

Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation
April 30, 2026 – 2:00 pm
The COVE at Don Ryan Center, 97 Progressive Street, Bluffton, SC 29910

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: Alsko, Braun, Cromer, Feaster, Forster (Designee for Toomer), Gilbert, Perry, Shelton, Sisino, Stone (Designee for Arnette), Tabernik, Williams, Willis

Guests: Nicole Wood (Beaufort County), Jason Semple (SCA), Kay Maxwell (SCA), Alice Howard (Chair, Beaufort Council), Paula Brown (Beaufort County Council), Brian Hulbert (Beaufort County), Andrew Reilly (Sergeant TAP), Eric Somerville (Sergeant TAP), Kate Gill (United Way of the Lowcountry)

Public: Elvio Tropeano, Nick Hammond (Davis|Floyd)

Staff: O'Toole, Brunson, Warner

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

Chair Braun entertained a motion by Cromer to go into Executive Session at 2:02 pm. Sisino seconded; approved unanimously.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to end Executive Session by Cromer; Shelton seconded; approved unanimously. Executive Session ended at 2:08 pm.

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

Chair Braun entertained a motion to accept the Board Meeting Minutes from March 26, 2026, meeting made by Willis; Feaster seconded; approved unanimously.

Shelton provided a Review of Budget FY 2025-2026 and Treasurer's Report. BCEDC is in a stable financial position with no areas of concern. Income from dues, sponsorships and grants are in line with expectations. Shelton offered a suggestion of additionally showing expense lines as a percentage of the budget for ease of review. Line items will be reviewed for increases or decreases for certain budget item allocations.

Brunson provided an update on the 25/26 Audit. The cost of the 24/25 audit with Mauldin & Jenkins was \$25,000. After conversations with Mauldin & Jenkins, the price would be lower for 25/26 as an information baseline has been created. A price quote for \$21,000 has been submitted by Mauldin & Jenkins. The recommendation of BCEDC Staff, along with accountants, Moss & Yantis and Treasurer Shelton, would be to continue with Mauldin & Jenkins for the 25/26 Audit for \$21,000. Possible RFP for Year 3 (26/27) Audit. Brian Hulbert, attorney for Beaufort County, stated that a full RFP is not necessary for contracts less than \$50,000 by Beaufort County policy, but that a competitive three bid process would suffice. Chair Braun entertained a motion to continue with Mauldin & Jenkins for the price of \$21,000 for the 25/26 Audit made by Tabernik; Sisino seconded; approved unanimously.

Chair Braun introduced presenter, Kate Gill with the United Way of the Lowcountry Long-Term Recovery Group. Gill presented the history of the LTRG, programs that are in place for after-disaster support, volunteer opportunities, employer/employee connections, and contact information.

Chair Braun introduced presenter, Andrew Reilly with Sergeant TAP. Reilly presented the history of the program and BCEDC's support in the creation of the project stemming from federal funds to create an app for military personnel use to create a civilian resume upon their exit (EOS). Reilly provided an example run and final resume for example. This technology and program will be free for Beaufort County to use due to BCEDC's support. Sergeant TAP is live now and will be utilized at all Transition Readiness Seminar / Employer Networking events with the BCEDC moving forward.

Chair Braun informed the board that Agenda Item 10 – Approve and Recommend Updated Tax Agreement Infrastructure for Project Lasagna would be omitted as the information was not available in time for the meeting.

Warner provided an update on the new Opportunity Zone submissions open via the SC Department of Commerce. BCEDC will be working with stakeholders and elected officials to formulate a list of eligible tracts for submission.

Chair Braun provided an update on the Board of Directors' Composition & Officers Succession along with his suggestions for edits to the bylaws including attendance policy and board expansion. Feaster recommended a range for board members to read "15-17 members". Board will review and make recommendations to be brought to full board. Update only.

O'Toole provided a Review of the Draft of BCEDC Strategic Plan. Draft of BCEDC Strategic Plan, Summary and Session Notes have been provided to the board in the packet. Beaufort County Council has scheduled a work session on Tuesday, May 12th, from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. This session will be held at Council Chambers, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort. Update only.

O'Toole provided an update on Spec Building 2 in the Beaufort Commerce Park. O'Toole went over the graphic providing detail into the Beaufort County (\$265,000), City of Beaufort (\$1,000,000), developer (~\$7,200,000) and potential Beaufort County backstop (\$1,300,000) expense figures for the building of the proposed 72,000 square foot spec building as well as the ~150 new jobs, \$162,600 land sale price going to the City of Beaufort and ~\$150,000 per year in property taxes that this project would potentially create. The Beaufort County Finance, Administration and Economic Development Committee voted not in favor of the Beaufort County funding portion. Additional information has been requested by members of the committee. This will go before full council once the requested information has been received. BCEDC is currently waiting for a Purchase and Sale Agreement from the developer to submit to the City of Beaufort. Update only.

O'Toole provided an update on the Transfer of the SC Parks, Recreation and Tourism Grant to Open Land Trust. In accordance with the March 26, 2026, meeting vote, BCEDC Staff has transferred the \$1,000,000 in grant funds to the Open Land Trust. The BCEDC received approval to transfer funds from granting entity, SC Parks, Recreation, & Tourism (SCPRT) and SC Senator George E. "Chip" Campsen III, provided that the funds are used for the intended purpose. Correspondence was included in the board packet. Tabernik asked why the project has continued to advance without Beaufort County Council approval and if Senator Campsen knows that the council has not voted in favor of the project. O'Toole stated that, while he cannot speak as to what the Senator does or does not know, full communication has been had with his office. BCEDC has been released harmless of any actions relating to the \$1,000,000 SCPRT grant. Tabernik stated that she does not want the project to come back to council asking for money at a later date. Much like in the funding reversal for other projects recently, the county does not have the funds to support such projects. Update only.

Brunson provided an update on the Site and Job Fund. No action needed. Long standing commitments

have been moved ahead in the calendar and the quarterly payment to the SC Nursing Retention Initiative has been processed.

BCEDC Staff provided a written activity report.

- A. O'Toole gave an update on the BCEDC Scorecard. The number of leads will grow considerably as O'Toole represents the SCA Region at Select USA next week.
- B. Warner gave an update on Business Retention and Expansion: 66 BRE Visits completed YTD, 73% of Goal. BRE Spotlight: Partner Programs. Example: Lowcountry Council of Governments (LCOG)'s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) allowing for cost offset for school/training and On-The-Job Training (OJT) allowing for percentage of wage reimbursement to employers for new hires during training period.
- C. Brunson gave an overview of the marketing, social media and website performance from March 1, 2026, to March 31, 2026, including the New York and RBC Heritage Marketing Campaigns.
- D. Brunson shared BCEDC's community involvement: Warner, O'Toole and some BCEDC Board Members attending Technical College of the Lowcountry's State of the College Honoring Dr. Richard Gough and Brunson's speaking with the St. Helena residents as part of the SC State Extension Program presentation on Beaufort County Resources.
- E. Brunson went over the proposed meeting calendar for FY 2025-2026. The upcoming meeting schedule has been posted.

Maxwell provided the SCA update covering the project announcements for 2025, SCA's continued partnership with Retail Strategies, ribbon cutting at the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center in Allendale, the Regional Manufacturing Training Advisory Board, the first class of the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center in Allendale, the Stantec Mobility Study being complete, TS Conductor's Trade and Industry Award, website/social media performance, RBC Heritage, Select USA and the Marketing Calendar.

O'Toole provided an update on the BCEDC 990 FY 2024-2025. Chair Braun entertained a motion to accept and file the BCEDC 990 made by Feaster; Shelton seconded; approved unanimously.

Public Comment: None

New Business:

- A. Beaufort County Council has scheduled a work session on Tuesday, May 12th, from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. This session will be held at Council Chambers, 100 Ribaut Road, Beaufort.
- B. MasterCorp Ribbon Cutting, May 21, 2026, from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm.
- C. Solution Station at the 2026 SCEDA Annual Meeting on Thursday May 7, 2026.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:56 pm by Shelton; Cromer seconded; approved unanimously.