

**NEWBERRY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
Feb. 21, 2023  
6:00 P.M.**

*The Newberry County Council Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023 in the Courthouse Annex Conference Room, 1309 College St., Newberry, SC, for a rescheduled meeting. The first quarter meeting was originally scheduled for Monday, March 6, 2023, but that meeting date was changed due to one of the members planning to be out of town on March 6.*

*Notice of the meeting was duly advertised, as required by law.*

**PRESENT:** Travis Reeder, Council Member, Committee Member  
Nick Shealy, Council Member, Committee Member  
Les Hipp, Council Vice-Chair, Committee Member  
Karl Sease, Council Member  
Debbie Cromer, County Finance Director  
Rick Farmer, Economic Development Director

**ABSENT:** None

**1. Call to Order**

In the absence of a chair, Mr. Farmer called the meeting to order, and noted that the meeting was posted well in advance, in accordance with state law. He determined a quorum was present.

**2. Election of Committee Chair for 2023**

Mr. Farmer said the first order of business on the agenda was to elect a committee chair for 2023. He opened the floor to nominations. Mr. Reeder nominated Mr. Hipp, and the second was supplied by Mr. Shealy. Mr. Farmer asked if there were further nominations. Hearing none, he declared nominations closed, and called for the question on the floor. The vote was unanimous, and Mr. Hipp was elected chair for 2023. *(Note: Mr. Sease was attending the meeting out of an interest and economic development, and did not vote during this meeting.)* Mr. Farmer then turned the meeting over to the new chair.

**3. Additions, Deletions & Adoption of the Agenda**

Chairman Hipp asked the committee if there were any additions or deletions of the agenda. He heard none. He asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Shealy made the motion and Mr. Reeder supplied the second. The vote was unanimous.

**4. Public Comments**

Mr. Hipp asked Mr. Farmer if anyone signed up to speak publicly at the meeting. Mr. Farmer said no one had.

**5. Staff Report**

a. **Project Activity:** Mr. Farmer reported that project activity is “solid,” and said there were six site submissions since the committee last met. He said there are several expansions at local industries pending.

**b. Product Development**

i. Mr. Farmer said the new road in Mind-Carolina Commerce Park was complete. He said final steps include the disbursement of grant funds.

ii. Mr. Farmer said the Daeyoung Construction in Mid-Carolina Commerce Park II is now complete, and the new public road to enter the park is now complete. He said final steps would be having the county’s public works director inspect and approve the road for adoption into the county system, disburse grants to Daeyoung as per agreements, and the installation of a new sign for MCCP II. He said he requested funds for the new sign in his FY23-24 budget request, and hoped to receive some grant funding from the state to help pay for the sign.

iii. Mr. Farmer said the Mawsons Way Extension project is back on track, and the engineers first hired in 2019 to design and permit the road were back on the job. He said he has resubmitted a grant request letter to the SC Dept. of Commerce, which had originally awarded \$600,000 to the project back then. He said he is optimistic we can get these grants reallocated, but it is not a sure thing.

**c. Prospect Development**

i. Mr. Farmer reported that the 2022 State Korea Mission was completed last October. He said this was his fourth Korean Mission, and this one was likely the best, as Sec. of Commerce Harry Lightsey participated in the mission and stayed with the mission group the entire week, calling on prospects and attending existing industry meetings.

ii. Mr. Farmer said he included \$15,000 in his FY23-24 budget proposal in the hopes he can overhaul the economic development web site in the coming fiscal year. He said the last overhaul was in 2016.

**d. Other**

i. Mr. Farmer showed slides including charts that track per capita income growth for the past decade. He said there was slow and steady growth for most of the decade, but that incomes began spiking in 2020. He said PCI in Newberry County grew at a rate of about 24% just in the last three years. He showed a similar slide tracking the community’s average wage, which is a SC Dept. of Revenue calculation that divides per capita income by 2000 hours worked in a year. He said the average wage reported by DOR in December of 2022 was \$23.46 per hour, up from \$19.00 per hour in 2019.

Mr. Farmer reported that the community’s average wage can be an important factor in calculating incentives offered to new investments by the state. He said Newberry is a Tier I county, and is considered “most developed,” along with some of the largest and wealthiest counties in the state like Richland, Lexington, Greenville and Charleston. He noted that Newberry is the smallest county in Tier I, and while our

countywide population is about 38,000, the average size of Tier I counties is far larger, with an average population of 248,765. He noted that if Newberry County were competing with Laurens and Greenwood County for a good project creating 200 jobs above the average wage, the state would offer the company about \$300,000 per year in the state's lucrative Job Development Credits. But that same project would be offered about \$4 million per year in Greenwood and Laurens counties, as those are Tier III counties.

iii. Mr. Farmer said he routinely visits and speaks with industries around the county, and presented a list of the companies with which he has had recent contact.

#### **6. Comments by and discussion items from Committee Members**

Mr. Hipp asked if there were any comments or further discussion from the committee members. Hearing none, he moved to the next item on the agenda.

*7. Executive Session: §30-4-70 (a)(2) and (a)(5): Discussion of matters incident to proposed contractual arrangements, and related to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other business in the area served by the public body, including Projects Viking, Motion, Red Stag, N and other unnamed projects.*

Mr. Hipp said that the committee needed to enter executive session to discuss matters of economic development, contractual matters, and issues surrounding the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries. Mr. Shealy made a motion that the committee enter executive session, and Mr. Reeder supplied the second. The vote was unanimous.

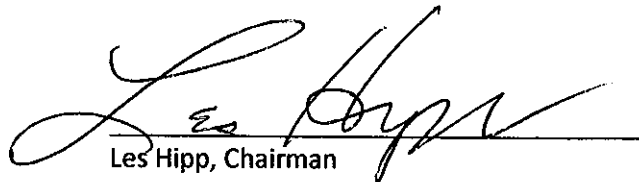
#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:28 p.m. – 7:31 p.m.**

Upon returning to open session, Mr. Hipp stated that the committee discussed the items as previously described, and that no actions were taken during executive session.

#### **8. Adjourn**

Mr. Shealy offered a motion to adjourn, and Mr. Reeder gave the second. The vote was unanimous, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Newberry County Council

  
Les Hipp, Chairman

Approved: 3-1-2023