

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Paul Arvantides (Town of Bluffton), Azallion-Kenny, Braun, Carnes, Cromer, Feaster, Gilbert, Perry, Sisino, Stone (Designee for Arnette), Tabernik, Williams

Guests: Michael Moore (Beaufort County), Evan Welsh (DRCI), Jason Semple (SCA), Graci Heirs (SCA), Paula Brown (Beaufort County Council)

Public: Elvio Tropeano

Staff: O'Toole, Brunson, Warner

Chair Braun called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm.

Chair Braun entertained a motion by Cromer to go into Executive Session at 4:02 pm. Azallio-Kenny seconded; approved unanimously.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to end Executive Session by Cromer; Perry seconded; approved unanimously. Executive Session ended at 4:21 pm.

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

Chair Braun entertained a motion to accept the Board Meeting Minutes from January 15, 2026, meeting made by Carnes; Sisino seconded; approved unanimously.

O'Toole provided an update that Shelton (not in attendance) will send a written Treasurer's Report and Management Report to the board members next week for the Review Budget FY 2025-2026.

Warner provided an update on Project Ceramic and Sale of Lot D in the Beaufort Commerce Park. A new project profile sheet has been submitted to BCEDC Staff showing an increase in number of new jobs created, increase in average wage, and increase in overall capital expenditure. BCEDC Staff has also received a Letter of Intent from Project Ceramic for the purchase of Lot D.

Brunson provided a pro-forma for Approval of Project Helicopter for a Job Creation Grant of \$7,500. Project Helicopter will create 15 jobs at \$70,611/year average compensation, invest \$223,000 (machinery and equipment), and is expected to have additional investments with leasehold improvements (TBD once space is selected). Chair Braun entertained a motion to Approval of Project Helicopter for a Job Creation Grant of \$7,500 made by Perry; Cromer seconded; Discussion: Perry asked what the timeframe for employment starting is expected to be. O'Toole stated that hiring is expected to begin within the next 1-2 months. Clawbacks for job creation are in place for recruitment and retention over the grant performance timeframe; approved unanimously.

O'Toole provided an update on Purchase of 10.25 acres on Saint Helena Island and Approve Borrowing and Due Diligence pending Beaufort County Council Approval. The Coastal Community Foundation has approached BCEDC Staff with the offer of a \$600,000, 2% interest only balloon payment loan for 3 years to purchase the land and conduct an economic feasibility study. Tabernik stated that she will not be in

support of this project and that Beaufort County Council will not support the project. No new plan has been presented as to how the project building will be funded or managed afterwards. Braun entertained a motion to move Purchase of 10.25 acres on Saint Helena Island and Approve Borrowing and Due Diligence pending Beaufort County Council Approval forward for further discussion made by Feaster, Azallion-Kenny seconded; Discussion: Feaster asked if Beaufort County Council does not support this project, why would we continue to put it forward. Sisino echoed Feaster's comment. Perry stated that the project does not have a complete plan and would need to be further vetted. Braun echoed Perry's comment. Cromer asked if the anticipated management group would be a 501c3. O'Toole answered that it is the plan that a 501c3 would be formed to run and manage the project upon completion. Chair Braun called for a roll call vote. In Favor: None Against: Perry, Tabernik, Cromer, Williams, Gilbert, Carnes, Azallion-Kenny, Feaster, Sisino, Braun, Stone; defeated unanimously.

O'Toole provided the Development Agreement for the Beaufort Commerce Park Spec Building including the borrow pit (\$600,000 value), BCEDC grant upon completion (\$250,000 value), \$1,000,000 grant from sale of land, carrying cost of \$50,000/month up to \$1,300,000 following certificate of occupancy, \$175,000 for wetland mitigation credits, and a FILOT/SSRC to be determined. Chair Braun entertained a motion to Approve the Development Agreement for the Beaufort Commerce Park Spec Building made by Feaster; Arvantides seconded; approved unanimously.

O'Toole provided an update on the Letter of Intent and Recommend to Beaufort County Council the Development of Hanger and Fixed Base Operation at Hilton Head Island Airport. No action required. When the draft is received it will be expedited to Beaufort County and the Town of Hilton Head Island. The BCEDC will facilitate weekly meetings between the parties to keep this project moving.

Brunson provided an update on the Sale of 31.79 Acres in the Beaufort Commerce Park. Details of the borrow pit have been received, but the buyer would like it to be presented alongside the Purchase and Sale Agreement. Expected to go before public during March 2026 meeting.

O'Toole provided an update on the Site and Job Fund including the \$25,000 grant delivered to Gullah Farmers Cooperative, \$30,000 grant to Spartina 449, \$7,500 grant to Project Helicopter, \$200,744 Pad Site match to SC Department of Commerce grant. End of Year balance projected as \$2,666,617. No action required.

BCEDC Staff provided a written activity report.

- A. Baseline Webinars scheduled for February 25 - 11:30am, February 25 - 4:00pm, and February 27 - 2:00pm
- B. Facilitated Session scheduled for March 5, 2026, at Palmetto Electric Cooperative, 1 Cooperative Way from 8:30 AM – 2:00 PM
- C. Converge 2026 is scheduled for February 18, 2026, at Sun City Pinckney Hall from 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM.

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

Heirs provided the SCA update reviewed Project Inspiration announcement in Bamberg, Le Creuset ribbon cutting February 20, SCA investors luncheons to be held in Columbia and Charleston, SCA attendance at Governor's Economic Roundtable, and new contract with Nichi Bay for potential Japanese leads. Chair Braun asked if the SCA report could be submitted to BCEDC Staff prior to the meetings so that they would be included in the Board Packet. Heirs stated that she would check with

Kay Maxwell and Danny Black for approval.

O'Toole provided an update on the audit. Braun and Shelton have approved a letter to leaders regarding the audit and the findings therein. Special thanks to Blakely Williams for agreeing to be a part of the real estate transaction committee.

Public Comment: None

New Business: Open invitation to Converge 2026.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 pm by Cromer; Azallion-Kenny seconded; approved unanimously.