
Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting
December 16, 2025 / 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
201 Hay Street, Suite 401-A
Fayetteville, NC 28301

MINUTES

Members Present: Chairwoman Kathryn Cox, Vice Chair Timothy Bryant (virtual), Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth, Secretary Carl Manning, County Chairman Kirk deViere, Mayor Mitch Colvin (virtual), Ferd Irizarry (virtual), Kristie Allen

Ex-Officios Present: Dr. Mark Sorrells

Members Absent: Dr. Brian Krakover, City Manager Dr. Doug Hewett, County Manager Clarence Grier

Staff Present: Robert Van Geons, Rob Patton, Brittany Odom, Chela Scott

1.0 Call to Order and Welcome

Chairwoman Kathryn Cox called the meeting to order at 8:05 A.M.

Quorum: Yes.

2.0 Approval of/or Adjustments to the Agenda

Action: Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Secretary Carl Manning.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

3.0 Organizational Business

3.1. Approval of October 29th, 2025, Minutes

Action: Secretary Carl Manning made a motion to approve the October 29th, 2025, minutes. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

3.2. Approval of the October 2025 and November 2025 Financials

– Robert Van Geons mentioned that we will be requesting some budget amendments. He also requested the financials be approved together or separate, whichever seemed most

Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting
December 16, 2025 / 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
201 Hay Street, Suite 401-A
Fayetteville, NC 28301

appropriate. Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth asked about the health insurance coverage expense. Robert Van Geons explained that there was \$75,000 budgeted for employee health insurance coverage for this year, there has been \$16,000 spent so far, but a portion of that was under the old premium.

Action: Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth made a motion to approve the August and September 2025 financials. The motion was seconded by Secretary Carl Manning.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

3.3. Financial Update – Robert Van Geons requested the following amendments.

Revenue and Cost Reductions

- Increase Cumberland County Revenue - + \$75,000
- Reduce Innovation Center Revenue - \$36,000
- Reduce Medical Insurance Line Item - \$40,000
- Reduce Building Rent by - \$50,000
- Reduce Building Tech Center Rent by -\$6,000

Expenses

- Innovation Center - + \$40,000
- Chief Technology Officer/Salaries - +\$75,000
- Advertising/Marketing - + \$20,000
- Net Change = \$0

Action: Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth made a motion to approve the Budget Amendments. The motion was seconded by Secretary Carl Manning.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

4.0 Program of Work Update

Robert Van Geons provided an overview of active projects, noting strong interest from companies in drone technology and data centers and highlighting the challenge of identifying how best to accommodate these opportunities. He also shared that while existing industries are not cutting positions, employment levels remain roughly 10% below previous levels due to natural attrition. Dr. Mark Sorrells added that current labor-market demand is concentrated among individuals ages 20–28 and those pursuing trades or two-year degrees. Mayor Mitch Colvin noted the recent upward trend in

Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting
December 16, 2025 / 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
201 Hay Street, Suite 401-A
Fayetteville, NC 28301

unemployment and requested the development of a clear target and action plan to bring local rates closer to state and national averages. Robert Van Geons emphasized ongoing efforts with the Next Gen Workforce initiative and deeper engagement with K–12 students, while also examining factors influencing outbound migration, including childcare access and commuting costs.

4.1. Project Pipeline – Rob Patton presented the Board with the December infographic and Project Pipeline. Rob explained that FCEDC has generated 143 projects and hosted 35 project visits, nearing last year’s total of 128 projects.

4.2. Major Project Developments – Rob Patton presented updates on Project Nutmeg, IQ, Forerunner, Compartmented, and Superman. The project industry sectors include Data Centers, Distribution, and Defense.

Project Deep Dive:

- Project Forerunner is expected to return for follow-up discussions in January.
- Project Compartmented remains paused due to the federal government shutdown.
- Project Tight, a home décor manufacturer, has secured a major distribution contract.
- Project Dish is planned for development in Spring Lake.
- Project Promise, to be located in Falcon, is anticipated to have a positive community impact.
- The Broadwell Tract on All American is being positioned as a secure industrial space to support military contractors.
- The Buster Road site is under consideration for a high-end office park focused on military contracting.
- Three major retail transformation projects are currently underway.

5.0 Reports and Analytics

5.1. Marketing & Communications – Brittany Odom highlighted Marketing Updates and Upcoming Events.

Marketing Updates

Posted “We Are Thankful For…” Campaign

Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting
December 16, 2025 / 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
201 Hay Street, Suite 401-A
Fayetteville, NC 28301

Recently Attended Events:

- Advanced Economic Development Leadership Class
- Modern Warfare Week
- I-295 Final Section Ribbon Cutting
- Norfolk Southern Holiday Party
- ECS Dinner

Media Coverage:

- Drone Competition – [CityView](#), [GFBJ](#), [Business NC](#), [Drone XL](#)

Ongoing Projects:

- Scheduling 12 Days of Christmas Campaign
- Finishing “Year in Review” Document
- Sending Out BAC Invoices
- Building EDPNC Billboard Social Posts
- Preparing Existing Industry Spotlight Campaign for 2026
- Ordering FCEDC Swag Items
- Events – New Building & FCEDC 10th Anniversary

Upcoming Events:

- **February 26 – 27:** SIOR Spring Carolinas Conference – Charlotte, NC (Sponsoring & Attending)
- **March 1 – 3:** IEDC Leadership Summit – Washington D.C. (Attending)
- **May 3 – 6:** SelectUSA Investment Summit – Washington D.C. (Attending with EDPNC)
- **May 11 – 14:** XPONENTIAL – Detroit, MI (Attending with EDPNC)
- **July 22 – 24:** Consultant Connect International – United Kingdom (Sponsoring & Attending)
- **August 26 – 28:** SIOR Fall Carolinas Conference – Palmetto Bluff, SC (Sponsoring & Attending)
- **TBD Fall:** Dallas Consultant Event (Attending with EDPNC)

5.2. Existing Industry Report – Chela Scott shared that although NVR was unable to participate directly in Manufacturing Week, the company demonstrated its commitment to workforce development by hosting students from Grays Creek High School on November 13. The visit provided students with a firsthand look at plant operations and helped connect classroom learning to real-world manufacturing practices. During the

Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting
December 16, 2025 / 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
201 Hay Street, Suite 401-A
Fayetteville, NC 28301

tour, Site Manager Cathy Scott delivered an informative presentation on NVR and its parent company, Ryan Homes, highlighting the company's history, industry role, and the homebuilding process from raw materials to finished homes.

Meetings & Events

- Regional Energy Collaborative (REC): October 29, 2025
- Cumberland County Schools CTE Advisory Board Luncheon: October 29, 2025
- FTCC Apprenticeship Internship Meeting: November 18, 2025
- NC Department of Labor, Labor on the Road: December 11, 2025, hosted at FTCC

5.3. Special Projects Updates - Chela Scott presented the Board with the special projects updates.

Black Voices Museum - Chela Scott shared the Black Voices Museum Project Leadership Team presented to the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners during their Agenda Session on November 13, 2025. The presentation closely mirrored the Public Information Session and Small Group discussions, ensuring consistency in messaging across audiences. The initial board met with the Project Leadership Team on December 11, 2025, to share introductions and discuss their vision for the Black Voices Museum Project, including its role in strengthening community engagement and cultural impact within the city. In preparation for the upcoming City Council work session on January 5, 2026, the team is finalizing materials and will deliver the same presentation previously shared with the County, ensuring consistency in messaging and alignment across key stakeholders.

Can Do Performance Financing Program:

Chela Scott discussed that applications for the Can Do Performance Financing Program continue to come in, with nine small, for-profit businesses now prepared for committee review. These applicants represent industries such as daycare services, healthcare support, and janitorial services, demonstrating strong community interest and broad program appeal. Staff have worked closely with each applicant, requesting detailed budgets, growth objectives, and supporting documentation to ensure the committee has complete information. At the upcoming meeting, the committee will review all materials and recommend which applicants should advance to CEED for professional vetting; those who complete vetting will return to present to the committee before final funding

Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting
December 16, 2025 / 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
201 Hay Street, Suite 401-A
Fayetteville, NC 28301

decisions are made and forwarded to City Council for approval. We also are working with first-round awardees to disburse funds and process their requests as they are received.

6.0. Items for Board Discussion – Robert Van Geons presented the items for Board discussion.

6.1. Strategic Initiatives

Next Gen Workforce Project- Robert Van Geons stated that the Next Gen Workforce would be meeting at the FCEDC offices today with the City, County, PWC, FTCC, Cape Fear Valley Medical Center, Cumberland County Schools, FSU, and Methodist. They would be focusing on Cyber technology and health care career paths. They are also looking to receive updated employer demand data from Ted Abernathy.

Innovation Nexus – 611 W. Russell Move – Robert Van Geons provided an update on the building’s progress, noting that the project is designed to elevate community capacity by incorporating a SCIF and other secured spaces, positioning the facility as a future cornerstone for the region. CPS has been selected to lead design services, architectural work, and construction management. Homemakers officially vacated the building on October 31, 2025, and carpet removal and cleanup are now underway. Several design elements are progressing, including preliminary layouts for the bathrooms, kitchens, and other key interior spaces.

7.0 Director’s Round Table

Robert Van Geons introduced a proposal to convene an international strategy discussion in late January or early February, seeking guidance on how best to frame the conversation, develop an action plan, and potentially engage a third-party facilitator. Dr. Mark Sorrells emphasized the significance of the opportunity and the need to move swiftly to maximize available resources. Kristie Allen expressed support for a coordinated strategic effort, noting its value in strengthening community-focused outcomes. Chairwoman Kathryn Cox highlighted the importance of active engagement that reflects the community and demonstrates strong leadership. Robert Van Geons further highlighted the Board’s capacity to drive impact and the importance of ensuring a strong return on investment while advancing economic growth. Members then discussed

Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting
December 16, 2025 / 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
201 Hay Street, Suite 401-A
Fayetteville, NC 28301

potential dates and the amount of time needed to conduct an efficient and productive session.

8.0 Closed Session- No closed session required

9.0 Adjournment

Action: Chairwoman Kathryn Cox adjourned the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 A.M.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Next Meeting: TBD