



REGULAR MEETING Minutes
WWDA Board of Directors
February 4, 2026
9:00 A.M.
2855 Forest Drive
Waycross, Ga 31503

Board Members Present:

Daniel Morris
Rusty Hall
James Willis
Stephen Burse
Kim Bennett-Callahan
Dan Good

Guests Present:

Mittie Vaughan
Hillary Stringfellow
Kimberly Burgess

Guests Present: (cont)

Taylor Hereford
Lonnie Roberts

Board Members Present via Teleconference:

Brian Jackson

Staff Members Present

Jason Rubenbauer
Frances Golder

Board Members Absent:

Michael-Angelo James

• **Call to Order**

Chairman Daniel Morris called February 4, 2026, to order at 9:05 A.M.

• **Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman Daniel Morris provided the invocation and led the board in the pledge of allegiance.

• **Approval of Agenda**

Rusty Hall motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Stephen Burse seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

• **Approval of Minutes**

- Regular Meeting January 7, 2026

James Willis motioned to approve the January 7th meeting minutes as presented. Dan Good seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

• **Approval of Financial Reports**

- January 31, 2026

Jason Rubenbauer presented January 31, 2026, financial reports, emphasizing that the Authority remains in good standing. In quick summation Mr. Rubenbauer reported that everything is as expected for the end of the year report with Hillary Stringfellow's hard work on the GATX bonds and the selling of the Victory Drive property. The Authority's expenses are also aligned with expectations. Chairman Daniel Morris inquired about SPLOST utilization to which Mr. Rubenbauer explained that it will be utilized to continue land developing and site readiness for development. Mr. Rubenbauer expressed the need to be conscientious about utilization of tax dollars. Mr. Rubenbauer also expressed the Authority's fiscal



responsibility in making double loan payments on the fore CF Rail property note as the board had previously advised. With no further questions or concerns, Dan Good motioned to approve the financial reports as presented. James Willis seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.

- **Community Reports**

- Waycross-Ware County Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Waycross Development Authority
- Waycross Convention & Visitors Bureau

- **Waycross-Ware County Chamber of Commerce**

Jason Rubenbauer stated that the Chamber has been tasked with working with the Okefenokee Partnership because they have Okefenokee Day Tuesday February 10, 2026, so Mrs. Suzanna Woodall was unable to attend but sends her apologies.

- **Coastal Pines Technical College**

Lonnie Roberts introduces Kimberly Burgess as the Vice President for Economic Development at Coastal Pines Technical College, replacing Pete Snell who retired at the end of 2025. Mr. Roberts reports that enrollment at Coastal Pines Technical College is up 4.4% from last year, but they are still doing regular and dual enrollment. Enrollment is finally at pre-Covid levels, and they remain optimistic. The college has a 99.8% placement rate. 95.3% of graduates went to work in the field for which they were trained. He underlines the positive impact that the College has in the community. He would also like to point out that the college has an articulation agreement with Mercer University, so it is easier for students to transfer their credits to that University.

- **South Ga. State College**

Taylor Hereford reports that enrollment at South Georgia State College is up 2.7% over last year, but more importantly enrollment in Waycross is up 16% over last year. He also reports that he can share weekly reports on enrollment trends with the board. He also reports that the basketball team is doing well and will now hold all the home games on Saturday.

- **Ware County Board of Education**

Kim Bennett-Callahan announced that Ware County High School will be having Mock Interview Day, so if any of the board members were interested in participating it would be held for 10th graders at the high school on Wednesday February 25th, 2026, beginning at 8:30 am.

- **Old Business**

- **Site Development Initiative Survey and Due Diligence Grant (GRAD Scholarship)**

Application Update- The WWDA was awarded the scholarship in the amount of \$161,500. We were 1 of 4 counties to receive this award and we received the highest amount. This money is used to renew all GRAD surveys required. This includes renewing wetlands, endangered species, historic artifacts and Phase I environmental surveys and our first geotechnical survey. Jason Rubenbauer informed the board that once these are completed, we can apply for the Rural Development Grant, which could award us up to \$2,000,000, and in turn help us put the infrastructure in place to be shovel ready. This is just phase I of the complete project. Mr.



Rubenbauer expressed his gratitude to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Governor's office.

- **Presentation, discussion, and request for action on the submitted proposals for annual audit services.** Jason Rubenbauer presented to the board the six audit bid proposals that were presented by the close of bidding on Friday, January 30, 2026, at 5:00 P.M. After the board did a complete review of all bids Stephen Burse made a motion to accept the lowest bid of \$9,075 annually made by McNair, McLemore, Middlebrooks and Company, on the condition that they extend the term of the contract to 5 years. James Willis seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.
- **New Business**
 - **Presentation, discussion, and request for action for the replacement of the 2017 Ford Explorer.** Jason Rubenbauer noted that although he remains fiscally conservative, the Board's recent trip to Atlanta for the 2026 Legislative Eggs and Issues event demonstrated the practical need for a larger, more efficient vehicle. Traveling together is the most economical option; however, the current vehicle cannot accommodate group travel and is also significantly older and less fuel-efficient. For these reasons, he stated that replacing the vehicle is a responsible and cost-effective decision. The board took a small recess to look over Mrs. Hillary Stringfellow's Ford Explorer Max. The discussion was put on hold pending an estimate to purchase a Ford Explorer Max.
 - **Presentation, discussion, and request for action for the replacement of the failed backflow preventer at 2969 Industrial Blvd.** Jason Rubenbauer presented the board with an issue of the leaky and failed plumbing fixture. The leak is substantial and replacement is of paramount importance. James Willis made a motion to proceed with repairs. It was seconded by Rusty Hall. All present members voted aye and the motion passed unanimously.
- **Attorney's Items**
 - Hillary Stringfellow—Gilbert, Harrell, Sumerford & Martin, P.C.
Hillary Stringfellow reported that she sent a list of investments available to a constitutional development authority with the powers of a public corporation to members of the board for their review. She again stated that a committee needs to be formed.
She advised the board that Jason Rubenbauer needed to be added as a signer as well as the four board officers, for the DCA scholarship grant so the funds may be readily accessible when needed. Jason Rubenbauer added that it needed to go through Waycross Bank and Trust since that account already exists. Dan Good made the motion to move forward as presented and Stephen Burse seconded. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously.
- **President's Report—Jason Rubenbauer**
Jason made his report that we are extremely busy right now with prospects. He also asks visitors to please make sure to RSVP to the meeting emails to ensure that we have enough room or can move the



meeting to the bigger room. On that note, the Chairman asked if we were set up in there to do remote meetings. He asked Jason to purchase a large TV to keep in the other room to accommodate more visitors, without too much moving heavy equipment.

- **Chairman’s Report—Daniel Morris**

The Chairman would like to thank the board members for attending Eggs and Issues. He believes Waycross and Ware County gained substantial ground and were noticed in a positive light by legislators and other industries that were there.

- **Executive Session**

- For discussion of land/lease and acquisition matters pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(b)(1)(B)
With no more business to be discussed in regular session Dan Good motioned to enter executive session. Rusty Hall seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously. The board entered executive session at 9:55A.M.

With no more business to discuss in executive session Dan Good motioned to enter back into regular session. Rusty Hall seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously. The board entered back into regular session at 10:14 A.M.

- **Adjournment**

Rusty Hall asked a question about the previously discussed vehicle purchase. He mentioned that we may want to also look into lease options. Jason Rubenbauer stated he would definitely look into those options. Chairman Daniel Morris provided clarifying instructions that Jason would return to the board with additional information related to a new Ford Expedition Max, 2WD, with a bench seat in the second row or an equivalent that provided for 3 and 5-year lease options, and purchase options with, and without the trade of the 2017 Explorer. Chairman Morris further stated that it would be a good idea to receive NADA trade values from several banks in the area on our proposed trade.

With no more business to discuss, Rusty Hall motioned to adjourn. Stephen Burse seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously. Daniel Morris adjourned the February 4, 2026, meeting at 10:18 A.M.