

# Columbus Sports & Entertainment Authority

## Organizational Meeting

### Minutes

December 8, 2025, • 2:00 pm

Columbus Civic Center, Hospitality Suites

400 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbus, GA 31901

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#### ATTENDANCE:

Voting Members Present – Andy G. Luker (Chair), Ashley Woitena (Secretary), Herman E. Lewis, Jr (Treasurer), Mike Welch, Morgan Moore and Gerald Miley

Voting Members Absent – Robert L. Wadkins Jr. (Vice Chair), Will Taylor and Charles Jim Rutland

Ex-Officio Members Present – Deputy City Manager Lisa Goodwin, Director Holli Browder, Director Ryan Pruitt, Lt. Kelly Phillips, Charles Auer, and Jeff Croop

Ex-Officio Members Absent – Director Forrest Toelle

Visitor(s) Present: Deputy City Manager Pam Hodge, Assistant City Attorney Lucy Sheftall, Clerk of Council Lindsey McClemore, and City Councils

#### 1. Call to Order

Chair Andy Luker called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM.

Minutes for November 10, 2025, approved.

- *Minor change to minutes = Secretary Ashley 'Wotenia' to 'Woitena'*

#### 2. Roll Call

- Authority Department Secretary – Zeanne Abano, Civic Center

#### 3. New Business

- **Clarifying Authority's Purpose and Executive Director Role:**

- No vote required to excuse absent members, verbal acknowledgement sufficient.
- Non-voting members cannot send substitutes in their absence.
- Sports and Entertainment Authority created to consolidate and improve facility management efficiency and profitability.
- Executive Director position proposed to oversee all sports and entertainment facilities; no operational or staffing changes planned.

- **Facility Oversight: Liberty Theater, Civic Center, South Commons:**

- Liberty Theater currently closed for renovations and construction
- Operating structure and management model for Liberty Theater remained undecided; council holds authority.

- iii. Liberty Theater is temporarily managed under Civic Center; final responsibility lies with council.
  - iv. Confusion exists regarding authority and reporting structure between Civic Center, Liberty Theater, and other facilities.
  - v. Council and advisory board continue discussion to clarify management, transparency, and operational intentions.
- **Strategic Planning, Mission Statement, and Financials:**
  - i. Executive director position identified as key for authority operations and collaboration.
  - ii. MOUs to be developed with Parks & Rec, Sports Council, and other entities for South Commons.
  - iii. Authority executive to assume functions of former Civic Center director and coordinate with City Departments.
  - iv. *Short-term Goal:* to hire executive director; *Long-term Goal:* to achieve financial self-sustainability (operate in the black).
  - v. Mission Statement and Strategic Vision to be developed; 2-3-year MOU with Parks & Rec proposed for operational continuity.
- **Governance, Bylaws, and Conflict of Interest:**
  - i. Ordinance and bylaws define authority structure; ordinance is difficult to change.
  - ii. Job description for executive director unclear, especially regarding Liberty Theater and other facilities.
  - iii. Authority over A.J McClung Stadium and South Commons facilities remains with Parks & Rec; executive director role involves collaboration, not direct control.
  - iv. Collaboration with other entities through memorandums of understanding is expected; operational clarity may take 2-3 years.
  - v. Success depends on hiring the right executive director to coordinate with city and facility leaders.
- **Facility Preservation, Subcommittees, and Next Steps:**
  - i. Council discussed need for a subcommittee focused on facility preservation and strategic planning.
  - ii. Current funding (TAD Dollars) for A.J McClung Stadium is insufficient; alternative revenue sources are required.
  - iii. Golf authority previously identified 90% of assets as outdated; strategic upgrades improved financial performance.
  - iv. Emphasis is placed on hiring the right director and using a search firm for best candidate selection.
  - v. Next meeting to review job description and discuss future vision for facilities.

#### 4. Old Business

- **Bylaws:** No Changes; will bring up to next meeting
- **A.J McClung Stadium and South Commons Facility Tour Schedule:** Andy Luker (Chair) will send out three (3) available dates for board members to tour the facility and set the schedule by January meeting.
- **Monthly Board Meeting:** The schedule has been changed *from 2:00 pm to 1:00 pm, every second Monday of every month.*

#### 5. Public Comment – *NONE*

#### 6. Adjournment – *Meeting adjourned at 3:18 pm, Mike Welch*

**Minutes Recorded by:** Zeanne Abano, Civic Center, Authority Department Secretary

*Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2026, at 1:00 pm,*

*Columbus Civic Center Hospitality Suites, 400 4<sup>th</sup> St Columbus, GA 31901*