***Laurens County Development Corporation***

Board Meeting – **Minutes**

Tuesday – November 21, 2017

Attendees:

Shawn Bell, Justin Benfield, Stan Bryson, Jon Caime, Jeff Field, Amanda Munyan, David O’Shields, David Pitts, Rodney Smith, Mayor John Stankus, Dale Satterfield, Steve West, John Young, and Collie Lehn

Guests:

Sam Leaman (Upper Savannah COG), Whitney Robertson (United Way)

Staff:

Jon Coleman, Lynn Finley, Sandy Cruickshanks

Press:

Billy Dunlap (goLaurens.com), Emil Finley (WLBG), Vic MacDonald (Chronicle)

Chairman Field called the meeting to order at 11:59 and gave the invocation. He also began by introducing Whitney Robertson as the new marketing manager who will be joining the LCDC staff in December.

*Minutes and Financials*

Chairman Field asked the Board for a motion to approve the meeting’s agenda. Stan Bryson made the motion to approve and John Young seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the agenda.

Chairman Field then asked the Board for a motion to approve the minutes from the 9/19/17 meeting. Dale Satterfield made the motion to approve the minutes as presented and Stan Bryson seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Lynn Finley provided a recap of expenses for September and October 2017. The financials were accepted as information only.

*Executive Director’s Report – Jonathan Coleman*

* Lynn Finley provided updates on several initiatives involving existing industry.
	+ The most recent Business & Education Partnership meeting was held in September and was hosted at Piedmont Tech’s CAM Center. Workforce and workforce development continues to be top topics of conversation for our industry leaders. From this meeting, suggestions were made to consider offering the SC Manufacturing Certificate at the high school level. The district representatives were open to exploring this offering and have gone back to their teams to see how to make it work. Right now we are optimistic that approximately 20 to 40 students will be able to begin this course either over the summer or in the fall of 2018.
	+ October 6 was National Manufacturing Day and we had several industries open for student tours. Mogul SC in Gray Court toured approximately 80 high school and 100 middle school students. Teknor Apex in Fountain Inn toured 20 high school students. Fukoku was also available if there had been additional students.
	+ There was a local job fair on October 26 at PTC Higher Ed Center. LCDC partnered with SC Works and PTC. Approximately 30 Laurens County companies participated and at least 250 job seekers. Planning has already begun for the annual spring high school graduate job fair in partnership with the Chamber and SC DOC Regional Workforce Coordinator.
	+ The 2017 wage survey was recently sent to all local industries to collect data. The results should be ready to share by mid-December.
* In late October, the Upstate Alliance hosted an inbound site selectors event. There were nine participants from outside the state. They were divided into small groups and Laurens County hosted one group at ZF. Other events attended by staff was the SCEDA mid-year meeting which was held in Greenville in October and the annual two-day workshop presented by the SC DOC.
* Mr. Coleman participated in an overseas marketing trip with Upstate Alliance to Ireland in early November. They had 14 visits set up with different companies. Since Brexit, Ireland is the fastest growing economy in Europe (12.5% corporate income tax rate) and the last English speaking country in the European Union. Also, being very similar in size geographically and in population, there is a lot of synergy between South Carolina and Ireland. It is a very good landing spot for US companies wishing to enter the European market and SC becomes a good landing spot for Irish companies wishing venture into the American market.
* In early December, will be attending Consultant Connect with Upstate Alliance in New Orleans. It’s a two-day event with 24 site selection people from across the US.
* Chairman Field added that as a follow-up from the presentation at the last meeting by Piedmont Tech and USC-Union at Laurens on the Future Scholarship that we want to make sure that our students know we are committed to funding them through the remainder of this year. Financial support is needed and the committee is looking forward to partnering with County Council at some level but there is also a grassroots effort that has been successful. The Cities of Clinton and Laurens have been supporters along with multiple companies and local individuals. For anyone who would like to get involved or provide support there is a consortium of the LCDC, Chamber, PTC, USC-Union and the Community Foundation working together to make the Future Scholarship successful. For donation opportunities, please speak with the Chamber of Commerce.
* RFIs to date – 59:
	+ Project size: 34% are $0 to $10 million projects / 10% are $10 to $25 million projects / 7% are $25 to $50 million projects / 22% are $50 to $100 million projects / 10% are $100 to $200 million projects / 17% are $200+ million projects
	+ Job creation: 21% is 0 to 50 jobs / 23% is 50 to 100 jobs / 6% is 100 to 150 jobs / 13% is 150 to 250 jobs / 13% is 250 to 500 jobs / 23% is 500+ jobs
	+ Building size: 26% needed 0 to 50,000 sq. ft. / 28% needed 50,000 to 100,000 sq. ft. / 8% needed 100,000 to 150,000 sq. ft. / 5% needed 150,000 to 200,000 sq. ft. / 8% needed 200,000 to 300,000 sq. ft. / 26% needed 300,000+ sq. ft.
* Announced projects:
	+ Job count – 122 vs. 195 in 2016
	+ Investment - $128.9 million vs. $114.1 million in 2016
* FILOT Revenue – 10-year comparison:
	+ In 2007, gross FILOT revenue for the county was at $3.3 million
	+ To date in 2017, gross FILOT revenue for the county is estimated at $9 million
* Just released, the average wage rate for Laurens County (which is used to determined incentives from the State) went up $0.30 for 2017. This moved from $15.70 to $16.00 per hour. $32,000 is the annual number.
* Unemployment – The most recent rate released from the State for Laurens County in October is an average of 4.3%. The State’s rate is the lowest since 2001. Laurens County’s rate goes back further. That is a good number but it is putting a huge strain on the workforce in the local industries.

*SC PEBA Benefits update – Jonathan Coleman*

As everyone is aware, the LCDC applied to State PEBA for retirement and state insurance as a standalone organization. We have received notification that the request is approved and are in the process of setting that up to begin handling in January.

*2018 Budget Approval – John Young, Treasurer*

Mr. Young covered specific line items for explanation and the few changes made to the presented budget made since the first distribution for review. With no questions or discussion, he recommended the budget to the board for vote. Coming from the Finance Committee no motion is needed and Chairman Field called for a vote. The vote to approve the 2018 budget was unanimous.

*Spec Building Agreement with LCPW – Jonathan Coleman*

Mr. Coleman shared that there is a resolution that needs to be presented to the board for vote. It authorizes Jonathan Coleman to sign an MOU with the Laurens Commission of Public Works in partnership with Laurens County to build a spec building in Hunter Industrial Park. The MOU states that the CPW will deed the land to the LCDC who will apply for a loan from Santee Cooper’s spec building loan program. The LCDC will manage the project of constructing the building and the loan will be paid back using the Hunter Industrial Park Funds that are held at the County if needed. Payments begin at year 4 if the building has not sold. After a short comment time, Chairman Field asked the Board for a motion to approve the resolution. Dale Satterfield made a motion to approve and Stan Bryson seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the resolution.

*Annual Meeting – Jonathan Coleman*

Mr. Coleman reminded the Board that the annual meeting is planned for January 18 at Musgrove Mill. Dr. Bruce Yandle, an economist from Clemson, will be the speaker. An invitation will be sent to all board members and please share with your boards and/or councils.

*Other Reports:*

None

*Executive Session:*

None

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn S. Finley