APPROVED
04.20.26

GEORGIA TRAUMA COMMISSION

Georgia Trauma Commission Finance & Budget Committee

March 16, 2026
Meeting Minutes
[Meeting Documents Link]
Zoom Meeting

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT	COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT
Pete Quinones, Chair, GTC Secretary/Treasurer	Dr. James Dunne, GTC Member
Dr. Dennis Ashley, GTC Chair	
Courtney Terwilliger, GTC Member	
Jesse Gibson, Northeast Georgia Medical Center	

OTHERS PRESENT	REPRESENTING
Elizabeth Atkins	GTC, Executive Director
Gina Solomon	GTC, GQIP Director
Crystal Shelnutt	GTC, Regional Trauma Systems Development Mgr
Katie Vaughan	GTC, Finance Operations Officer
Gabriela Saye	GTC, Business Operations Mgr
Cheryle Ward	Georgia Trauma Foundation, Executive Director
Ninfa Saunders	Georgia Trauma Foundation, Board Member
Jeffrey Myers	Georgia Trauma Foundation, Board Member

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting commenced at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, March 16, with four committee members present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Presented by Pete Quinones

With quorum established, Pete Quinones requested a motion to approve the January 16 and February 16, 2026, meeting minutes.

> **MOTION GTCNC FINANCE COMMITTEE 2026-03-01:**
> **Motion to approve the January 16, 2026, and February 16, 2026, meeting minutes as submitted**
> **MOTION BY**: Dr. James Dunne
> **SECOND BY:** Courtney Terwilliger
> **VOTING:** All members are in favor of the motion.
> **ACTION:** The motion ***PASSED*** with no objections nor abstentions

FINANCE & BUDGET ITEMS

Presented by Katie Vaughan

Katie provided the finance update (**ATTACHMENT A**), including the review of expenses through February

2026. She noted that preparations for the FY2027 budget are underway, including adjustments for operational cost increases and subscription expansions, such as Adobe licenses. She explained that trauma center expenses are pending biannual readiness invoices, which will increase the line item once processed. Super Speeder and fireworks revenues are trending below the FY2025 February amounts. Additional supporting documents were included in the packet, including the budget timeline and trust fund statement. No questions were raised by Committee members.

FY2027 PRELIMINARY BUDGET REVIEW

Presented by Katie Vaughan

There was no old business to report, and the meeting transitioned into new business. Katie provided an update on the preliminary FY2027 budget (**ATTACHMENT B**). She emphasized that it was initially based on prior-year figures and has since been updated with the governor's proposed $31 million allocation. The budget also includes updated funding, including for the Rural Interactive Trauma Simulation (RITS) program and ArborMetrix. She reminded Committee members that this is a working draft and does not require a vote at this time. It was also clarified that firework revenue projections are placeholders based on prior-year data and are subject to change.

Courtney Terwilliger asked whether there were any updates on the Foundation grant distributions addressed at the prior meeting. Katie confirmed that the Foundation leadership will join the meeting to review questions.

GEORGIA QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (GQIP) FY2027 PROPOSED BUDGET

Presented by Gina Solomon

Gina Solomon reviewed the FY2027 GQIP proposed budget (**ATTACHMENT C),** noting an overall 11% increase. Updates included:

- 4% Emory physician salary increase
- Adjusted compensation for a projected Year 4 research resident, which is funded at 80% salary and fringe.
- Slight increase in the GQIP Medical Director travel budget
- ESO software platform annual increase
- The ArborMetrix platform updated costs, including maintenance and expansion of measures.

It was also noted that the TQIP Medical Director position is currently vacant, which could lower the budget if it remains unfilled.

Discussion focused on the utilization and value of the ArborMetrix platform. Gina noted that about 120 users currently have access across the participating centers. Login data can be tracked, but actual usage is difficult to capture.

To improve engagement, GQIP is:

- Exploring ways to increase platform value for Level III and Level IV centers
- Shifting toward a push model, distributing data via secure email rather than relying solely on users to access the platform

Discussion emphasized the importance of improving data quality and timeliness. The group highlighted:

- Limitations of national benchmarking data
- The value of developing more localized, real-time performance insights
- Interest in aligning with more advanced benchmarking models used in other regions
- Challenges related to smaller-volume centers and data consistency

Potential areas of growth include:

- Expanding data inclusion across more center types
- Exploring additional datasets while maintaining strong data quality controls

Members raised questions about return on investment, emphasizing rising platform costs and the need to ensure meaningful output from the system. Data quality control was identified as critical to maintaining the integrity of benchmarking efforts.

GEORGIA TRAUMA FOUNDATION FY2027 PROPOSED BUDGET

The discussion shifted to Georgia Trauma Foundation representatives, who were invited to review the Georgia Trauma Foundation FY2027 proposal (**ATTACHMENT D**). Questions were raised about the relationship between the requested funding amount and the level of grant distribution. In response, it was clarified that commission funds support operational expenses, while grant awards are funded separately through fundraising and external contributions. Recent grant distributions totaled approximately $100,000.

Additional context was provided on overall financial activity, including approximately $1.4 million raised since 2022 through contributions, fundraising, and grants. It was also noted that a significant portion of the raised funds included a large external grant.

Foundation leadership emphasized that earlier years were focused on addressing operational and financial challenges, including restructuring and improving oversight. Since that time, efforts have been made to stabilize operations and strengthen fundraising capacity.

The group discussed trends in revenue generation, noting gradual improvement and relative consistency over the past few years. It was emphasized that building a successful foundation requires sustained investment, time, and resources, and that current performance should be evaluated within a longer-term growth trajectory.

The discussion continued with questions regarding the sustainability of increasing operational funding requests and how the Foundation's needs should be evaluated over time. Concerns were raised about whether funding requests would continue to rise indefinitely and how the Commission should plan for long-term financial support.

In response, Foundation leadership emphasized that funding levels are not fixed or predictable year to year, but should be driven by organizational strategy, programmatic goals, and identified needs. It was noted that the Foundation's purpose is to support trauma initiatives across the state, and that its structure as a separate entity creates an intentional distinction between fundraising activities and publicly funded operations.

The conversation highlighted that operational support from the Commission is expected to continue, while fundraising efforts remain focused on programmatic impact. Rather than focusing solely on annual funding needs, Foundation leadership encouraged the Commission to define clear goals, priorities, and success metrics to guide both fundraising targets and operational needs.

Further discussion reframed the relationship as a collaborative planning process in which the Commission identifies priority initiatives and the Foundation raises funds to support those efforts. Participants noted that successful fundraising typically requires clearly defined, tangible goals that stakeholders can connect with, as well as sustained engagement over time.

It was also emphasized that building an effective fundraising program requires ongoing coordination, not just during budget cycles. Strengthening alignment between the Foundation and Commission, particularly around shared priorities and messaging, was identified as key to improving outcomes and demonstrating value.

Discussion shifted to fundraising strategy, target audiences, and improving coordination between the Foundation and Commission. Participants acknowledged that while hospitals have been the primary supporters of fundraising events to date, they are not a sustainable long-term funding source. Hospitals were initially engaged to build awareness and establish credibility, but there was agreement that future efforts should expand to include vendors, corporations, philanthropists, and broader community partners.

Foundation leadership emphasized that early efforts focused on increasing visibility, branding, and engagement, as many stakeholders were previously unaware of the Foundation or its purpose. While recent events have shown progress in participation and awareness, there is a need to pivot toward more diversified and sustainable funding streams.

The group also discussed ongoing and potential initiatives to support fundraising efforts, including:

- Initial funding committed to the Stop the Bleed program
- Continued exploration of initiatives such as pre-hospital blood programs
- Longer-term projects like the mobile simulation lab are under consideration

Participants highlighted the importance of having clear, tangible materials and messaging when approaching potential donors, including corporate partners. The need for a more structured outreach approach and tools to support solicitation efforts was emphasized.

There was general agreement that stronger collaboration and communication between the Foundation and Commission is needed, including:

- Regular updates on progress, performance, and use of funds
- Clear alignment on priorities, goals, and messaging
- Greater involvement from Commission members in fundraising efforts and events

It was suggested that planning and alignment discussions should take place throughout the year rather than during budget cycles. Establishing shared goals, tracking outcomes, and jointly evaluating what is working were identified as critical to improving effectiveness.

While quarterly reports are regularly provided, they primarily deliver quantitative updates and may not fully capture the broader context, including progress toward goals, fundraising effectiveness, and programmatic impact. As a result, budget discussions can sometimes feel reactive, particularly when funding requests increase significantly.

Participants emphasized the need for more comprehensive, ongoing dialogue that combines quantitative reporting with qualitative insights. This would allow for better understanding of performance, clearer expectations, and more informed decision-making throughout the year rather than primarily during budget cycles.

There was general agreement on the importance of establishing clearer performance metrics, strategic priorities, and programmatic direction aligned with community needs. Strengthening this alignment was seen as essential to ensuring that funding requests are well understood and supported.

The conversation also returned to fundraising strategy, with recognition of opportunities to engage larger corporate donors and external partners. However, challenges remain in offering tangible value or recognition to donors, which can impact engagement. Ideas such as branded initiatives or larger, visible projects were discussed as potential ways to attract support.

Overall, the group reinforced the importance of improving coordination, developing clearer goals, and expanding outreach efforts, while continuing to build relationships and identify new funding opportunities. The discussion ended on a collaborative note, with participants expressing appreciation and a shared commitment to refining strategy and communication moving forward.

MARCH PAWS UPDATE

Presented by Courtney Terwilliger

Courtney Terwilliger reviewed progress on the MARCH PAWS grant, noting that the initial video has been completed and is awaiting final review and approval. Two additional videos remain before the project is finished. There is approximately $124,000 in remaining funds, and discussions are underway to reallocate them to better support the RITS program, pending approval and proper process.

The committee discussed the next steps for upcoming meetings. At the April 20 meeting, the updated FY2027 budget numbers will be presented following the EMS Committee meeting. The Finance Committee is expected to vote on the FY2027 budget and any proposed fund reallocations, after which a formal commission meeting will be held to finalize decisions.

With no further business raised, the meeting adjourned.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS & ADJOURNMENT

- Katie reviewed financial materials provided in the meeting packet (**ATTACHMENT A**).
- The committee reviewed the FY2027 preliminary proposed budget (**ATTACHMENT B**)
- The committee reviewed the GQIP FY 2027 budget proposal (**ATTACHMENT C**).
- The committee reviewed the Georgia Trauma Foundation FY2027 proposal (**ATTACHMENT D**) with Georgia Trauma Foundation leadership.
- Courtney Terwilliger provided an update on MARCH PAWS progress, noting that the first draft of the training course video has been completed. It is under review by Dr. Mabes.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Gabriela Saye.