

**Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation  
September 21 – Regular Meeting – 2:00 pm  
Technical College of the Lowcountry, New River Campus  
100 Community College Drive, Bluffton, SC**

**Meeting Minutes**

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Present: Arnette, Azallion-Kenny, Braun, Feaster, Gilbert (Designee for Rodriguez), Passiment (Designee for McElynn), Perry, Sisino, Williams,  
Absent: Alsko, Dallas, Gough, Rodriguez, Shelton, Sulka, McElynn  
Staff: O'Toole, Stone  
Guests: Avantides, Amundson, Bush, Brown, Fragale, Lee, Marshall, Mcfee, Fleming, Forster, Sommerville, Turano

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Chair Feaster called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion to enter executive session to review the confidential projects; Williams moved; Braun seconded; approved unanimously; the Board entered executive session at 2:01 pm.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion to exit executive session; Azallion-Kenny moved; Braun seconded; The Board exited executive session at 2:26 pm. No motions or votes were taken in executive session. Public session followed.

Chair Feaster entertained a motion to approve July 20<sup>th</sup> minutes, Williams moved; Sisino seconded; approved unanimously.

O'Toole reviewed BCEDC's 2022-2023 operating budget. The BCEDC has \$702,000 cash on hand. The BCEDC has \$15,000 from SCA that will be paid out as a grant to Watterson Brands for Lawn/Parcel. The BCEDC is holding \$150,000 in UTCs in Dominion Energy designated toward the Beaufort Commerce Park. The BCEDC also has \$50,000 that will be reimbursed from the job and site fund to the operating budget. The \$50,000 was paid out as a grant to Project Green. The BCEDC is at 11% of budget and is beginning to spend more on lead generation. The legal & professional services line of \$160,000 depicts \$150,000 of UTCs.

Braun inquired about the open position that the BCEDC is advertising. In an effort to assist in recruiting the position, Braun recommended the board has a chance to review the job description again.

O'Toole requested that the board and each municipality look at what they would like to see from the BCEDC. The BCEDC will plan to have discussion on a diversified approach for each community at the next board meeting.

O'Toole provided an update on the BCEDC's site and job fund. The BCEDC anticipates finishing the FY with \$557,848 in the site and job fund and projects that they will spend additional monies on due diligence at Lobeco and new projects.

O'Toole will bring back additional detail defining retention meetings to the Executive Board.

O'Toole provided an update on dropped leads. 92 of the BCEDC dropped leads were companies that chose not to expand due to internal challenges. 33 of the dropped leads were financial reasons for the company. 19 companies chose alternative SC sites. 13 companies chose an alternative State. 10 companies did not

move forward due to improper zoning. 7 companies chose not to move forward due to a change in the company focus. 7 did not move forward due to bureaucracy and 4 companies did not move forward due to company merger/acquisition.

Councilwoman Paula Brown provided an update on leads that Brown and O'Toole are pursuing. Brown has been leveraging her network to facilitate leads for the BCEDC. Councilwoman Paula Brown recommends pursuing a PGA tournament in Beaufort County.

Chair Feaster entertained motion to approve a \$46,000 grant for Project Burger II; Williams moved; Perry seconded; approved unanimously.

O'Toole spoke on the importance of a 'balanced wheel' approach. As the BCEDC looks to develop their product plan, the group aims to consider transportation, workforce housing, environment, education, economic development and workforce. The BCEDC also looks to consider existing infrastructure and identify sites in proximity to electric/gas, communications, highway accessibility, and the proper zoning. Currently, the BCEDC has three large sites that are in front of Beaufort County Council for consideration. Perry mentioned the Coastal Carolina Development Corporation's work in workforce housing on Hilton Head Island.

LJ Bush, Executive Director of the COIN Group, presented to the BCEDC board on the efforts of the COIN Group. LJ is a Hilton Head Island resident and has been working with local students to expose them to industry and opportunities in the area. The COIN group aims to teach life skills to students and prepare them for interviews, proper interview attire, resumes, and various other soft skills. LJ recently helped a young man get hired by the Town of Hilton Head Island as well as plug several students into the South Carolina-Georgia joint job fair. LJ's passion for the community and assisting young people is what drives him in his current role.

Fleming provided an update on SCA. SCA hosted a workforce summit with area partners. County Council Chairman Passiment spoke to the partnership between Beaufort County, the BCEDC, and the Southern Carolina Alliance.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:44 pm.