***Laurens County Development Corporation***

Board Meeting – **Minutes**

Tuesday – May 15, 2018

Attendees:

Shawn Bell, Jon Caime, Bill Ed Cannon, Gary Coleman, Randy Garrett, Randy Lis, Amanda Munyan, David O’Shields, Rodney Smith, John Young, and Collie Lehn

Guests:

James Chavez (SC Power Team), Laura Turner (Senator Graham’s Office), Cindy Jacobs (School District 56), Jolie Patterson (Fountain Inn intern, USC student)

Staff:

Jon Coleman, Lynn Finley, Whitney Robertson, Sandy Cruickshanks

Press:

Emil Finley (WLBG)

Vice Chairman Garrett called the meeting to order at 12:15 and Mr. Emil Finley gave the invocation.

*Minutes and Financials*

Vice Chairman Garrett asked the Board for a motion to approve the meeting’s agenda. John Young made the motion to approve and Shawn Bell seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the agenda.

Vice Chairman Garrett then asked the Board for a motion to approve the minutes from the 03/20/18 meeting. Shawn Bell made the motion to approve the minutes as presented and John Young seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Lynn Finley provided a recap of expenses for March and April 2018. The financials were accepted as information only.

*Executive Director’s Report – Jonathan Coleman*

An investor of the LCDC has offered the use of a suite at a Greenville Drive game on June 12 and the staff will be hosting a group of board members, industry leaders, and investors. Email invitations will be sent later in the week.

For overall activity: There have been 26 RFIs to date (9 in March, 2 in April and 2 in May). These have resulted in several site visits and have been short listed for four projects.

The golf tournament was a success and well attended – pleased to have the most participation from industry over the last several years.

The grand opening of Phase III for the PTC CAM was held on April 5 and this center continues to be a huge asset for the county. Clinton celebrated the grand opening of GE Mechanical Test Lab at the end of the month.

Mr. Coleman reported that he completed the second phase of the University of Oklahoma EDI course and Lynn will be attending the second phase this fall.

Mr. Coleman is planning to travel with Upstate Alliance and the SC DOC in June to Ireland to participate as speakers at a manufacturing conference sponsored by Enterprise Ireland along with several company visits.

*Product Development Update – Jonathan Coleman*

As an update, the surveys, geotechnical and permitting are all complete on the spec building the LCDC is partnering on with Laurens CPW. Construction bids will be accepted early to mid-June and construction to begin soon afterwards. Mr. Cannon was asked to share any updates from the spec building currently in the works for the City of Clinton. He shared that all was moving well in the planning and was also very close to accepting bids for construction.

Mr. Coleman provided an update on The Connexial Center in the Gray Court area. Due diligence is wrapping up on Phase I and plans for water / sewer are in the works. Have received some comments of concern from a few people that live in the area concerning current and future traffic. The LCDC respects their concerns and are doing what can be done to plan for that. The LCDC is currently working with ZF Transmissions on improving wayfinding and direction signage to their facility and logistics center which should improve some of the current issues.

*Existing Industry Update – Lynn Finley*

April 26 was an important day for three local industries. GE Mechanical Test Lab was welcomed to the community with a grand opening and two others were recognized in Columbia by the governor. Walmart Distribution Center and CeramTec were presented with SC Industry Appreciation Awards for their accomplishments and contributions to Laurens County. Also, in April, a job fair was held at the Higher Ed Center for graduating high school students and the general public. There were over 25 companies present and approximately 110 job seekers (45 were students). The Business & Education Partnership team met in March to hear an update on offering the SC Manufacturing Certification at Laurens HS. We are also wrapping up the joint visits to industries with the Laurens County Fire Service team. These were introductions and to cover the information pertaining to the new station opening July 1 located at Thompson Rd.

*Higher Opportunity Update – Whitney Robertson*

To update the board, Ms. Robertson shared that the Higher Opportunity video on Facebook has been shared at least 51 times, viewed over 4,000 times and the data shows that it has reached over 8,000 people. The brochure cards have been printed and delivered to Districts 55 and 56 to be distributed to all middle and high school students. There will be a second distribution to all middle and high school students at the beginning of the school year during registration. Thumb drives loaded with the workforce video have been provided to the schools to be used in classrooms or on information boards. Advertising at the Capitol Theatre has been extended to run through August. The new dedicated website ([www.higheropportunity.com](http://www.higheropportunity.com)) is up for access and will grow and evolve as new information is available. One tab to mention specifically is the Job Opportunities tab. There is an active link there to any Laurens County industry that has an online job page. There are also links to other online job search engines which direct to Laurens County specific results.

*Project Pioneer – SC Power Team, James Chavez*

Mr. Chavez provided an informative and thorough review of the SC Power Team’s newly released labor study initiative which provides up-to-date labor information statewide or by county. The data can be accessed directly from the Power Team’s website. This tool focuses primarily on three pieces of data: commute patterns, underemployment, and skills gap. The key takeaways for Laurens County are:

* New and expanding employers in the region can expect to attract the vast majority of their workforce from a 45-minute drive time radius.
* The region is very well positioned for manufacturing requirements due to strong presence, concentration, and growth of key production-related occupational clusters.
* There is lower underemployment in the region overall, a sign of a relatively tight labor market.
* Employers report that they can find entry level workers, but that hard and soft skills can be lacking.
* There is a high demand for skilled machinists and maintenance workers, among others. Training programs are critical to help meet that demand.

*Other Reports:*

None

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn S. Finley