GCEDD Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 22nd 2026

3555 Timmons Lane Houston Texas, 77027 Conference Room BC

Members Present: Mike Rozell, Carlos Guzman, Jimmy Henry, Andrew Van Chau, Dianna Grobe, Guy Robert Jackson, Lance Dean (Proxy), Courtland Holman, Stephanie Smith, Judge Jay Knight, Tiko Hausman (Proxy), Danielle Scheiner, Josh Owens(Proxy) and Jason Smith

Members Absent: David Hairel, Commissioner Kendric Jones, Chad Carson, B.J. Simon, Mike Ferdinand, Patti Worfe, Matt Buchanan, Becky Nutt, Gwen Tillotson, and Elizabeth Huff

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I. Call To Order

Andrew Van Chau called the meeting at 10:05 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Darryl Briscoe performed roll call and confirmed that a quorum was met.

II. Public Comment

No public comments were presented.

III. Action Items

- **Meeting Minutes**

The incorrect meeting minutes were provided. The November 5, 2025, meeting minutes will be presented at the next meeting for approval.

- **Financial Report**

Christina Ordóñez-Campos presented the financial reports for the periods ending December 31st, 2025, and March 31st, 2026.

Discussion:

- Jason Smith questioned the personnel expense increase from $28,672 (2025) to $119,573 (2026).
- Christina Ordóñez-Campos explained that Ronnie Barnes and Omar Fortune allocated additional funds to compensate employees who are directly involved with the GCEDD activities, both current and future.
- Omar Fortune clarified that within the Enterprise Solutions department, they tend to compensate staff according to the revenue that is available, which mainly comes from the Cooperative Purchasing team, but in the last year, there was an increase in the revenue available.
- Judge Rozell requested more detailed documentation showing where personnel funds are allocated, including employee hours and specific activities, for a better understanding of the significant increase in personnel expenses.

- Jason Smith referenced his previous concerns during a discussion on bylaws and how the funds should be used appropriately, and should avoid subsidizing employees from incorrect funding sources.
- Christina Ordóñez-Campo described H-GAC's robust payroll system that tracks time by funding source and explained that all district activities undergo annual audits to ensure proper allocation.
- Danielle Scheiner requested that large financial deltas be pre-explained in future reports.

Motion: Guy Robert Jackson motioned to table the December 31st, 2026, and March 31st, 2026, pending a detailed summary of the personnel expenses showing the hours allocated and activities performed. Jason Smith seconded the motion. **Motion passed**

- **Vote on amendment to GCEDD Bylaws**

Omar Fortune reviewed the proposed amendments to the GCEDD Bylaws, including changes to the signature authority, contracts and documents, and board roles.

Discussion:

- Judge Rozell asked whether the changes would affect board operations. Omar confirmed that they would not affect the board's receipt of information or its decision-making authority.
- Josh Owens suggested removing the specific list of cities from Article II, Section 3 of the bylaws and retaining only the criteria ($250 million+ in sales tax revenue), because listing specific cities would require amending the bylaws each time the list changes.
- Dianna Grobe proposed adding a requirement that qualifying cities must have at least one paid staff member dedicated to economic development, because she knows one city does not have such staff.
- Jason Smith suggested the language specify "at least one full-time paid employee dedicated to economic development" to ensure cities are actively engaged in economic development activities.
- The board discussed whether to include elected officials or require dedicated economic development staff, ultimately agreeing on requiring paid professional staff dedicated to economic development (Whether employed by the city, county, EDC, or contract).
- Jason Smith also proposed to amend Article 6, Section 6 to require a two-thirds majority vote (rather than a simple majority) to amend the bylaws.

Motion: Jason Smith moved to approve the bylaws with the amendments to:

1. Article II, Section 3: Remove the specific list of cities and add language requiring that qualifying cities must have at least one full-time paid employee dedicated to economic development activities.
2. Article VI, Section 6: Change the voting requirement from a majority vote to a two-thirds majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Mike Rozell seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- **Vote to approve the Executive Committee bylaws**

Omar Fortune presented the Executive Committee Bylaws for approval.

Discussion:

- Jason Smith asked for clarification on Article 2 regarding who serves as "President and Executive Director" and questioned the provision allowing the Executive Committee to "act on urgent matters requiring immediate attention with subsequent board ratification," expressing concern about potential scenarios where the board might not ratify actions already taken.
- Omar explained that this provision is intended for rare emergency cases (such as disaster response or time-sensitive grant applications) and the Executive Committee would act in the best interest of the full board.
- Darryl Briscoe provided context from three years prior when the district missed a grant opportunity because the full board could not be convened quickly enough to approve a letter of support.
- Jason Smith expressed concern about the broad language around "urgent matters" and suggested either limiting it to grant applications or striking the provision entirely and delegating specific tasks at a future meeting. He noted the provision already prohibits the Executive Committee from entering into contracts or making financial commitments.
- Daniele Scheiner and Josh Owens discussed various scenarios where expedited action might be needed.
- The board discussed striking everything after "full board" in Article 2 and creating a specific list of delegated authorities at the next meeting.
- Jason Smith also proposed amending Article 8 to require a two-thirds majority vote and removing "executive committee with approval of" so amendments require full board approval only.

Motion: Jason Smith moved to approve the Executive Committee Bylaws with the following amendments:

1. Under Article 2: Insert a period after full board and strike all language regarding acting on urgent matters and subsequent ratification.

2. Under Article 8: Change to require a two-thirds majority vote and remove "executive committee with approval of" so the bylaws may only be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Gulf Coast Economic Development District Board/

Danielle Scheiner seconded the motion. Motion passed.

- **Vote to Approve Loan Write Off Policy**

Christina Cornelius reviewed the proposed Loan Defaults and Write-Offs policy, which establishes a criterion of:

- Loans in default for 12 months without communication or payment will be moved to bad debt status.
- Loans in default for 24 months will be considered for full write-off.
- At the beginning of each fiscal year, the finance team will propose bad debt write-offs for board approval.

Discussion:

- Jason Smith asked whether this is a new policy or an addition to the existing policy. Christina confirmed it is an additional formalization of the write-off process.
- Jason Smith asked about collection efforts prior to write-off, including potential legal action and asset seizure.
- Christina Cornelius explained that legal collection costs often exceed recoverable amounts. Current collection efforts include monthly calls from loan servicers, implementing easier payment methods, and procuring credit reporting software. She noted that threatening credit reporting results in increased payments.
- Omar Fortune added that the credit reporting software (Credit Builders Alliance) is currently being vetted by H-GAC's data services team.
- Jason Smith suggested future revisions should ensure personal guarantees are required and that late payments (not just defaults) are reported to credit bureaus, as this creates a stronger incentive for business owners to remain current.
- The board discussed potentially selling loan portfolios (performing and non-performing) on the secondary market to free up capital for additional lending. Jason Smith recommended contacting the Bankers Bank in Dallas, which specializes in such transactions.

Motion: Jason Smith motioned to approve the Loan Write-Off Policy as presented. Danielle Scheiner seconded. Motion passed.

IV. Information

- For the sake of time, the information section was skipped to allow for our guest presenters to speak.
- **Board Updates**
  - Darryl Briscoe provided updates on staff activities and broadband activities to the board.
- Loan Program Report
  - Christina Cornelius provided a report on the Loan Program.

V. Committee updates

- Executive Committee Update
  - Darryl Briscoe provided an update regarding the executive committee
- CEDS Committee Update
  - Darryl Briscoe provided an update regarding the CEDS Committee
- Small Business Committee Update
  - Darryl Briscoe provided an update on the Small Business Committee

VI. Presentations

- Due to time, we did not have a presentation from Workforce Solutions.
- **H-GAC's participation in the FIFA World Cup**
  - Tricia Bentley discussed H-GAC's coordination efforts for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, including:
    - Seven World Cup matches hosted in Houston from June 14-July 4, 2026.
    - There are overlapping events such as Fan Fest in East Downtown, Houston Astros home games, and July 4th celebrations for America's 250th anniversary.
    - H-GAC's role in regional coordination for public safety, transportation/mobility, emergency preparedness, and environmental sustainability.
    - Transportation modeling and contingency planning efforts
    - The "What's Your Game Plan?" commuter outreach campaign (commutegameplan.com).
    - Emergency management workshops and coordination with retail businesses on suspicious activity reporting.
    - Air quality monitoring along the 14-mile Green Corridor between NRG Park and Fan Fest.
  - A board member asked about procurement opportunities for small businesses. Brandy Guidry noted that most procurement deadlines have already passed,

but information is available on the Houston FIFA website. A business continuity employer worksheet will be distributed to help businesses plan for the event.

- Nuclear Energy Consortium
  - Dr. Monica Cortez, Director of Business Operations for the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC), presented on:
    - TMAC's role as the second-largest National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) MEP Center in the U.S., supporting small and medium-sized manufacturers.
    - The Texas Consortium for Fusion Energy and fusion energy's potential to provide 3-5 times more power than fission with zero greenhouse gas emissions.
    - Global fusion energy investments exceeding $10 billion.
    - Governor Abbott's Texas House Bill 14 establishing the Texas Advanced Nuclear Energy Office (TANEO) and the $350 million Texas Advanced Nuclear Development Fund (applications due May 14, 2026)
    - Upcoming technical workshops at the University of Houston (Early May) and Texas A&M.
  - Dr. Cortez emphasized the importance of partnerships between industry, academia, and government to accelerate Texas's energy leadership.

VII. Other

- **General Updates**
  - Darryl Briscoe provided additional updates:
    - Ongoing discussions regarding Brownfields initiatives and CDFI conversations for small business support.
    - Six EDA projects submitted from the region with letters of alignment.
    - Three additional committee projects have been submitted (Pasadena, Fort Bend, and Bolivar Peninsula).

- **Other Updates**
  - CEDS Committee Meeting: May 6, 2026
  - Small Business Committee Meeting: May 13, 2026
  - Next GCEDD Board Meeting: July 22, 2026 (In-Person)
  - Brandy Guidry announced a National Apprenticeship Week event on May 1st at H-GAC, with registration information to be distributed.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

Andrew Van Chau asked the board's preference on receiving copies of letters of support for projects. The consensus was that letters do not need to be distributed routinely but will be available upon request.

VIII.

VIII. Closing Remarks

- Andrew Van Chau thanked the board members for their diligence in reviewing materials and participating in thorough discussions. He encouraged members to contact Darryl Briscoe with any topics for future agendas.

IX. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 PM by Andrew Van Chau

GULF COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT