***Laurens County Development Corporation***

Board Meeting – **Minutes**

Tuesday – March 20, 2018

Attendees:

Shawn Bell, Justin Benfield, Jon Caime, Bill Ed Cannon, Rusty Denning, Jeff Field, Randy Lis, Amanda Munyan, David O’Shields, David Pitts, Rodney Smith, Mayor John Stankus, and John Young

Guests:

None

Staff:

Jon Coleman, Lynn Finley, Whitney Robertson, Sandy Cruickshanks

Press:

Emil Finley (WLBG), Vic MacDonald (Chronicle)

Chairman Field called the meeting to order at 12:20 and gave the invocation.

*Minutes and Financials*

Chairman Field asked the Board for a motion to approve the meeting’s agenda. Justin Benfield made the motion to approve and Mayor Stankus seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the agenda.

Chairman Field then asked the Board for a motion to approve the minutes from the 11/21/17 meeting. Rodney Smith made the motion to approve the minutes as presented and Mayor Stankus seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Lynn Finley provided a recap of expenses for December 2017, January and February 2018. The financials were accepted as information only.

*Executive Director’s Report – Jonathan Coleman*

* Mr. Coleman began by sharing that the overall economic development activity is very strong. Staff has received 20 RFIs since the first of the year compared to 15 through March in 2017.
* The LCDC hosted five SC DOC project managers on a county wide tour in early March showcasing available product and assets.
* Spec Building Update: The spec building loan voted on by the board for the Hunter Industrial Park was closed on in February. The planning team is in the process of finalizing the design concepts which should go to bid in April. For information, an image of the preliminary design concept is included in the information packets – including the site plan and building concepts. This building will be very visible along interstate I-385. The City of Clinton is about at the same stage of planning for a spec building which will be located in the I26 Commerce Park. These buildings will be 2 different sizes providing good options for promoting to prospects.
* The change over to work with SC PEBA benefits directly is going well. It took a couple of months for the conversion to settle out but all seems to be working well with this new direct arrangement.
* Meetings with approximately 11 industries located in the Fountain Inn area are being held now to make introductions to the Laurens County team. The fire service responsibility will change over to Laurens County fire service on July 1 and Lynn has been working with Greg Lindley to plan and attend these visits to share information and to answer questions.
* For upcoming professional development - Whitney and Lynn attended a Women in Economic Development leadership seminar in February. Whitney will also be attending the SCEDA Institute which will meet once a quarter throughout the year. In May, Jon will be completing the second of three sessions in the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute (OUEDI).
* The Upstate SC Alliance annual meeting will be the last week of March where they have the CEO of BMW planned as the keynote speaker. The LCDC annual golf industry and investor appreciation golf tournament is also the last week of March. Much appreciation goes to the LCWSC and Thomas & Hutton teams for being the two presenting sponsors and to all the other sponsors for the tournament. This event is always a great event for networking and making connections from within county and around the state.
* Piedmont Tech is hosting a grand opening on Phase III of the CAM on April 6. This facility continues to be a great asset for the county and in promoting to prospects.
* The SC Power Team will be unveiling their year long labor study initiative the end of March. This study includes data on the state, regions and individual counties. It will identify current shortages of workers in specific positions and statistics of new jobs which may be coming to our area. The team from SC Power Team will be at the next board meeting to give a presentation of this study and the findings.

*Higher Opportunity Initiative – Jonathan Coleman & Whitney Robertson*

The workforce video that was planned and filmed last year has grown into a full initiative which has been labeled “Laurens County: A High Opportunity.” It is much more than just a video. There is a website ([www.higheropportunity.com](http://www.higheropportunity.com)) which includes many resources for students and adults. These resources include links to the workforce video and individual testimonials, school, scholarship, and apprenticeship links, industry job page links, news & events, and a complete list of Laurens County industries. Whitney has developed a color information piece, with four versions, that will be given to all middle and high school students in the county sharing this information. Partners at both school districts will also email an electronic version of this piece to the student email addresses which will contain a link to the Higher Opportunity website. Advertising time has been purchased at the Capitol Theatre in Laurens to run this video as the preview to every movie throughout the summer, also reaching the established target market of students and parents. As an update on outreach: To date, the video has been viewed over 4,100 times on Facebook and over 1,000 times on the LCDC YouTube channel.

*Business and Education Partnership – Lynn Finley*

The Business and Education Partnership team will be coming together March 26 at the CAM. Agenda items will include sharing information on the new Higher Opportunity initiative along with an update on offering the SC Manufacturing Certification at the high school level. Tara Dean will give an overview on progress made to begin offering in the fall 2018 semester.

The LCDC is also partnering with several other entities to host a job fair April 24 focused on graduating high school students and current Piedmont Tech students. These students will have dedicated time to visit with participating companies and then the general public will be invited to also attend. There are currently 18 local industries committed to attend. In preparation for the job fair, info sessions have been held at Clinton and Laurens High Schools featuring HR professionals from six different companies along with resume assistance and interview skills.

*Executive Session – Economic Development Matter*

Chairman Field asked for a motion to go into Executive Session at 12:48. Justin Benfield motioned to enter executive session and Mayor Stankus seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved moving into executive session.

The Board returned to open session at 12:54 with no action taken.

*The Connexial Center – Jonathan Coleman*

Mr. Coleman covered information regarding plans for a new industrial park to be located on I-385 and Friendship Church Rd near Gray Court. This park is being planned by Laurens Electric Cooperative with funds also contributed by the SC Power Team. A master concept plan is included in the information packet and shows the current park size to be approximately 330 acres with the potential to hold over 2 million sq. ft. in building space.

*Octagon Reinvestment Funds Approval – Jeff Field & Jonathan Coleman*

Chairman Field continued that as part of the creation of this new park the LCDC would like to bring to a vote a request for funding to be used to construct the entrance road as part of Phase I development. The amount requested is approximately 15% of the total budget and seen as a good leveraging of funds to support the project. The funds being requested are from the Octagon Reinvestment Fund and Land Sale Funds. Octagon Funds are funds held by resolution set aside for this purpose and to be reinvested into infrastructure for economic development. Land Sale Funds are profits realized from the sale of property in Owings Industrial Park. Both accounts are held to be used on economic development projects such as this. The finance committee has met to discuss and Mr. John Young, Chairman of the Finance Committee, was asked to bring forward their recommendation. He stated the Finance Committee would like to recommend the adoption of Resolution 2018.03 and everyone has been provided a copy of this at their places. The Finance Committee recommends committing $750,000 from the infrastructure reinvestment account and $250,000 from the land sale account to be used to construct the road in phase I development of the Connexial Center Park. Being a recommendation coming from the Finance Committee, no motion is needed, so Chairman Field asked for a second. The second was provided by Shawn Bell. After entertaining questions, Chairman Field called for a vote which was approved unanimously.

*Other Reports:*

None

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn S. Finley