***Laurens County Development Corporation***

Board Meeting - **Minutes**

Tuesday – November 17, 2015

Attendees:

Stan Bryson, Mayor John Carter, Rich D’Alberto, Jeff Field, Randy Garrett, Randy Lis, Ernie Segars, Frank Stovall, Mayor John Stankus, John Young, and Collie Lehn

Guests:

Joe Strauss (Retail Strategies), Laura Koskela (School District 56)

Staff:

Marvin Moss, Jon Coleman, Lynn Finley, Sandy Cruickshanks.

Press:

Vic MacDonald (Chronicle), Emil Finley (WLBG)

Chairman Bryson called the meeting to order at 2:32 and gave the invocation.

*Minutes and Financials*

Chairman Bryson asked the Board for a motion to approve the meeting’s agenda. Rich D’Alberto made the motion to approve and Frank Stovall seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the agenda.

Chairman Bryson then asked the Board for a motion to approve the minutes from the 09/15/15 meeting. Randy Garrett made the motion to approve the minutes as presented and Frank Stovall seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Lynn Finley provided a recap of expenses for September and October. With no questions or comments, the financials were accepted as information only.

Update on Investors: No change in investors in the past two months. There are 46 current investors.

*Existing Industry/Retail Update – Jonathan Coleman:*

* Had the opportunity to tour the new engineering and development center at ZF. It is a very impressive and state of the art facility to have located in Laurens County.
* The official start of the Laurens County Future Scholarship program was this fall semester. The county had 108 high school graduates attend Piedmont Tech which was a 30% increase over last year. It is anticipated that the numbers will increase again in 2016.
* The Upper Savannah job fair was held on September 30 in Greenwood and after reviewing the companies participating, it was the most Laurens County employers ever attending.
* The Upstate Alliance recently hosted a 2 day inbound site selection event. Laurens County had the opportunity to host two of the consultants for half a day. The CAM was showcased along with other workforce development efforts in the County.
* For existing industry: We have Project Beretta that will be announcing in three weeks which is an $8 million expansion and about 30 new jobs. There are two other expansions that should be announcing after the first of the year.

*Retail Strategies Update – Joe Strauss:*

Mr. Strauss provided a detailed update on nationwide trends in 2015 and of the work Retail Strategies has been conducting on behalf of Laurens County. He reported that they have seen an increase in interest and activity in Laurens County in the past 6 months. He also reported that they are currently in confidential negotiations with several restaurants/retailers and hope to have some announcements to share in 2016.

*Economic Development Update – Marvin Moss:*

* RFIs: 45 YTD – 60 at this same point in 2014. Low interest may be attributed to low product of available buildings.
* Site Visits: In 2014 had 56 total – currently at 32 for 2015. Have had numerous conference calls but don’t count those as actual visits.
* So far in 2015 have announced 849 new jobs and $117.2 million in new investment.
* Attended the CPW planning meeting.
* Continuing to work at identifying new property in the northern end of the county. Expecting a report from the engineers by year end on the feasibility of working a larger section in phases.
* Still continuing to explore the possibility of another Spec Building and hope to have that decision worked out within several months.
* Project Laredo is still looking at Hunter Industrial Park. County Council is having the 3rd and final reading on Project Yak in December and a company name will be provided then. Project Lobster is still looking at Clinton.
* Attended meetings in Detroit recently and have a new company looking at northern Laurens County called Project Mold.

*CEDC Update – Frank Stovall:*

* Assisting with Project Lobster
* Have a new retail client looking at Corporate I and hope to have that wrapped up by the end of the month.
* Completed the timber cutting project which brought $175,000 of revenue. Money will be split by City Council to pay down debt and make improvements at Clinton Corporate III.

*Main Street Laurens Update – John Young:*

* Have a new business opening on the Square called Persnickety.
* Held a rain date for Squealin on the Square called Squeakin on the Square. Was more successful than expected. Had over 50 venders and 4 BBQ teams.
* Working on a tax credit workshop for 1Q 2016 for merchants who own businesses on the Square and Downtown to help them understand some of the financial incentives available to them that are housed in the older buildings.

*Organizational Update – Jonathan Coleman:*

With the 2016 budget being presented for vote, Mr. Coleman wanted to cover the top seven line items and to answer any questions from the board. With Jon moving into a new position, Lynn will transition into the vacated role of assistant director. He plans to rearrange some of the duties where both positions will be a hybrid of current and new responsibilities. After the first of the year plans will be considered to hire an additional staff person as a marketing manager. Details have not yet been finalized but the budget covers all these changes.

*Finance Committee Update – Frank Stovall:*

The finance committee has provided the proposed 2016 budget

* The overall budget is a slight increase, less than 1% as compared to the previous year.
* The most significant increases can be found in line items that have to do with the organization’s core mission, which include business retention, expansion, and marketing.
* Mr. Coleman covered the changes to salary line items

Mr. Stovall stated that the budget is recommended to the Board for approval by the members of the finance committee and coming from the committee it requires no second. After hearing the recommendation, Chairman Bryson called for a vote to approve the proposed 2016 budget. The vote carried unanimously.

*Possible Bylaw Modification – Jonathan Coleman:*

Mr. Coleman stated that he wanted to make everyone aware that the Executive Committee would be meeting to consider possible bylaw changes. It is typical that new officers are elected at the November board meeting for the following year. Discussions were had in January 2015 that terms would be extended to two years for the current officers but was never voted on by the board. One item to be presented at the January 2016 meeting will be that the term for officers will be two years and the current slate will continue on another year.

*Other Business*

Mr. Rich D’Alberto made a request to give a 15 minute presentation at the January board meeting to cover the governance structure changes of the Greenville Health System.

Chairman Bryson formally thanked Marvin Moss for his years of service and dedication to Laurens County. A drop-in will immediately follow the board meeting in Marvin’s honor.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn S. Finley