



EDACC Board Meeting Minutes						
September 24, 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	8:08 AM					
Board Attendance	Rick Evans	Y	Mark Wills	Y	Stan Shepherd	Y
	Jim Cox	Y	Jean Garniewicz	Y	Kerry Bridges	ABSENT
	Mark Herbert	Y	Ben Stapleton	Y	Rick Toole	Y
Staff/Guests	Chris Driver, Anita Patel, Stuart Hilsman, Linda Peplau, Skyler Andrews (The Augusta Press) & Anastasia Black (Corporate Environments of Georgia)					
Meeting Agenda						
1 minute	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Discussion	Chairman, Rick Evans calls for a motion to jointly approve the agenda for the September 24, 2025, EDACC Board Meeting & the minutes for the August 27, 2025, EDACC Board Meeting.					
Conclusions	Motion: Mark Herbert 2nd: Jim Cox Motion carries unanimously (8-0).					
Minutes of Previous Meeting						
0 minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Discussion	See above.					
Conclusions	Motion: Mark Herbert 2nd: Jim Cox Motion carries unanimously (8-0).					

DACC Financial Report	
5 Minutes	Treasurer, Mark Wills
Discussion	Treasurer, Mark Wills reported on the following items in the August 2025 financial report. • FY25 audits are currently in process. • Page 1 (balance sheet): ○ Provided a Balance Sheet/Statement of Net Position summary report. * Highlighted the Total Assets balance. * Highlighted and explained the Total Liabilities balance. • Page 2 & 3 (monthly expenses-August): ○ Reported minimal activity for the month of August. ○ Highlighted the County Appropriation total for the month. ○ Reported on a couple expenditures over 1,000.00. * Future Forward sponsorship (Chamber- CSRA Development Summit 09.04.2025) * 2026 April Showcase expenditures (house rental & driver service) • Page 6 (2026 FY budget). ○ Treasurer Mark Wills reported that the budget percentages are on target at this point. ○ Shared that the line item erroneously titled Misc/Bad Debt at software conversion has been corrected and is now labels Contingency. • Chairman, Rick Evan reported on the following items in the August 2025 financial report. ○ Rick Evans thanked Mark Herbert for spotting the line item heading error at last month's board meeting. * Shared that the total was for balancing and was titled incorrectly. * The error has been corrected and reflects correctly in the August report. ○ Rick shared that the audit is currently being conducted.
Conclusions	No need for approval until the FY2025 audit is complete and finalized.

Chairman's Report	
2 Minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans
Discussion	Chairman, Rick Evans shared the following: • Future Forward updates (Chamber- CSRA Development Summit 09.04.2025) ○ Rick thanked the EDACC staff for their participation at the Future Forward event. ○ Reported that Cheney Eldridge did a great job alongside Cal Wray, successfully presenting a great work dynamic. • Rick offered a reminder- Regional Housing Study release and round table forum. ○ October 08, 2025 ○ 7 a.m.- 10:00 a.m. ○ Anita Patel offers to RSVP anyone interested in going.
EDACC Committee Reports	
4 minutes	Jean Garniewicz for Existing Business Development & Workforce Dev. (09.12.2025) Stan Shepherd for Property Development Committee (09.19.2025)
Discussion	Jean Garniewicz for the Existing Business Dev. & Workforce Dev. • Topics covered at the committee meeting on 09.12.2025. ○ Masters 2026 planning (house rental) ○ Existing Industry visits (Healthwise/Nutritional Resources) ○ Annual Wage/Compensation Survey update. * 2 part to the survey * Participants * Future participation incentives ○ Horizon South signage (demolished by car collision and replacement options) ○ Jean shared that Rick Evans suggested inviting Julie Langham of Augusta Technical College to a board meeting for a round table discussion on workforce development & placement in our community. Stan Shepherd for the Property Development Committee. • Topics covered at the committee meeting on 09.19.2025. ○ County's new Zoning Classification project designated specifically for data centers. ○ Townhall meeting updates. ○ Horizon South signage (demolished by a car collision) * Replacement options (a wayfinding sign is preferred).

Project Updates

20 minutes

Project Manager, Stuart Hilsman & Project Manager, Anita Patel

Discussion

Project Manager, **Stuart Hilsman** shared the following:

- Shared an **Existing Industry visits** report.
 - **Healthwise/Nutritional Resources**
 - * Stuart reported that his takeaway from the visit was, correspondence between EDACC and Healthwise needs to continue to build a stronger relationship.
- Reported on the **GA Tech Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership Event (GaMEP)** (09/09/2025 at ATC).
 - Event topics:
 - * Mastering Inventory Management
 - * Shared strategies for efficiency and profitability
 - Stuart reported that though he did not attend due to travel, several existing industries from Columbia County did attend the event via his invite.
- **Annual Wage/Compensation Survey** update.
 - 5 completions
 - Incentives for subsequent year participants.
- Stuart shared his report on attending the **CTAE Advisory Committee Meeting** (9/17/25).
 - The Advisory Board participated in an overview of the pathways for each program.
 - Shared a list of some available courses (Health Science, Law enforcement & welding).
 - Pathway progression:
 1. Course participation
 2. Test
 3. Industry certificate
 - Setting curriculum implementation guidelines with industries for a optimal skill set standard result.
 - Stuart reported that the objective of the CTAE program is to bridge the gap between student status and workforce entry.
- Stuart gave a report on the **GEDA 2025 Annual Conference** that he and Anita Patel attended in Savannah (09.17-9.19.2025).
 - Great networking opportunity with utility (GA Power) and development (T&H) partners.
 - Speaker
 - * Dr. David Gaddy regarding energy demands.
 - Rick Evans thanked Anita Patel & Stuart Hilsman for representing the EDACC at the GEDA conference.
- Annual Columbia County **Chamber Golf Tournament** (10.20.2025)
 - West Lake Country Club
 - Stuart thanked the board members that are participating in the golf tournament with him for volunteering thier time.
 1. Stuart Hilsman
 2. Marl Wills
 3. Rick Evans
 4. Rick Toole

Discussion

Project Manager, **Anita Patel** shared the following:

- Anita shared her narrative of the **Future Forward Summit** and while doing so shared that she recently celebrated her **8th anniversary** working for EDACC.
- **SRS-CRO** match funding update.
 - She is going through expenditures to submit reimbursement under the Work Force Development category.
 - Anita reported that she is working on the logistics of scheduling/sponsoring the Be Pro Be Proud mobile workshop.
 - Anita is probing opportunities to use the remaining SRS-CRO match amount before the end of 2025.

Continued Project Updates

Discussion	• Board & staff comments regarding CTAE (Career, Technical, & Agricultural Education) ○ Rick Toole shared that as a SRS-CRO board member it has become clear of the need for high level/high skilled workers in varies industries. He suggests inviting Madalyn Brantley from SRS-CRO to inform us of their work force development/work pathway needs. ○ Mark Herbert expressed the necessity of unearthing & financially supporting the most beneficial pathway program. * He also shared that Evans High School provides welding classes. * Student obtain training before going to a Tech school producing high incomes for participants. * Incubator facilities would be a great resource for facilitating a skilled workforce. ○ Stuart Hilsman shared information regarding high school students obtaining college/technical credits through the dual enrollment program, after Rick Evans inquired about the process of obtaining credit while in high school. ○ Anita Patel shared that the CTAE program offers over 18 available work pathways and that students must secure parental approval for participation. ○ Jean Garniewicz shared a beautiful work pathway success story of a friend's child with some disabilities, working at Ruby Tuesday's and flourishing by the opportunity provided to them. ○ Stan Shepherd also shared a personal & successful work pathway story regarding his son. Stan shared that his son was an intern at Healthwise and he applauds Stuart Hilsman for highlighting Healthwise for making products here in our back yard. Stan expressed that Healthwise is a homegrown company investing in the community's future workers. ○ Rick Evans suggested adding some of the shared success stories on our website (monthly highlights).
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Economic Development Update

2 minutes	Chairman, Rick Evans for Executive Director, Cheney Eldridge
Discussion	Chairman, Rick Evans read Executive Director, Cheney Eldridge's written Economic Development Update report. • Rick Evans reported that Cheney Eldridge checked in to the hospital this morning and should have a baby delivery at any time and to keep her in everyone's prayers. He reports that the EDACC team will carry the load in her absence. Reading: • Current projects are progressing smoothly, with milestones being reached on schedule and strong momentum heading into the next phase. All project partners, including the Development Authority, the County Administrators Office, the Columbia County Board of Commissioners, Trammel Crow, and Georgia Power remain aligned on current initiatives. Collaboration continues to be strong, and momentum is building toward our upcoming goals. We will continue to work in high gear for the remainder of the year and into next year in order to push these efforts past the finish line. The staff and I appreciate the strong support the Development Authority Board has provided over the last few months and we ask for your continued support moving forward. Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to seeing you all very soon.



Public Comments		
3 minutes	Anastasia Black (Corporate Environments of Georgia) & Skyler Andrews (The Augusta Press)	
Discussion	- Anastasia Black (Corporate Environments of Georgia) introduced herself to the board. - She shared she is an Augusta native. - She specializes in architectural design with a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Georgia Southern University. - Chairman Rick Evans, thanks Anastasia for investing her time by attending the board meeting. - Skyler Andrews (The Augusta Press) shared the following: - Skyler shared that he is pleased to hear the Board discuss the CTAE program and conveys that good things are happening in our area.	
Calendar of Events		
1 minute	Chairman, Rick Evans	
Discussion	- October 01, 2025 - Business Recruitment & Incentive Program Committee - 7:30 a.m. - October 08, 2025 - Regional Housing Study release and round table forum - 7-10:00 a.m. - October 21, 2025 - Executive Committee Meeting - 7:30 a.m. - October 22, 2025- EDACC Board Meeting - 7:30 a.m.	
Adjournment		8:08 AM
Conclusions	Chairman, Rick Evans calls for a motion to adjourn the September 24, 2025, board meeting at 8:08 a.m. Motioned: Jean Garniewicz 2nd: Mark Wills Motion carries unanimously (8-0)	
Next meeting: October 22,2025		EDACC All