



EDACC Board Meeting Minutes						
August 27, 2025				7:30 AM		EDACC Conference Room
Meeting called by	Chairman, Rick Evans - called the meeting to order @ 7:30					
Type of meeting	Board Meeting					
Facilitator	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Note taker	Linda Peplau					
Adjourned	8:24 AM					
Board Attendance	Rick Evans	Y	Mark Wills	Y	Stan Shepherd	Y
	Jim Cox	Y	Jean Garniewicz	Y	Kerry Bridges	Y
	Mark Herbert	Y	Ben Stapleton	ABSENT	Rick Toole	ABSENT
Staff/Guests	Cheney Eldridge, Chris Driver, Anita Patel, Stuart Hilsman, Linda Peplau, Dr. Tom Clark (CSRA Alliance for Fort Gordon), Commissioner, Connie Melear (CCBOC), Robbie Bennett (SRSCRO), Skyler Andrews (The Augusta Press).					
Opening Remarks						
4 minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chairman, Rick Evans presented Cheney Eldridge with a baby gift on behalf of the board, stating that family comes 1st.Cheney Eldridge thanks everyone for her gift and support.					
Meeting Agenda						
1 minute	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Discussion	Chairman, Rick Evans calls for a motion to jointly approve the agenda for the August 27, 2025, EDACC Board Meeting & the minutes for the July 23, 2025, EDACC Board Meeting. Jean Garniewicz requests a correction to date and time for the next Executive meeting on the agenda. The correction was noted and made from 09.17.2025 7:30 A.M. to 09.19.2025 @10 A.M.					
Conclusions	Motion: Mark Herbert 2nd: Mark Wills Motion carries unanimously (7-0).					
Minutes of Previous Meeting						
0 minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Discussion	See above.					
Conclusions	Motion: Mark Herbert 2nd: Mark Wills Motion carries unanimously (7-0).					

DACC Financial Report	
6 minutes	Treasurer, Mark Wills
Discussion	<p>Treasurer, Mark Wills reported on the following items in the July 2025 financial reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New FY26 financial reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One month into the new fiscal year (FY26). ○ This report is just for review at this time. ○ Approval will come after FY2025's audit has been completed to allow for any auditor adjustments. ○ This is the 1st financial report presented to the board by the county's finance department. ○ The county was able to duplicate the prior reports well with the same format. • Summarized the current balance sheet on page 1 and reported that the balance sheet looked great. • Mark Wills directed to board to page 6 for a review of the 2026 fiscal year budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reported on the county appropriations monthly distribution/pay structure. <p>Chairman Rick Evans, reports on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praises Angie Russell (Columbia County Finance Manager) for her hard work on producing the new financial reports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comments that the look and format match the reports from prior months and look great. ○ Rick shared that he worked with Angie to make some adjustments to the 1st draft to produce this final draft. • Rick Evans passed around the Internal Control procedures for EDACC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cash Receipts ○ Cash Disbursements (approval process for checks) ○ Cash Reconciliations <p>After all the members had time to review the financial reports, Mark Herbert identified a heading error on the Miscellaneous line item on page 6. Rick Evans confirmed the error due to conversion of the new software, and he will get it corrected with Angie Russell.</p>
Conclusions	No need for approval until the FY2025 audit is complete and finalized.

Chairman's Report

10 Minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans
Discussion	<p>Chairman, Rick Evans shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rick shared his accounts of the town hall meeting from Monday, 08.25.2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At Hardin Auditorium with Alison Couch & Connie Melear (6:30-7:30 P.M.) ○ Rick reiterates once again that Cheney is the spokesperson for EDACC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All questions should be directed to Cheney Eldridge. * Always provide Tech Park's web link for extra information (www.whiteoak-techpark.com). <p>Additional accounts of the town hall meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Herbert (Herbert Homes Inc) shared his accounts and apologized to Commissioner Melear for the negative comments she and Commissioner Alison Couch had to endure during the meeting. • Commissioner Connie Melear also reported on the town hall meeting and thanked Kerry Bridges with GA Power, for answering many questions that required a more technical answer. • Kerry Bridges (GA Power) shared the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reported that in January 2025, the PSC (GA Public Service Commission) voted unanimously to pass some new charging rules for new large-load customers (100 MW of energy) to protect their existing 2.8 million customers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Allowing GA Power to collect infrastructure costs upfront for new large-load customers to address risks. * The allowance of assessing a minimum billing requirement for up to 15 years allowing for longer contracts. * The collection of collateral will be required of the new large load customer. ○ Shared that every 3 years GA Power goes through an 18-month process of filing an Integrated Resource Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The plan is created for the benefit of evaluating power needs and load forecasting. * The plan produces new strategies and processes to be executed as power need grow. * GA Power has a check point process for their customers, including large-load customers. ○ GA Power is projected to add 8,000 to 10,000 MW of power generation due to growth in the state. ○ GA Power is projected to add approximately 1000 miles of transmission to ensure power reliability to their customers.

EDACC Committee Reports

4 minutes	Jim Cox, for Business Recruitment & Incentive Program Committee
Discussion	<p>Jim Cox shared the following topics from the Business Recruitment & Incentive Program Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result update on the Atlantic Waste Services proposal (840 Horizon South Pkwy/parcel# 069 001I). • Shared that Cheney Eldridge updated the committee on activities in the region. • Tech Park updates and website link information (www.whiteoak-techpark.com). • Trey Allen's resignation as County Commissioner. • Brainstormed a potential food truck/restaurant incubator concept plan for White Oak's available parcels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jim mentioned he spoke to some county commissions regarding permitting for a food truck project like this. ○ Jim references Gather (shipping container food hall) in Greenville SC as a benchmarker. • Discussed local, national and global tariff impacts. • Jim Shared that Ben Stapleton updated the committee on Harlem and surrounding communities' growth. <p>Jean Garniewicz added that she loves the food truck idea and thinks it could be a great asset to the community.</p>

Project Updates	
8 minutes	Project Manager, Stuart Hilsman & Project Manager, Anita Patel
Discussion	<p>Project Manager, Stuart Hilsman shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a brief project update. • Shares an Existing Industry visits report. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Brooks Smith (Director of CTAE) took Stuart on a tour of Grovetown High School on 08-11-2025. Stuart shared that the CTAE curriculum equips the students with a trade certificate at completion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Automotive Maintenance and Repair * Welding * Cybersecurity * Audio Visual Technology and Film ○ Stuart shared he met with Amy Jenkins (Work-Based Learning Coordinators @ Grovetown High) to learn more about the school work partnerships that are already being utilized for workforce placement in our region. • Stuart reported on the Georgia Power CREATE Entrepreneurship Summit that he and Anita attended. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The event was held in Macon GA on 08.13.2025. ○ The summit was created for the purpose of fostering the development of entrepreneurship in the state. • Shared Insite on his meeting with Daniel Evans (Grant Writer - AEDA) for a Brownfield Coalition Partnership visit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learned about the EPA Brown Field Grant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The grant helps identify sights for developing underutilized properties. * Provides Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) * Awards Cleanup Grants * Awards RLF Supplemental Funding
Discussion	<p>Project Manager, Anita Patel shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported that her meet and greets with businesses in the community focus on retention. • Refers CSR Lending to all businesses that require lending assistance. • Shared her thoughts on the importance of logo identity in the current workplace culture. • Provided a brief local restaurant update.
Economic Development Update	
4 minutes	Executive Director, Cheney Eldridge
Discussion	<p>Executive Director, Cheney Eldridge shared the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Augusta Technical College's President search: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Narrowing down the applicants to 3 finalists. • Chamber of Commerce Future Forward Summit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scheduled for 09.04.2025 at the Columbia County Exhibition Center (9:00 -1 P.M.) ○ Summit topics will include a Regional Economic Development outlook. ○ Stan Shepherd shared that the Future Forward Summit will be a great forum for the topic of Regional Economic Impacts. He reported that he has seats available at his table as well if EDACC has an overflow of attendees. • Cheney reported that Augusta Pro-Hockey has been approved and was officially announced to launch in Augusta. She reported that this launch is exciting for tourism in our region.

Public Comments		
15 minutes	Commissioner, Connie Melear (CCBOC), Robbie Bennett (SRSCRO) & Dr. Tom Clark (CSRA Alliance for Fort Gordon)	
Discussion	<p>Commissioner, Connie Melear (CCBOC) shared the following county updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covered the fulfillment process for the open commissioner seat for district 2, left open by Trey Allen after his resignation.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ The open seat will be on the November voting ballot (per Jim Cox).<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Candidate - Howard W. Johnson V (D)* Candidate - Jim Steed (R)• Commissioner Melear shared a government annex, construction completion timeline.<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ The new annex building will include an event space to accommodate larger meeting/events. <p>Robbie Bennett (SRSCRO) shared the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Announces that the Regional Housing Study is complete!!<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ SRSCRO partnered with KB Advisory Group to produce the study.◦ The study will include 8 counties (4 in GA & 4 in SC).◦ An invitation will soon be extended to the release of the housing study for the purpose of a round table forum.• SRS (Savannah River Site):<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Mr. Bennett reported that SRS is the largest employer in Columbia County.◦ SRS is anticipated to hire 7,000 new employees.• New Nuclear<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Robbie reported on the President's Executive Orders for Reinvigorating the Nuclear Industrial Base.◦ New Nuclear Forum 2026 (ECA -Energy Communities Alliance)<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Scheduled for April 21- 24, 2026* At Augusta Marriott at the Convention Center <p>Dr. Tom Clark (CSRA Alliance for Fort Gordon) shared the following fort updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• TechNet 2025 update:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ August 19-21, 2025◦ Augusta Marriott Convention Center◦ 6,000 attendees• Fort installation renaming update:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Renaming Ceremony is set for Sept. 26, 2025.◦ The installation will return to the original name but honoring a different individual.<ul style="list-style-type: none">** MSG Gary Gordon, a Medal of Honor recipient, Delta Force operator, and hero of the Black Hawk Down mission.	
Discussion		
Calendar of Events		
2 minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• September 12, 2025, Existing Business & Workforce Committee - 8:30 a.m.• September 19, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting - 10:00 a.m.• September 19, 2025, Property Development Committee - 11:00 a.m.• September 24, 2025, EDACC Board Meeting - 7:30 a.m.	
Adjournment		8:24 AM
Conclusions	Chairman, Rick Evans calls for a motion to adjourn the August 27, 2025, board meeting at 8:24 a.m. Motioned: Jim Cox 2nd: Jean Garniewicz Motion carries unanimously (7-0)	
Next meeting: September 24,2025		EDACC All