

## ***Laurens County Development Corporation***

Board Meeting – **Minutes**

Tuesday – July 16, 2024

### Attendees:

Jimmy Capps, Jim Donahoo, Jeff Field, Thomas Higgs, Mayor Stellartean Jones, Amanda Munyan, Mayor Nathan Senn, Dr. Joey Penland, Steve West

### Guests:

None

### Staff:

Jon Coleman, Lynn Finley, Whitney Lagrange, Sandy Cruickshanks

### Press:

None

Chairman West called the meeting to order at 12:11.

### Minutes and Financials

Chairman West asked the Board for a motion to approve the meeting's agenda. Mayor Nathan Senn made the motion to approve the agenda and Dr. Jody Pendland seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the agenda.

Chairman West asked the Board for a motion to approve the minutes from both the 3/19/24 and 5/21/24 meetings. Jim Donahoo made the motion to approve the minutes as presented and Jimmy Capps seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Lynn Finley provided a recap of expenses for May and June 2024. The financials were accepted as information only.

### 2023 Audit Review – Matt Phillips, Phillips CPA's and Advisors

Matt Phillips provided a detailed review of the 2023 audit results and answered questions from the board. He reported that Phillips CPA's and Advisors provided a "clean and unmodified" opinion of the LCDC financial position as of December 31, 2023, with no material weaknesses and no items of note to report. He stated this is the best opinion the LCDC can receive.

### Existing Industry Update – Lynn Finley

\* There is a Career Showcase kickoff meeting planned in August. The event will be held in Newberry this year on November 7 at Piedmont Technical College. Whitney and Lynn will be supporting this event again this year. Companies are always needed to set up career information tables and interact with students, so please let us know if you would like to help this year.

\* Piedmont Technical College is planning a Business & Industry Forum on August 13 at the CAM. This is a follow-up to the first they hosted in April.

\* Lynn plans to send the industry wage survey invitation to companies earlier this year to give more time for planning before annual budgets are finalized. The link will be sent by email in early August.

\* HTI and SC Works are hosting two job fairs on Thursday, July 18. The first will be held at Clinton High School from 10:00 to 12:00 and the second at Laurens High School from 2:00 to 4:00. They will be utilizing the SC Works Career Coach van in the parking lots. It is open to recent high school graduates and the public at large.

\* The Laurens County unemployment rate was last reported for May at 3.8% compared to the state rate of 3.4%. The state labor participation rate is 57.2.

### Marketing Update – Whitney Laqrangle

- LCDC will host this year's Stew n' Brew event this fall for industry, investors and supporters, hopefully out at Musgrove Mill again. Details are being discussed on availability and event space on their end.
- LCDC continues to partner with PC Athletics again this year. We are working to plan a couple of networking/social events to coincide with games and activities. Stay tuned for "save the date" notifications in the next month or two. PSAs will be broadcasted at games regarding our sponsorship and the mission of LCDC for community awareness.
- Website and Facebook reporting:
  - Since last board meeting, we've had 4.4K web views by 1.6K users
    - Top 3 pages in order of popularity are the home page, Visit Laurens County page, and the Properties Search page
  - We have 1.9K likes on our Facebook page and 627 on Instagram
    - Since last board meeting, we've reached over 7K people on Facebook and Instagram reach has increased by 12.1%
    - In comparing our Facebook reach to other economic development organizations, we are ahead or toe-to-toe with larger areas: Greenville Area DC has 1.5K, Richland Co has less than 500, and the regional alliance, Upstate SC Alliance only has 200 more followers than we do.
- We are still planning to create a video to highlight the County for marketing purposes. The video will likely focus on quality of life but also our business climate. Due to videos becoming outdated or obsolete so quickly as surroundings and circumstances change, we really want to take the time to drill down on what we want our vision to be and ensure we capture content that will stand the test of time--or at least a couple of years.

### Economic Development Activity – Jonathan Coleman

\* Mr. Coleman shared that where the Upstate Alliance's RFI data is tracking similarly to 2023, Laurens County is not. The number of RFIs received to date in 2023 was 53 where to date in 2024 is 31. Last year in July Laurens County received 10, in 2024 it is 1.

\* Project Dogwood will announce on Wednesday, July 17. They purchased the spec building in Clinton and have committed to \$30 million in investment and 135 new jobs. That will bring the overall total for 2024 to \$182.4 million in capital investment and 175 jobs. This is a great company and will be a very good addition to the community. They are closing a unionized facility in Ohio and relocating to Clinton. That is why it has taken so long to announce. This is a very high-tech manufacturing equipment manufacturer.

\* Project Tomahawk, that was announced at the end of 2023 and will be on Metric Road, has selected their general contractor (McCroy) and should begin construction in the next month or so.

### Executive Session:

None

### Other Business:

\*September meeting location: The new company to announce on July 17 will be utilizing the flex space at the CAM on the date of the next board meeting so the LCDC meeting will be moved to a different location that has not been established at this point. Please look for an email with that information for the September meeting.

\*John Lummus with Upstate Alliance Update: At this point, 2024 has been a good year so far for the Upstate Alliance. Recent data shows that the Upstate is tracking consistently to 2023 even with the summer slowdown and presidential election. They focus on tracking new leads and pipeline generation. In 2023 through the end of June they tracked 99 new leads and for the same period in 2024 they were at 108. Those come from mission outreaches, from the Department of Commerce, and from site consultants. For presentations to site consultants and companies, in 2023 the Upstate Alliance gave 181 through June and in 2024 that number is 175. There have been 29 site consultants hosted this year by the Upstate Alliance learning more about the area. To date they have sent out 31 RFIs (Requests for Information) – at this point

in 2023 it was 30. Of the RFIs received by the Upstate Alliance, 55% were received directly from site consultants. Jon Coleman is the chairman of the local developer's committee and has been doing a great job leading that group.

With no other reports the meeting was adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn S. Finley