



MEETING MINUTES - Special Called

Monday, July 13, 2026

9:00 AM

Alexander Building - Board Room

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

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Susanne Reynolds, Bill Mills, Mr. Bill Mills' niece, Hank Jester, Beth Chandler Noland and Charlie Sol

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

Meeting minutes for June 1, 2026, along with the current financials were presented. A motion to approve as presented was made by William Davis and seconded by Dee Grist. All voted in favor.

OLD BUSINESS: Reynolds gave copies of the 2-hour and 8-hour development authority board member training certificates to each member present.

NEW BUSINESS: Three Early County Growth Scholarship applications were turned in by the deadline. Reynolds asked the board how they would like to determine the residency of one of the applicants. The high school transcripts and the college letter of acceptance have different home addresses. Attorney Mills recommended honoring the applicant as an Early County resident at the time of the application. There was no action taken on selecting a 2026 applicant until the board has more time to review the applications. Reynolds discussed the insurance policy with ACCG (base premium of \$6500). A motion to approve an insurance policy for the Development Authority up to \$8,000 was made by William Davis and seconded by Sam Hattaway. All voted in favor. Reynolds discussed the need for the Authority to make an official statement on "Project Blue Hole." She is working on a document compiled of information based on interviews over the past several months with people who have worked in the data center industry or with QTS. A discussion was had regarding the need to host a panel based on the document with professionals in the industry. Plans will be made to host a panel within the next month, based on panelists availability.

OTHER UPDATES: Chairman Mike Newberry discussed how the board cannot help others perceptions, but the board has a unique chemistry. The board of directors are on board with each other. Chairman Newberry said he has complete confidence in the board and how they should work together to not lose confidence in each other. He explained that there is a lot in front of the board. To work in the best interest of the community, the board needs to always make sure they are together and hold each other accountable. During the Directors Report, Reynolds explained that she has been receiving open records requests and has responded within 3 days of receiving it with Attorney Bill Mills guidance. The receipt gave a month for records to be compiled. Based on the lowest paid staff person's hourly rate... First 15 min no charge. Reynolds is the only staff member for the Development Authority of Early County, so it is based on her salary (\$38.69/hr) with \$.10 per page if printed. Board members cannot retrieve these documents. They are not staff members and cannot be paid.

Reynolds clarified that the Development Authority is not a commission or department of the county. It is a separate entity defined by State Law. However, the director's position is funded mostly by the county... and then the city and development authority. This is defined in an intergovernmental agreement signed by all entities. Bill Mills said he would send a copy of the IGA to Reynolds. She also clarified that the Downtown Development Authority of Blakely is not a department or a commission of the city. It was formed during her first year as development authority of EC director, so she "inherited" it as part of her job description; however, it is not part of the Development Authority of Early County. She is working to schedule another QTS-Fayetteville tour and asked if the Development Authority would be willing to provide transportation again. Chairman Mike Newberry said he did think it would be a good idea to provide the transportation again. Reynolds recommended that the DAEC adopt a project policy. How does the board need to handle projects when they are presented via the Development Authority of Early County's office? Who is involved, etc.? Early County is part of the Locate South Georgia Bus Tour this year. Plans are in the works for it. Blakely-Early County will host a session for the South GeorgiaLEADS Regional Initiative this year. Plans are in the works for it as well. The Development Authority of Early made the front cover of the inaugural edition of South Georgia Magazine. Article about Paper Mill closure with great interviews with the Mayor, Dr. David Bridges, Rep. Gerald Green and Tim Lowrimore (GA Forestry Association President). At the end of the month, Reynolds will attend the GA Forestry Association Annual Conference to help make connections with the forestry industry. Attorney Bill Mills recommended the Development Authority creating an open records request form in case any of the board members were presented with an ORR and to also name Susanne Reynolds, Director, as the official custodian of records in a policy.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Beth Chandler Noland, Chamber Executive Director, shared her experience at the Annual Georgia Chamber of Commerce Conference. Data centers were the topic of the main session. She mentioned that QTS Data Centers is now a Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce member. The Chamber is open for business.

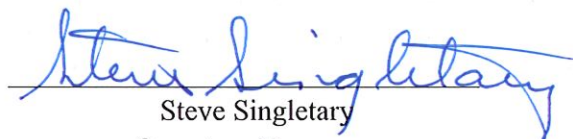
EXECUTIVE SESSION: Chairman Mike Newberry asked for a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of economic development to discuss "Project Goober." A motion was made by Dee Grist and seconded by Sam Hattaway. All voted in favor. No action was taken during the executive session, so there was no action to report out.

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

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



Mike Newberry or William Davis
Chairman or Vice-Chairman



Steve Singletary
Secretary-Treasurer