER UPDATES:** There were no further updates from the Chairman or Director. Vice Chairman William Davis did not go on the tour for the data center and asked about the aesthetics. Steve Singletary commented that it was a very nice, attractive facility

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Beth Chandler, the new Chamber Executive Director, was present and commented that she was excited to be in her position and also very excited about the data center because Early County needs something. She also stated that data centers are used in our daily lives. County Commissioner Charlie Sol was also present. He commented on the wisdom of the development authority for keeping the project quiet so as to not run anyone off and how we need to connect with the younger generation. He also stated not hinder progress but to let it grow. Other comments by Sol: People want to come back to Blakely but need something to come back to. It's hard to get out of the old mindset and we need to be able to tell and inform the community, especially where resources are concerned (water & electricity)

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

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

  
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Mike Newberry or William Davis  
Chairman or Vice-Chairman

  
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Steve Singletary  
Secretary-Treasurer