

**Beaufort County Economic Development Corporation**  
**February 20, 2025 – 2:00 pm**

**Technical College of the Lowcountry - 100 Community College Drive, Bluffton, SC**

**Meeting Minutes**

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Board Members Present: Alsko, Amundson, Azallion-Kenny, Braun, Carns, Cromer, Feaster, Forster, Gilbert, Maxwell (SCA), Shelton, Stone, Sisino, Perry, Williams

Public: Chloe Appleby, Paul Arvantides (DRCI), Mike Covert, Elvio Tropeano

Guests: RISE – Anna Chafin, Justin Farquhar

Staff: O’Toole, Brunson, Warner

Chair Braun called the meeting to order at 1:59 pm.

Chair Braun entertained a motion by Cromer to go into Executive Session at 2:00 pm. Perry seconded; approved unanimously.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to end Executive Session by Shelton; Cromer seconded; approved unanimously. Executive Session ended at 2:46 pm.

There was no public comment.

Anna Chafin and Justin Farquhar gave a presentation on the Regional Industry Support Enterprise (RISE) and how they are working with the Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA) to meet the workforce needs of the growth in the area. Beaufort County is among the counties that are in the labor draw of companies such as the Hyundai mega-plant in Bryan County.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve January 23, 2025, meeting minutes made by Cromer; Alsko seconded; approved unanimously.

The upcoming meeting schedule was presented for the remainder of FY 2024-2025.

Shelton reviewed the FY 2024-2025 budget to date. BCEDC is operating well within their budget with a strong cash position. Transfers from the TD Bank account to Pinnacle have been in process. FY 2026 interest could cover the fixed expenses of BCEDC. The Pinnacle credit facility should be completed soon.

O’Toole presented the findings from the due diligence completed by Alliance Consulting Engineers on the Chilton Tract. The majority of the purposed property is wetlands. BCEDC

recommendation is to exit the PSA. Chair Braun entertained a motion to exit the Chilton PSA made by Shelton; Perry seconded; approved unanimously.

Brunson presented Project Ceramic. Incumbent Beaufort County business with interest in Beaufort Commerce Park - Lot F. Investment: \$6,560,000. Jobs: 3 new jobs; 4 retained jobs. Average Salary: \$50,000 - \$60,000. BCEDC Staff recommendation is a \$10,000 grant. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve a \$10,000 grant for Project Ceramic made by Cromer; Feaster seconded; approved unanimously.

No report was given for Project Bag.

Warner presented Project Sabal. Incumbent Beaufort County business is already working with the Town of Bluffton. Investment: \$11,300,000. New Jobs: 31. Average Salary: \$82,892. BCEDC Staff recommendation is a \$10,000 grant. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve a \$10,000 grant for Project Sabal made by Shelton; Feaster seconded; approved unanimously.

Warner gave an update on the grant for Project Stone. \$100,000 grant with an agreement of \$2,400,000 investment and 14 new jobs. Project met \$2,700,000 building investment (\$5,400,000 total) and 2 new jobs. A \$35,000 pro rata repayment obligation has been received from StoneWorks based on the formula in the grant performance agreement. BCEDC Staff recommendation is to release StoneWorks from their obligation. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve release of StoneWorks from their grant obligation made by Perry; Alsko seconded; approved unanimously.

O'Toole gave an update on the grant for Project Blacquity. \$75,000 grant with an agreement of 25 program participants, 25% of new businesses producing a product and data from which an economic impact study is to be completed. Project met 31 program participants and over 50% of new businesses producing a product. The economic impact study is currently being completed by the Clemson University Regional Economics Analysis Lab (REAL). BCEDC Staff recommendation is to release Blacquity from their obligation. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve release of Blacquity from their grant obligation made by Feaster; Alsko seconded; approved unanimously.

Brunson gave an update on the grant for the Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce (BRCC) Apprenticeship Program. \$15,000 grant with an agreement of expenditure. BRCC had an operational expenditure of \$3,346.90. A \$11,653.10 pro rata repayment obligation has been received from BRCC. BCEDC Staff recommendation is to release BRCC from their obligation. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve release of BRCC from their grant obligation made by Perry; Shelton seconded; approved unanimously.

O'Toole updated status of Beaufort Commerce Park Spec Building #2. Two developers from Greenville and Charleston have submitted. No action is needed at this point.

O'Toole introduced the plan to submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Due Diligence/Appraisal to the BCEDC short list of engineers on 372 acres in Whale Branch as a new target for development. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve the submitting of the RFP made by Perry; Cromer seconded; approved unanimously.

Shelton introduced a plan to form a fundraising subcommittee made up of the BCEDC board members to assist in raising additional funds and/or a mid-year event. Warner to provide a definition and scope of the subcommittee for board review.

O'Toole presented the Job & Site Fund, including the new grant amounts of \$10,000 for Project Ceramic and \$10,000 for Project Sabal; along with moving the previously awarded grant amounts for Project Quantum Leap and Project German to June 2025. Chair Braun entertained a motion to approve the Jobs & Site Fund Budget to include the grants for Project Ceramic and Project Sabal; and to move the previously awarded grants for Project Quantum Leap and Project German to June 2025 made by Perry; Cromer seconded; approved unanimously.

BCEDC Staff Activity Report was provided as a written document.

Maxwell from the Southern Carolina Regional Alliance reported that they were hosting Leadership Salkehatchie in the SCA region, as well as showing new Project Managers from the SC Department of Commerce the counties. The SCA Board Retreat was held January 31 – February 1, 2025, in Sea Pines. The next SCA Board Meeting is set for April 1, 2025, in Bamberg County. SCA will be attending the SC Rural Summit 2025. March 6, 2025, SCA has an announcement event for Project Salmon in Jasper County. March 18, 2025, SCA will be attending the DC Site Consultants Conference. March 24-29, 2025, SCA and Kelli Brunson will be on an aerospace and defense marketing mission in California. April 17-20, 2025, SCA will be a host at the skybox on 15 for the RBC Heritage, hosting the Regional Leadership Congressional Delegation in HHI, and being a part of the Regional EDA's meeting. SCA plans to geofence the RBC Heritage like in years past.

New Business included BCEDC board members to review and sign Conflict of Interest and Non-Disclosure Agreement contracts.

Chair Braun entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:43 pm by Perry; Alsko seconded; all voted in favor.