

Technology & Entrepreneurship Advisory Board  
Minutes - December 18, 2025

1. Call to Order: Chairman Richardson called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.
2. Roll Call: Chairman Richardson; Directors Boman, Pearson, and Rodriguez were present. Directors Ritchie, Rhoades, and Kennedy were absent.

Staff: Holly Wharton – Economic Development Director, Trey Hildebrand – IT Manager, and Christine Sewell – Recording Clerk

3. Citizens with Input – None
4. Guests and Speakers – None
5. New Business

- a. Approve November 20, 2025, Minutes

Director Pearson motioned to approve as presented; Director Rodriguez seconded; all in favor, and the motion was unanimously approved.

- b. Approve November 2025 Financials

Director Pearson motioned to approve as presented; Director Boman seconded; all in favor, and the motion was unanimously approved.

- c. 2026 Startup Summit Program Planning

Ms. Wharton provided a draft of the event program scheduled for February 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The proposal outlined topics, speakers, and times was reviewed and requested for input. The board liked the proposed concept for the event, and the outline presented and noted there was a variety of topics and the structure allowed attendees to choose what they would like to attend and receive information on. Chairman Richardson was asked to be the keynote speaker, which he accepted, and Director Pearson will also present. Ms. Wharton also provided details on associated costs and noted this event will not require as many sponsorships. Ms. Wharton advised she had a bank reach out asking to be a sponsor, but with the request that they be the only one; the board requested this not be done and allow everyone an opportunity on a first come first serve basis. Ms. Wharton advised marketing will begin in the new year.

- d. 2026 Speaker Series Program Planning

Director Boman suggested a program on agriculture with representatives from USDA, Georgia Grown; the board concurred. Director Boman advised there are numerous resources for homesteading and farming and would reach out to a local farmer who utilized the program(s) and have as a guest. Ms. Wharton asked for

which month; it was decided in March, and forgo one in January to allow for preparation. Director Pearson suggested making a teaser at the summit to garner interest. For future topics, Director Pearson suggested a poll possibly at the summit; Director Boman suggested non-profits and AI.

6. Staff Items

- a. Monthly Updates – Ms. Wharton advised Georgia Tech was awarded a grant for Georgia Arts & Innovative Communities and has chosen Perry as a host location. The online Business Blueprint Entrepreneurship online training has not been utilized as expected, and perhaps more time is needed, and the SBC will be offering theirs in the near future and is requesting the board's input on how to proceed; it was requested for the January meeting to bring back usage data for further discussion.

7. Member Items – Dr. Rodriguez advised of an upcoming regional fruit and vegetable conference in Savannah and it's anticipated AI companies will be in attendance. Chairman Richardson advised the Middle Georgia AIM grant is in its' fourth year and Georgia Tech reached out about a statewide “think tank” to better support veterans' entrepreneurship.

8. Adjourn: there being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 pm.