

Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation
September 18, 2025 – 2:00 pm
Palmetto Electric Cooperative – New River Community Room, 1 Cooperative Way, Hardeeville,
SC

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Azallion-Kenny, Braun, Cromer, Feaster, Forster (Designee for Toomer), Mealer (Designee for Perry), Shelton, Sisino, Tabernik, Williams, Willis

Guests: York Glover (Beaufort County Council), Michael Moore (Beaufort County), Hank Amundson (Beaufort County), Paul Arvantides (DRCI), Kay Maxwell (SCA)

Public: Nick Hammond (Davis & Floyd), Elvio Tropeano, Chris Bates (Alliance Consulting Engineers)

Staff: O'Toole, Brunson, Warner

Chair Braun called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.

Chair Braun recognized Anna Maria Tabernik as the newly appointed liaison for Beaufort County Council to the BCEDC Board of Directors, replacing Paula Brown.

Chair Braun entertained a motion by Sisino to go into Executive Session at 2:04 pm. Cromer seconded; approved unanimously.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to end Executive Session by Shelton; Cromer seconded; approved unanimously. Executive Session ended at 2:13 pm.

Introductions: BCEDC Board of Directors, BCEDC Staff and Guests made introductions.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve July 24, 2025, Meeting Minutes made by Sisino; Williams seconded; approved unanimously.

Shelton gave a Treasurer's Report and reviewed the FY 2025-2026 budget. The amount of information and level of detail included in the monthly financial reports from Moss & Yantis are far better than the previous firm's reporting. BCEDC is 17% into the new year and only 13% in budget. Chair Braun added that the annual audit begins on October 20, 2025. BCEDC has completely changed over from cash to accrual basis.

O'Toole asked that the Update on Site & Job Fund be tabled until after discussions for requested expenditures later in the meeting.

Amundson provided an update on the new use of BCEDC Site & Job Fund Account. Beaufort County Council passed a resolution on September 8, 2025: 2025/50: A Resolution establishing a policy that restricts and defines the allowable uses of Beaufort County Council's Economic Development 'Site & Jobs' funds, which are allocated annually for use by the Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation.

Warner provided an update on the grant match funding for the SC Department of Commerce Site Enhancement Grant for 25,000 square foot pad site at Lot D in the Beaufort Commerce Park. Total cost of the project has been estimated at \$401,488 with a 50% match requirement of \$200,744 from Beaufort County. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve sending a recommendation to Beaufort County Council for use of Site and Job Fund for grant match funding for the SC Department of Commerce Site Enhancement Grant for 25,000 square foot pad site at Lot D in the Beaufort Commerce Park totaling \$200,744 made by Feaster; Mealer seconded; approved unanimously.

Warner provided an update on the grant match funding for the SC Department of Commerce Site Enhancement Grant for extension of natural gas infrastructure to Lot D in the Beaufort Commerce Park. The total cost of the project has been estimated at \$130,000 with a 50% match requirement of \$65,000 from Beaufort County. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve sending a recommendation to Beaufort County Council for use of Site and Job Fund for grant match funding for the SC Department of Commerce Site Enhancement Grant for extension of natural gas infrastructure to Lot D in the Beaufort Commerce Park totaling \$65,000 made by Shelton; Sisino seconded; approved unanimously.

O'Toole provided an update to the Site & Job Fund including the potential expenditures of the SC Department of Commerce Site Enhancement Grant match funding, pending Beaufort County Council approval.

O'Toole provided an update on the 10.25 Acres on St. Helena. Information only. Moving forward with the project would require a financing plan, product plan, and management plan to be formed prior.

Brunson provided an update on the 117 Acres at Lobeco. Working to finalize the environmental firm for the project. Continued conversations with UNC Wilmington and Rutgers regarding fisheries. The trip to White Oak Pastures in Bluffton, GA provided great insight into possible meat processing usage.

O'Toole presented the Parker Poe Fiscal Impact (Cost/Benefit Analysis) Modeling Software licensing agreement. \$5,000 for the first year and after that, \$2,000 per year. The financing line would be in the Administrative Budget line. Parker Poe's modeling software is used by many counties in the state of SC and is seen as one of the best in fiscal impact studies of economic development projects. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve BCEDC Staff to enter the Parker Poe Fiscal Impact (Cost/Benefit Analysis) Modeling Software licensing agreement made by Sisino; Cromer seconded; approved unanimously.

Maxwell provided the SCA update via a handout and went over the announced jobs and investment amounts, Site Consultants Meeting (Brantley Strickland – Colleton County), SCA Board Meeting September 23, ANUGA Food Conference (Kelli Brunson – BCEDC), SCEDA Mid-Year, Marketing Mission to UK and Ireland, October 23 Drive and Pull Event, November Atlanta Site Consultant Event, November Switzerland Roadshow (SCA and HSB Law Firm), December 2 Last SCA Board Meeting/Christmas Celebration, December 8-12 Ontario Marketing Mission. Covered leads from the northeast marketing mission with six leads being seen as a direct fit for Beaufort County.

BCEDC Staff provided a written activity report. Brunson highlighted that the BCEDC Prosperity in Practice event is sold out with a great response. Warner covered the SCEDA Membership Meeting which the BCEDC staff has been asked by SCEDA to present on a panel “Discovering and Maximizing Your Community’s Niche” during the meeting was a success with positive response. Brunson covered her involvement in the Greater Island Council meeting on September 4, 2025. Warner covered that John O’Toole will be completing his SCEDA Advanced Symposium and has been diligently working on his capstone project. Brunson will be attending the ANUGA Food Show in Germany October 4-8, 2025. Warner will be at OU EDI in Fort Worth, TX October 19-24, 2025. Warner touched on the Business Retention and Expansion numbers at 17 visits completed so far. BRE Spotlight: BRE Workforce Team.

Brunson went over the proposed meeting calendar for FY 2025-2026. The upcoming meeting schedule has been posted.

Public Comment: None.

New Business: Moving forward, BCEDC Board of Directors Meeting Public Comment may be made in person or by email by 11:00 a.m. EST on the day of the meeting only. Public comments may be emailed to info@thrivebeaufort.org.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:13 pm by Cromer; Sisino seconded; approved unanimously.