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Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting  
January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025 / 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM  
201 Hay Street, Suite 401A  
Fayetteville, NC 28301

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**MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Chair Kathryn Cox, Vice Chair Timothy Bryant, Secretary Dymond Spain, Treasurer Carl Manning (virtual), Kirk deViere, Josh Choi, Bill Hedgepeth, Ferd Irizarry (virtual), Ulysses Taylor (virtual)

**Ex-Officios Present:** Mark Sorrells, Clarence Grier

**Members Absent:** Mitch Colvin, Doug Hewett (ex-officio)

**Staff Present:** Robert Van Geons, Jennifer McFadyen Hammond, Brittany Tschida

**Visitors/Guests:** None

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**1.0 Call to Order and Welcome**

Chair Kathryn Cox called the meeting to order at 8:04 am.

**Quorum:** Yes

**2.0 Approval of/or Adjustments to the Agenda**

Chair Kathryn Cox asked the board if anyone had any changes to the agenda. Robert Van Geons mentioned that we needed to discuss a \$45,000 budget transfer from salaries to insurance, due to a utilization change within the organization and increased costs thanks to Chamber utilization.

**Action:** A motion was made by Bill Hedgepeth to approve the amended agenda. Josh Choi seconded the motion.

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor.

**3.0 Organizational Business**

**3.1 Approval of December 12, 2024, Minutes – (sent electronically)**

**Action:** A motion was made by Bill Hedgepeth to approve the amended agenda. Commission Chairman deViere seconded the motion.

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor.

**3.2 Approval of the December Financials**

**Action:** A motion was made to approve the December financials by Vice Chairman Timothy Bryant. Bill Hedgepeth seconded the motion.

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor.

**3.3 Request for Budget Amendment - \$45,000 from Salaries to Medical Insurance**

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Robert Van Geons shared that the FCEDC's medical insurance costs have exceeded the budgeted amount significantly due to a change in staff usage and because of the Chamber's previous utilization (they are no longer on our plan

**Action:** After discussion, a motion was made by Bill Hedgepeth to approve the budget amendment. Josh Choi seconded

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor.

**3.4 Board Interest: Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards** – FCEDC has purchased a table, and Brittany has been in touch with Board members to see who would like to attend with us.

**3.5 Board Interest: MLK Brunch** - Robert asked the group if we had enough interest from members not already attending to see if it made sense to purchase a table. Dymond and Kathryn wanted to attend. Dr. Sorrells shared that they had extra space at the FTCC table. The Board decided not to purchase a table.

**3.6: Candidate Search Update** – the final two candidates have been identified, and final discussion meetings have been scheduled with Brittany and Rob

## 4.0 Program of Work Update

**4.1 Project Pipeline:** Robert Van Geons presented the Board with the FCEDC Project Pipeline. He informed the Board that FCEDC has generated 128 projects (a new company record, beating 123 from 2023) with 32 project visits for the 2024 calendar year.

**4.2 Major Project Developments:** Rob advised how the projects have diversified, with new additions including air domes, cat litter, batteries, and automotive chemicals. Projects on the move include Projects Tight, Crossfit, Rankin, Palmetto, and Touchdown. There are currently 79 active projects in the pipeline.

As a response to December's question about tracking why projects don't ultimately choose our area for their investments, Rob shared the following reasons:

- Project Pur and Project New Growth CFIUS (multiple instances)
- Project Bond: Proximity to Sea Water
- Project Horizontal: Rail proximity at a specific location
- Project Prometheus, Project Sensor: The entire state of NC was eliminated from consideration for various reasons
- Project Fortune: Company ultimately downsized

He noted that we have not seen a specific trend that identifies community deficiencies, but did note that we are running out of available sites for industrial development. He noted that thanks to our partnerships with partners like the City, County, and PWC, areas for potential development are being identified and prepared.

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**4.3 Balanced Scorecard** Robert Van Geons presented the Balanced Scorecard to the Board. The target percentage for 2024 was 75%. Our actual subtotal was 96%.

## 5.0 Reports & Analytics

**5.1 2024 Year in Review:** Robert emailed a copy of the FCEDC's "2024 Year in Review" to the Board on Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>.

### 5.2 Existing Industry

**Existing Industry** – Jennifer Hammond provided the Board with the Existing Industry and Business Retention update. She recapped 2024 Existing Industry activities:

**2 Visits in December:** Foundever, Myron

#### **2024 – Existing Industry Visit recap:**

Major Private Employers: 17/20

Manufacturing: 17/25

Distribution: 11/15

Defense: 18/15

Operations/Business Services: 7 visits (did not set goal)

60 total visits

#### **Updates**

- **Delta Apparel:** Salt Life's last day of operation was 12/30/2024. All employees but 1 (plant manager Steve Albin) found new positions or decided not to re-enter the workforce. Per Scott Reynolds at MJ Softe, they are in the wind-down phase of getting inventory and machinery out of the building. They still have about 20 people on staff. The anticipated MJ Softe closing date is 1/31/2025
- **Cargill:** Plant Manager Fady Phillipe confirmed there were no layoffs in the Fayetteville location
- **Keeco** is closing its plant in Henderson by the end of Q1 in 2025. Meeting with Plant Manager Soami McHenry on January 24<sup>th</sup> for an annual visit, will probably know if any operations will shift to the Fayetteville plant by then
- An **Existing Industry brochure** has been created to help area businesses understand more about what we do in the community and how we can help them with grants, hiring support, training, research, and real estate needs
- The **Business Support Network**, a group of area organizations that provide support to existing industry in Fayetteville and Cumberland County, is meeting on January 24th
- Cumberland County's **Largest Employers (Top 25) and Largest Private Sector Lists** were provided to the Board. Jennifer shared that we had visited 18 of the 22 eligible private-sector companies on the list in 2024, and had visits planned for 2 more in January

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## 5.2 Marketing and Communications:

Brittany Tschida shared an update on FCEDC's Marketing and Communications activities. She also shared the December Analytics

- **Marketing Updates**

- Happy New Year Video
- Received Letters & Banners
- Purchased Green Screen

- **Marketing Ongoing Projects**

- Growing YouTube Channel
- GFBJ Q1 Power Breakfast Speaker
- "Can Do" Performance Financing Program
- FCEDC 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Plan
- Events Flyers & Marketing Plan
- Project Tight curtain donation for Western North Carolina

## 5.3 Upcoming Events

- January 20 – 21: IEEE Electrical Energy Storage Applications & Technology Conference – Charlotte, NC
- January 22 – 23: NCEDA Emerging Executives Forum – Durham, NC
- January 30: NCSE Industrial Broker Briefing – Raleigh, NC
- February 4 – 6: Medical Design & Manufacturing West – Anaheim, CA (EDPNC Event)
- February 5 – 7: TechNet Fort Liberty – Crown Coliseum

## 6.0 Items for Board Discussion

**6.1 Strategic Initiatives:** Robert combined the "strategic initiatives" section with the findings from the 2024 Board Satisfaction Survey

**6.2 Review of Board Member Satisfaction Survey**

Robert Van Geons shared the findings from the 2023 Board Satisfaction Survey, which was based on the experiences of the board members. The survey revealed that the overall satisfaction rating of FCEDC's efforts in 2024 was 9.3.

## 7.0 Director's Round Table

**8.0 Closed Session** – no closed session was required.

## 9.0 Adjournment

**Action:** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Vice Chairman Timothy Bryant and seconded by Chairwoman Kathryn Cox.

**Vote:** Unanimous in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 am.

**Next Meeting: February 13th, 2025 at 8:00am**