

Laurens County Development Corporation

Board Meeting – Minutes

Monday, July 20, 2026

Attendees:

Shawn Bell, Dabs Davis, Charles Dixon, Jim Donahoo, Brown Patterson, Mayor Nathan Senn, Jerre Threat, Steve West, John Young

Guests:

Matt Phillips – Phillips CPA

Melissa Ferqueron & Wes Meetz – Laurens County

Staff:

Jon Coleman, Lynn Finley, Whitney Lagrange

Press:

John Clayton, Laurens Advertiser

Chairman Patterson called the meeting to order at 12:17 and gave the invocation. The meeting was held at the Laurens County Historic Courthouse.

Minutes and Financials

Chairman Patterson asked the Board for a motion to approve the meeting's agenda after amending to include an executive session for a contractual matter. John Young made the motion to approve the amended agenda and Dabs Davis seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the agenda.

Chairman Patterson asked the Board for a motion to approve the minutes from the 3/17/26 and 5/19/26 meetings. Shawn Bell made the motion to approve the minutes as presented and Steve West seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Lynn Finley provided a recap of expenses for May and June 2026. The financials were accepted as information only.

2025 Annual Audit Review – Matt Phillips, Phillips CPA's and Advisors

* Matt Phillips provided a detailed review of the 2025 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, 2025, 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

* On June 29th Laurens County was the 6th of 7 educator industry tours held across the Upper Savannah region. Branded as Business and Menus, this initiative of the SC Department of Workforce is designed to expose educators to the manufacturing and hospitality sectors to build awareness of career opportunities that can then be shared firsthand with their students. The attendees were welcomed by the Nordson team in Clinton and participated in an overview of the company and then taken on a facility tour. There was a lot of conversation about the variety of job opportunities, education requirements, future pathways and expected salaries. Lunch was hosted at Great Crepes followed by a candid conversation with the owner, Kaleefa Neely, about the business side of working in the hospitality industry.

* Ms. Finley was invited by the Chamber of Commerce to sit on a panel at their last Women @ Work event. It was a great event, and Lynn was honored to share personal work experiences with other women at different stages in their careers.

* Three of the newest announcements have had their kickoff meetings with readySC. (Shamrock, Suniva, Hydrite) Early support from readySC provides a great jump start for establishing companies.

* The date has been set for the 2027 Annual Investor & Industry Golf Tournament – Thursday, April 1, 2027

* The Laurens County unemployment rate that was last reported for May was 4.0% (compared to the state rate of 4.6%). The current SC labor participation rate is 59% which continues to be a slow improvement.

www.dew.sc.gov

Marketing Update – Whitney Lagrange

* Staff have been working on new RFIs and follow-up requests from companies of previously submitted RFIs. Since May alone, Whitney has worked on almost 10 and had two follow-up requests for drone flyovers from prospects.

* LCDC is going strong with the SEO advertising initiative. LCDC had the 2nd quarter review with Brianna and she reviewed the latest insights from the real-time performance dashboard which a summary follows:

- Overall traffic remained relatively steady compared to Q1, while engagement on the site increased significantly with a 20% increase in average session duration and a 13% lift in user key events. (Key events are important actions that a user takes on the website—such as clicking an email address or downloading a flyer).
 - Over 25% of all visitors to the site completed at least one key event, totaling 732 individual users.
- Top viewed pages were the property search page, staff page, the Aptiv and Suniva articles, and the economic incentives page—which had a 60% increase in sessions this quarter.
- About 28% of traffic is coming from international audiences, with users in Germany, Ireland, Canada and South Korea having strong key event rates.
- More than 300 people came back to our website in Q2, making up about 10% of our traffic. Those returning visitors are twice as likely to take meaningful action on the site, showing LCDC is staying top of mind as companies continue researching locations.
- The two top downloaded PDFs were the Industrial Directory and the property flyer for the former PL Developments building in Clinton

* The annual Stew & Brew will be held on Thursday, October 8th from 4–6 p.m., again at The Lumberyard in Clinton. A save-the-date will be sent sometime in August, with a follow-up invitation in mid-September. This is an annual, informal networking event featuring Lowcountry boil and beverages enjoyed by board members, investors, industry representatives, county leaders, and community supporters. Board members are welcome to extend the invitation to their respective board and council members.

Economic Development Activity – Jonathan Coleman

*The current number of RFIs received is 41 year-to-date compared to 39 at this point in 2025. But since the last board meeting there have been five prospect visits. The last was over two days and was a substantial project of \$2+ billion with another planned for the coming week that is very similar in scope and size and will be their second visit.

*So far to date in 2026, there have been 1,107 new jobs announced and \$675.4 million in investment. Both of those numbers are records for Laurens County. There is a lot to be proud of with this team and board partners working together to achieve these results.

*Jonathan and Lynn went to the Area Development Site Consultant forum in June. There were 27 site consultants in attendance with a lot of one-on-one time. One of which is working on one of these large projects previously mentioned. Jonathan will attend another site consultant two-day event in August.

*The Upstate SC Alliance is strategically developing an initiative of a series of about 12 videos that is an educational series on economic development. It covers topics from what tax revenue means to counties and cities to what industry and population growth means to small business. There seems to be a lot of concern in the public and some misinformation circulation about economic development and certain type industries. They have partnered with Beth Land out of Greenville to who is a longtime site consultant. They plan to launch this initiative in August and then offer rollout presentations in each county. We will most likely have that arranged for the LCDC September meeting.

*A similar topic that could impact the work of LCDC is the recent passing of first reading with Laurens County Council placing a 12-month moratorium on data centers. Jonathan asked others from the County along with the utility providers in the room to offer comment and to discuss any stance the LCDC should or

should not take at this time. Conversation around the pros and cons was offered along with the caution in defining restrictions because data centers come in many different sizes and are found in many different sectors. Hyperscale data centers which seem to be drawing the most concern are rare and will not locate in an area that cannot provide the required electric loads. Those are typically sized at 200 MW and above, so a trend is being seen of locating multiple smaller MW centers in different places. The construction phase is heavy with support but that diminishes dramatically when running. A point was also made that when industry is recruited for Laurens County there is a vetting process and not all companies are a good fit for the community and the people hired to manage this process are skilled in determining the viability of these companies. The goal of establishing development standards can be a positive if they are written responsibly. It was suggested that LCDC wait to see what will be included in the regulation before taking a stance publicly. The utility providers were invited to review this as well to offer comment on any sections that pertain to their area of expertise.

SCDOC Site Enhancement Grant Update – Jonathan Coleman:

*Since the last board meeting LCDC closed on a parcel of 113 acres beside the Connexial Center. A second parcel of 6 acres is under contract and should close in the next month and negotiations are still active for a third parcel.

Executive Session:

Chairman Brown asked for a motion to enter executive session. Mayor Senn made a motion to go into executive session at 1:06 for a contractual matter and was seconded by Jim Donahoo. The Board unanimously approved entering executive session.

Chairman Brown declared the board out of executive session at 1:19 and no action was taken during session.

John Young then made a motion to terminate the mutual contract lease with the Laurens County Chamber of Commerce early with a buyout from the Chamber of \$10,000 and adjustment to the deed to remove LCDC ownership from the Chamber building pending approval from the Laurens County Chamber Board. Steve West seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion with a show of hands with Dabs Davis abstaining from the vote.

Other Business:

None

With no other business the meeting to adjourn at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn S. Finley