

Board Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2026
20 Doyle Street, Toccoa, GA

Attending: Brian Akin, Evan Hellenga, Rick Phillips, Chris Rickman, Cassandra Wilkins, Fredda Wheeler, Christian Hamilton, Janney Sanders, Chad Dorsett, Milton Seabolt, Brittany Ivey, & Sadie Hawkins

Chairman Brian Akin called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Sanders opened with prayer. Akin led the Pledge of Allegiance and read the confidentiality & conflict of interest statement.

A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented, [Hellenga:Phillips]. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made to approve the January 21, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes, [Phillips:Wilkins]. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made to approve the January financials as presented, [Wilkins:Hellenga]. All in favor; none opposed.

Board Action Items:

A motion was made to approve opening a \$275,000 CD with 3.85% interest for 13 months at Oconee Federal Savings & Loan and to authorize the Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and President to sign, [Phillips:Rickman]. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made to grant a variance to allow AK Ventures to put a sign advertising Havenbloom on HBBP property from now until 6 months into their leasing process, [Rickman:Hellenga]. All in favor; none opposed. Phillips recused himself.

Program Updates/Reports:

Attraction: Ivey shared that Project Friend is not moving forward. Ivey, Akin & Phillips are meeting with Project Grow on Friday. Project Max is progressing rapidly. The City is working with Norfolk Southern to get a parking lease agreement and work on a plan for the erosion issues on Railroad Street.

Existing Industry: PakPro is at record employment, operating two shifts, and adding a third. Viesain Pharma is working on finalizing an agreement with Hartwell Rail for FDA required maintenance on their right of way that touches the building. Sark Wire continues trying to work through expediting work visas as they add new equipment.

Product Development: The Freeman Creek Lift Station is operational. No official update on the Memorial Drive PUD. SCDA will begin GRAD recertification using the \$15,000 grant, targeting completion by late March or April.

President's Report:

Ivey shared that after sharing SCDA's apartment availability it still remains vacant and available for short or long-term rental. Akin suggested listing it on Zillow or VRBO. Sadie will manage that listing.

Workforce Development: Belmont Place has one home available, with additional lots graded for construction. Manufacturing Challenge planning has started. SCDA took 12 Advancement Academy students to tour Piedmont University and TFC. A Discovery Tour for 40 educators is set for March 13. Ivey encouraged the board and WNEG to attend tours that day.

Recruit New Industry: Ivey attended the Blue Ridge Connector Panel for updates on the inland port opening in April.

Input from Others: Hamilton reported the County is in budget season, with public safety a priority. Wheeler stated the City is also in budget season, focusing on a new water treatment plant, and noted the City has met with Norfolk Southern regarding Project MAX. Ivey shared Chamber updates, including Leadership Graduation (Feb. 26), Toccoa-Stephens County Day at the Capitol (March 12), Post-Legislative Chat (April 16), Golf Classic (May 12), a planned town hall meeting for seats on the upcoming ballot, and progress in the search for a new Chamber President. Phillips reported the hospital awards banquet is Feb. 26, with a new CFO starting March 16. Sanders is working to release KTX's option on 10 acres in HBBP.

Executive Session: A motion was made to enter Executive Session for the discussion of real estate matters as provided by O.C.G.A 50-14-3(4) at 8:07 a.m., [Phillips:Wilkins]. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made to exit Executive Session at 8:10 a.m., [Phillips:Rickman]. All in favor; none opposed.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 a.m., [Phillips:Wilkins]. All in favor; none opposed.

Submitted By:

Attested By:

Brian Akin, Chairman

Brittany W. Ivey, President/CEO