
Fayetteville-Cumberland County Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors Meeting
October 29, 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, Ferd Irizarry, Dr. Brian Krakover (virtual), Joshua Choi (virtual), Kristie Allen

Ex-Officios Present: Dr. Mark Sorrells

Members Absent: Mayor Mitch Colvin, City Manager Dr. Doug Hewett, County Manager Clarence Grier

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

Visitors/Guests: ACM Kelly Strickland (virtual)

1.0 Call to Order and Welcome

Chairwoman Kathryn Cox called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

Quorum: Yes.

2.0 Approval of/or Adjustments to the Agenda

Action: County Chairman Kirk deViere made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

3.0 Organizational Business

Staffing Update: Robert Van Geons shared with the Board that Genesis Merced Rosa resigned from her position. He then stated that an offer is pending for a position focused on innovation and partnerships. Robert also explained that a part-time Existing Industry position is in the works.

3.1. Approval of September 18th, 2025, Minutes

Action: Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth made a motion to approve the September 18th, 2025, minutes. The motion was seconded by Secretary Carl Manning.

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Vote: Unanimous in favor.

3.2. Approval of the August 2025 and September Financials – Chairman Kirk deViere asked about the County’s payments and if they are quarterly or monthly. Robert Van Geons explained that they come biannually, and Q1 and Q2 payments should show up in the October financials. Ferd Irizarry asked about the increase in Salaries. Robert Van Geons explained that funds were added for new positions as well as performance pay for employees.

Action: Vice Chair Timothy Bryant made a motion to approve the August and September 2025 financials. The motion was seconded by Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

3.3. Financial Update – Amendments to be requested at next meeting.

- \$75,000 increased funding from Cumberland County for Operations/Staffing
- \$250,000 Innovation Center Funding from the City
- County and PWC are processing (or have processed) Q1&2 payments
- \$110,000 in private sector support received (processing for deposit)
- \$25,000 CORE Lab Revenue (processing)
- \$40,000 savings in Health Care Costs

3.4. Upcoming Meeting Date – Robert Van Geons opened a discussion about the November 2025 Board Meeting date, originally scheduled for November 13th. He presented November 20, 2025, as a possible alternate date to accommodate other Board members' commitments. The board discussed their availability and agreed to poll on the matter. The December meeting was also discussed. Currently scheduled for December 11, 2025, Robert discussed the possibility of the meeting being held at the new building as a Christmas reception.

Kathryn Cox asked about FCEDC’s 10-year celebration. Robert Van Geons explained that we are aiming for a date in January when the primary construction is anticipated to be completed.

4.0 Program of Work Update

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4.1. Project Pipeline – Rob Patton presented the Board with the October infographic and Project Pipeline. Rob explained that FCEDC has generated 121 projects and hosted 31 project visits, nearing last year’s total of 128 projects. Robert explained that projects are companies who have expressed initial interest in our area.

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

Project Sapphire, looking to move production from Ireland to the US, possibly consolidating Pennsylvania production to North Carolina

Rob Patton shared a Project Deep Dive

- Project Forerunner, a Taiwanese drone battery manufacturer, had a chance to spend 5 or 6 days with them between DCOMP and AUSA
 - During AUSA, the company introduced us to nine additional Taiwanese firms with potential interest in U.S. expansion.
 - A formal Project visit was on October 10, 2025, to view sites and community assessment
 - These connections support a broader concept to establish a Taiwanese industrial ecosystem locally, fostering collaboration and investment in advanced manufacturing and defense-related technologies.
- Project ACMI, looking to develop a drone and counter-drone campus.
 - A similar campus is currently NSA Crane, in Red River, TX, focused on munition.
 - Potential sites under consideration include locations near I-295 and the Racetrack area.
- Project Compartmented, a U.S.-based copier parts manufacturer and repair company identified as a prospect.
 - Two in-person visits have been conducted to advance discussions.
 - A Letter of Intent (LOI) is currently in progress with Exeter for the 4800 Corporation site.
 - Project is moving forward on a rapid timeline.

Robert Van Geons discussed projects Goalie and Mackers. Project Goalie: A U.S.-based e-commerce company is seeking 250,000 square feet of new construction. The

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project represents an \$80 million investment and is expected to create 100 full-time jobs. The company is currently not seeking any incentives. Project Mackers: A proposed large-scale outdoor entertainment complex with a planned investment of \$120 million. The project is anticipated to generate 180 full-time jobs.

5.0 Reports and Analytics

5.1. Marketing & Communications – Brittany Odom highlighted the first annual Drone Competition (DCOMP25), Marketing Updates, and Upcoming Events.

DCOMP25

DCOMP 2025 was held October 8-9 at The Range Complex and had over 100 attendees. The team received positive feedback and will move forward with hosting this event on an annual basis.

Marketing Updates

Recently Attended Events:

- October 2: NCSE Charlotte Industrial Brokers Reception
- October 8-9: DCOMP 2025 – The Range Complex
- October 13 – 15: RES'25 Next Level Leadership Summit – Julep Farms, GA
- October 15 – 17: RES'25 Senior Executive Symposium – Highlands, NC
- October 20 – 25: Paris/France Trip with Parker Poe

Media Coverage:

- Project Superman: [Fayetteville Observer](#), [CityView](#), [GFBJ](#)
- Huntsville, AL Trip: [Cumberland County](#), [GFBJ](#)
- New Building: [Fayetteville Observer](#)

Ongoing Projects:

- Content Creation
- FCEDC Swag Items
- New Building Event & FCEDC 10th Anniversary

Upcoming Events:

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- November 3 – 6: Advanced Economic Development Leadership Class – Kansas City, KS
- November 17 – 20: Modern Warfare Week – Fort Bragg & The Range Complex
- December 4: GFBJ Power Breakfast: Taking Care of Business

5.2. Existing Industry Report – Chela Scott shared Manufacturing Week Highlights observed September 29 through October. Partnering with Cumberland County Schools’ Career Technical Education Department, FCEDC was able to coordinate site visits and tours to MANN+HUMMEL, Myron, Eaton, Parks Building Solutions, and Goodyear Tire. The trips included students from 7 high schools and 1 middle school. Students were highly engaged throughout the week, asking insightful questions about hiring requirements, career pathways, and workplace expectations. Many of the tours included hands-on activities, allowing students to interact directly with tools, materials, and processes. Employees from various departments shared personal stories and insights into their roles, offering students a deeper understanding of the wide range of careers available beyond what a typical plant tour might reveal. Several companies shared that they offer entry-level positions for students directly out of high school, along with information on certifications and minimum requirements for advancement into higher-level and management roles. Several representatives emphasized their connection to Fayetteville Technical Community College, noting that they actively hire from its programs and that many of the college’s offerings align directly with the skills and roles needed at their facilities.

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

Black Voices Museum - Chela Scott shared that A public session was held to share updates on the museum project. Bill Cassell and Dr. Dauv outlined the original charge from the City and County and provided background on the designated site.

Key highlights included:

- Findings from community engagement underscored Fayetteville’s unique strengths, including its storytelling heritage and opportunities for resident involvement.
- Eight core outreach themes emerged, emphasizing local voices, youth engagement, and inclusive representation.
- The project’s four foundational pillars were introduced: Arts & Culture, Empowerment Hub, Centers for Social Equity, and A Haven for Healing.

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- Regional models such as the National Museum of African American History and Culture (D.C.) and the Harvey B. Gantt Center (Charlotte) were referenced.
- Gensler presented early conceptual designs, renderings, and a projected economic impact overview.

Can Do Performance Financing Program:

Chela Scott shared the Can Do Performance Financing Program updates.

Powering Prosperity: A Small Business Resource Event for Empowerment and Growth with PWC's Economic Inclusion Program and Carolina Small Business Development Fund.

Aaron Harris and Camille Little from PWC provided an overview of their procurement process, including how to become a vendor and the requirements for partnership. FCEDC shared details about the Can Do Performance Financing Program, outlining eligibility and benefits. Magaly Rivera from Carolina Small Business Development Fund presented various loan products and support services available to small businesses.

Attendees had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with each partner to ask specific questions, explore available resources, and network with fellow entrepreneurs and community stakeholders. There has also been great feedback from attendees and the community, inviting the team to present at future events.

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

6.1. Innovation Nexus – 611 W. Russell Move – Robert Van Geons stated that CPS has been selected to lead design, architectural, and construction management for the project. Homemakers will vacate the space by October 31, with all carpeting and backing scheduled for removal by November 15. Barring any unforeseen issues, the move out of Suite 401A will proceed immediately thereafter. Should complications arise, a month-to-month lease is available to accommodate delays. Suite 402A will remain in use through April 2026.

7.0 Director's Round Table

Ferd Irizarry asked about the current demographics in Fayetteville, mentioning the current birthrate and the correlation between it and the skilled labor force, the ability to hire skilled workers, and the skills or lack thereof. He also mentioned the possibility of

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managing a metric to track education, skills, High school programs available, referencing the Science Olympiad, StarWard Stem Expo and the District C. He discussed the lack of participation and mentioned the correlation of STEM and academic excellence and talent management and possibly incorporating FTCC.

Robert Van Geons mentioned this is something that we do track annually, but we could focus on incorporating this topic in the conversation more often.

Dr. Mark Sorrels mentioned that there are multiple challenges in higher education, one being that male participation is underperforming. FTCC is working to address the issue, beginning with early awareness. Another issue is that quality STEM is not prevalent in rural communities. Looking for

8.0 Closed Session

Action: Secretary Carl Manning made a motion to go into a Closed Session. Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth seconded the motion. The meeting entered Closed Session at 9:04 A.M.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Action: In Closed Session, Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth made a motion to approve the contract for the CEO as presented by the Executive Committee. Secretary Carl Manning seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Action: Treasurer Bill Hedgepeth made a motion to come out of Closed Session. The motion was seconded by Ferd Irizarry. The meeting exited Closed Session at 9:15 A.M.

9.0 Adjournment

Action: Chairwoman Kathryn Cox adjourned the meeting. Vice Chair Timothy Bryant seconded the adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 A.M.

Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Next Meeting: TBD