GCEDD Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 5th 2025
3555 Timmons Lane Houston Texas, 77027
Conference Room BC

Members Present: Mike Rozell (Proxy - Andrew Van Chau), Carlos Guzman, Dianna Grobe, Guy Robert Jackson, Lance Dean, Courtland Holman, Judge Jay Knight, Elizabeth Huff, Danielle Scheiner, Commissioner Kendric Jones, and Jason Smith

Members Absent: David Hairel, Jimmy Henry, Chad Carson, B.J. Simon, Mike Ferdinand, Patti Worfe, Stephanie Smith, Tiko Hausman, Lance LaCour, Matt Buchanan, Becky Nutt, and Gwen Tillotson

Andrew Van Chau commenced 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.

I. Public Comment

- Molly Eskelson was promoting Houston Area GIS Day. Professional workshops, Expo, and Student Event from November 19-21, 2025. Cost is $20.
- Andrew Van Chau inquired whether additional event information was available on the website (Flyers in person and on website).

II. Action Items

Approval of Minutes

- Guy Robert Jackson motioned to approve the July 23, 2025 meeting minutes. Lance Dean seconded the motion.
  Motion carried, and board minutes approved for the July 23rd meeting.

Financial Report

- Gilda Mendoza presented the financial report for the period ending September 30, 2025.

Discussion:

- Guy Robert Jackson inquired about the potential impacts of the federal government shutdown on program funding.
- Omar Fortune confirmed that no funds listed on the financials were in jeopardy, and noted that the organization is in the process of certifying as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI).
- Guy Robert Jackson motioned to approve the financial report. Elizabeth Huff seconded. The motion carried; the financial report was approved.

Amendment to GCEDD Bylaws

- Omar Fortune stated that the Board did not issue the required ten-day notice to allow adequate review of the proposed amendment to the GCEDD Bylaws. Therefore, this item will be tabled until the next meeting.

a. Jason Smith questioned if the other necessary revisions that were needed had been completed.
b. Guy Robert Jackson requested clarification on specific changes.
c. William Matthews was present to address any questions deferred to the Board's decision to postpone discussion until proper notice could be issued.

III. Information

Board Updates – Darryl Briscoe

d. Welcomed Danielle Shiner, representing the Greater Houston Partnership, who has rejoined the Board as a regional representative.
e. The GCEDD continues to work toward filling all open Board seats, including representation from Chambers County and Galveston County.
    - The Board discussed representation changes for Chambers County, confirming that Guy Robert Jackson serves as the official delegate. Staff will coordinate formal documentation to update records. The Galveston County seat remains vacant pending a new appointment.
f. Five CEDS recommendation letters were submitted through the region for entities applying to the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Due to the ongoing federal government shutdown, EDA application reviews are currently paused.
g. GCEDD plans to pursue additional EDA grant opportunities once operations resume.

FIFA World Cup 2026 Planning

h. FIFA World Cup 2026, HGAC is a part of the planning commission, and how the departments will work together.
    - H-GAC will be participating in the air quality team, transportation, traffic, safety and security, and economic development, and is looking at ways to help small businesses capitalize on the increased tourism.
    - Looking at ways for the community to decrease travelling as much during the event, potentially work from home, and rideshare to reduce congestion, etc.
i. Darryl Briscoe provided an update on the broadband grant application for rural areas, addressing resiliency challenges. The region is working collaboratively to identify priority projects, with submissions expected by the end of the month.
j. The Broadband RFQ is currently under review to determine potential revisions before being released to internet service providers.
    - Andrew Van Chau asked about the strategic approach to the RFQ.

- Darryl Briscoe stated that the goal is to develop a shortlist of qualified broadband service providers to alleviate administrative burden on local communities.

k. Christina Corenlius provided an update on the current lending capacity available:
   - Fort Bend County Fund: $381,719
   - Cares 2: $84,605.50
   - Cares 1: $121,499
   - Regular RLF: $195,067
   - Total available to lend is $587,822.

IV. Presentations

Workforce Solutions – Presented by Ron Borski

- Provided updates on the current workforce trends and regional industry data.
  - Andrew Van Chau asked whether there is any identified skills gap contributing to hiring challenges.
  - The Board discussed the growing influence of artificial intelligence (AI) on workforce trends, particularly the displacement of clerical and technical roles. Members highlighted the need for targeted training programs in skilled trades, CDL licensing, and biotechnology manufacturing to address workforce shortages.

Texas PACE – Charlene Heydinger

- Discussed opportunities for Unlocking Capital for Resilient Growth, emphasizing that the program remains underutilized in the region.
- Ms. Heydinger requested Board assistance in promoting awareness of the Texas PACE program through local chambers, Rotary clubs, and EDCs, emphasizing that it is a no-cost tool for local governments.

Board Member Community Spotlight from City of Sugarland – Elizabeth Huff

- Shared community updates from Sugar Land.
- Ms. Huff announced that the City of Sugar Land secured an exclusive regional sponsorship with the Houston Host Committee for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and plans to host public watch parties at Sugar Land Town Square.
- Noted that FIFA World Cup matches in Houston will occur every three days and may impact local economic activity and infrastructure planning.

V. Other

General Staff Updates

- Darryl discussed coordination efforts between GCEDD and Harita to conduct an upcoming meeting.

VI. Staff reported attendance at various professional conferences and regional development events.

VII. **Other Business**

- The Board discussed creating a formal process for issuing letters of support to local companies seeking assistance from GCEDD for mergers, expansions, or grant applications. No action was taken.

VIII. **Closing Remarks**

- Mr. Van Chau reminded members of the importance of attendance and early scheduling. Mr. Jackson noted that members may assign proxies in writing to ensure a quorum at future meetings.

IX. **Next Meeting**

- The next meeting will be held in 2026, and the calendar will be distributed by the end of the year. Committee meetings will be scheduled accordingly.

X. **Adjournment**

- A motion to adjourn was made by Elizabeth Huff and seconded by Carlos Guzman. The meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

GULF COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT