



EDACC Board Meeting Minutes						
August 26, 2026					EDACC Conference Room	
Meeting called by	Chairman, Rick Evans - called the meeting to order @ 8:00					
Type of meeting	Board Meeting					
Facilitator	Chairman, Rick Evans					
Note taker	Linda Peplau					
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	Y	Rick Toole	Y
Staff/Guests	Cheney Eldridge, Anita Patel, Stuart Hilsman, Linda Peplau, Chris Driver (Hull Barrett, PC), Commissioner Connie Melear (BOC), County Manager Scott Johnson (BOC), Dr. Steven Flynt (CCBOE), Heath Taylor (CC Chamber) & Lythia Ross (local business)					
Meeting Agenda						
	Chairman Rick Evans called for a motion to approve the agenda for the August 26, 2026, EDACC Board Meeting, with one correction to Section J: Executive Session, by adding a Property Matter to that section. Motion: Jim Cox 2nd: Rick Toole Motion carries unanimously (9-0)					
Minutes of Previous Meeting						
	Chairman Rick Evans called for a motion to review & approve the minutes for the July 22, 2026, EDACC Board Meeting. Motion: Mark Herbert 2nd: Jim Cox Motion carries unanimously (9-0)					

DACC Financial Report

Discussion	Treasurer, Mark Wills reported on the following items in the July 2026 financial report. • Page 1 (Balance Sheet/Statement of Net Position): ◦ A summary of checking, savings, and liabilities was provided. ◦ Reported that no significant changes were noted, and overall financial activity for the first month of the fiscal year appears normal. • Page 2 & 3 (monthly expenses): ◦ Mark reported that operations appear in good order and explained that a negative entry in Repairs and Maintenance resulted from a reimbursement-related expense shared with the Chamber. • Page 6 (2026 FY Budget vs. Actual Expenses): ◦ Treasurer reported that all financials appear normal, and no concerns were identified. ◦ Questions were invited from attendees, but none were asked. Chairman Rick Evans added that the new budget appears on page six and reflects several key changes. • With county appropriations discontinued, the budget is balanced by drawing from the organization's fund balance. • Reserves are being used to cover this year's debt service, which is tied to prior property purchases in phases one and two. • Information on bond principal and bond interest for the fiscal year is listed near the bottom of the same column. • Attendees were invited to ask questions regarding these items, but none were asked.
Conclusions	Chairman Rick Evans called for a motion to approve the July 2026 Financial Reports, contingent upon any audit related adjustments. Motion by Jean Garniewicz 2nd by Mark Herbert The motion carried unanimously (9 0).

Chairman's Report

Discussion	Chairman Rick Evans provided the following updates: • Members were asked to review and sign the annual Code of Ethics, Confidentiality, Conflict of Interest, and Attendance forms to ensure compliance. • Upcoming dates were noted, including a tour of Vogtle on October 2nd and strategic planning sessions scheduled for October 27–29, 2026.
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Project Updates

Discussion	N/A – Cheney yielded her time.
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Economic Development Update

Discussion	Jim Cox provided a summary of minutes for Business Recruitment & Incentives Committee meeting on 08.05.2026 • Reported that all members were present for the meeting, which was brief. • The committee discussed ongoing property tax relief initiatives and clarified several related issues. • Staff provided operational updates, including information on open records requests. • Additional updates were provided regarding the development progress at White Oak. • The committee discussed development activity beginning at surrounding property site. • Members reviewed potential locations and discussed strategies for the upcoming planning session.
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Public Comments

Discussion	Dr. Steven Flynt (CCBOE) shared the following school updates: • Shared that the CCBOE met the previous evening and discussed the upcoming strategic planning cycle. • Noted that, the current five year strategic plan concludes this summer, and the new planning process will begin in January, continuing through the spring with opportunities for public input and stakeholder group engagement. A revised plan is expected for approval in the summer. • An invitation was extended to attend the ribbon cutting event at Lakeside High School next Thursday, September 3, 2026. The ceremony will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by an open tour of the facility with students and teachers present. • Dr. Flynt shared that enrollment has declined slightly over the past three years, mainly among incoming elementary students. Despite the decline, state funding has increased through the weighted staffing formula, enabling raises and millage rate reductions. This funding trend is expected to level off this year. The decline in enrollment aligns with statewide and national patterns, with no notable increases in private, homeschool, or alternative education enrollment. Heath Taylor (President/CEO) shared the following Chamber updates: • Shared an upcoming event with Whiting-Turner scheduled for 09/22/2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. During this time, Whiting-Turner's procurement team and leadership will be onsite to meet with chamber members and community partners interested in working with them across various sectors, including construction and food services. Promotional materials will be distributed in advance, and the team will be available throughout the day to engage with the community. • A brief overview was provided of the Future Forward event on 09/10/2026, which has been streamlined to deliver faster, high impact content. The program will feature commercial real estate updates, development authority updates, and a presentation from Google.
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Calendar of Events

Discussion	Rick Evans provided an overview of the upcoming calendar of events. • September 09, 2026, Property Development Committee - 8:00 a.m. • September 09, 2026, Existing Business & Workforce Committee - 9:00 a.m. • September 15, 2026, Executive Committee Meeting - 8:00 a.m. • September 23, 2026, Board Meeting - 8:00 a.m.
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Executive Session

Chairman, Rick Evans called for a motion to enter executive session at 8:19.
Motion: Jean Garniewicz 2nd: Jim Cox Motion carries unanimously (9-0)

Chairman, Rick Evans called for a motion to exit executive session at 9:19.
Motion: Rick Toole 2nd: Mark Herbert Motion carries unanimously (9-0)

After exiting Executive Session, Chris Driver reported that a property matter was discussed. No vote was taken during Executive Session. A vote will be taken in open session regarding an MOU, a related acquisition of property, and a related IGA with the county.

Motion #1

Chairman Rick Evans called for a motion regarding the MOU.

Jim Cox made a motioned to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with Kinetic Infrastructure Solutions, LLC, or its assignee, for the development incentive program contemplated therein, and to approve the related acquisition of the following tax parcels: 018 006, 019 003, 019 002B, 019 002C, 019 002A, 019 002, 019 001, 028 026, 028 026E, 028 026B, 028 026C, 028 027L, 028 027I, 028 027J, 028 027K, 028 027M, 028 027N, 028 027Q, 028 027O, 028 027H, 028 027F, 028 027, 029 057, 029 037B, 029 036, 029 038. The acquisition of such property shall be at no cost to the Development Authority and shall be subject to approval of the Intergovernmental Agreement between the Development Authority and Columbia County, Georgia, regarding the use of associated bond fees.

He further moved to authorize the Chairman and the Executive Director, acting individually or jointly, to negotiate, execute, and deliver all agreements and documents necessary or desirable to effectuate the Memorandum of Understanding, the property acquisition, and the development incentive program, including all closing documents and related instruments.

Motion was 2nd by Jean Garniewicz

Continue Executive Session

Before voting on Motion #1, **Stan Shepherd read the following statement** for inclusion in the minutes as part of his effort to ensure transparency. He stated that, for the sake of transparency, he wished to note that after the legal guidance provided for the minutes, this statement pertains to this vote and to any other vote this body takes this morning.

" For the record, I wish to disclose that I am employed by AT&T. AT&T is not a party to the bond transaction before the authority. It is possible that AT&T, along with other telecommunications providers, may have a competitive opportunity to provide services to the data center facility. I have had no involvement in sales activity related to the project, nor have I shared any information with AT&T personnel. I do not believe I have a disqualifying conflict of interest, but I make this disclosure in the interest of transparency. Also, would like to point out that if AT&T were to win a bid in the future, I have no personal financial gain in such transaction."

Kerry Bridges stated for the record that he would like it to reflect that he is recusing himself from this vote due to his role at Georgia Power Company.

After the above statement and recusal (Kerry Bridges), the Chairman noted that a first and a second were already on the floor and asked if all were in favor of the motion.

Motion #1, carried 8-0, with one recusal.

Motion #2

Chairman Rick Evans called for a motion on the intergovernmental agreement with Columbia County.

Rick Toole motioned to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with Columbia County, Georgia, regarding the use of bond fees associated with the Memorandum of Understanding previously approved by the Authority, and to authorize the Chairman and the Executive Director, acting individually or jointly, to execute and deliver the Intergovernmental Agreement and any related documents necessary to implement its terms.

Motion was 2nd by Jim Cox

Kerry Bridges stated again for the record that he would like it to reflect that he is recusing himself from this vote due to his role at Georgia Power Company.

Stan Shepherd stated for the record that his previous statement stands for the IGA motion as well.

Motion #2, carried 8-0, with one recusal.



Adjournment		
Conclusions	The Chairman expressed appreciation to the board, staff, and partners for their work on the project, noting that while significant progress has been made, much remains to be done. He acknowledged the efforts of Chris and Cheney and thanked the board members for their patience throughout the process of finalizing the agreement. He emphasized the importance of the actions taken during the meeting and recognized this as a major step forward. Chairman, Rick Evans calls for a motion to adjourn the August 26, 2026, EDACC board meeting at 9:28 a.m. Motioned: Mark Wills 2nd: Jean Garniewicz Motion carries unanimously (9-0)	
Next meeting: September 23, 2026		All