

Minutes
York County Economic Development Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 6, 2023
6:00pm

The York County Economic Development Committee met on the above date for an Economic Development Committee Meeting at 6:00pm at 1070 Heckle Boulevard, Rock Hill, SC. The following Council members were present: Council member Watts Huckabee and Council member Tom Audette. Also present were County Manager, David Hudspeth, Economic Development Director, David Swenson, County Attorney, Michael Kendree, and Clerk to Council, Karen Brogdon.

Jason Flora from Economic Development also attended.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Tom Audette

Motion was made by Council member Watts Huckabee and seconded by Council member Tom Audette to approve the minutes from the August 24, 2023 Economic Development Committee meeting. Motion Carried.

David Swenson, Economic Development Director provided general Economic Development activities update and reported that there were 4 new opportunities in November 2023 and 5 new leads added. Mr. Swenson stated that 2023 generated \$1.1B in investments, which is a huge win for York County, with QTS Data, Silfab Solar and State Seal.

Mr. Swenson reported on Business Retention and Expansion:

- Goal of the BR&E program is to engage existing companies to further monitor, grow and promote the local economy
- Potentials are looking better than the past year
- Concerns remain pertaining to finding workers and wage rates
- Group meetings occurring and participation interest improving
- Existing industry golf event in October

Marketing/Research

- Marketing Mission Trips
 - October/November
 - Site consultants event in Greenville, SC – CRBA
 - Southeast US – Japan event/3 existing industry visits in Japan – SC I-77 Alliance/DOC
 - Germany Marketing Mission /Existing Industry Visit – SC I-77 Alliance/DOC
 - Elkem marketing video completed; Atlas Copco next
 - Manufacturing week recognition
 - Collaborative branding plan activities
 - ED team toured the Port of Charleston – October

- Economic indicators completed – November
- Fall 2023 Business Pulse Survey sent – November
- Economic Insights Newsletter next week – December
- YCGP's Program and Budget Planning – December

Items to Note

- SC NEXUS for Advanced Resilient Energy was selected one of 31 Regional Tech Hubs
 - SC Nexus can compete for up to \$75M in funding for innovation projects
- Governor and SCDOC ED Summit – January
- Carolina Thread Trail / Rails to Trails discussion – Rock Hill to York
- SC I-77 Alliance fundraising underway – next 6 months

Mr. Swenson provided an overview regarding the previous Gravity Center discussion/proposal. The request was for \$100,000 annually for a 3-year commitment to fund non-profit Gravity Center.

Council member Watts Huckabee stated that he has concerns with the County investing money in the not-for-profit side of the Gravity Center (for profit) that angel investors take an interest in.

Council member Tom Audette stated that he is in support of the program and Council providing funding to help with small businesses. Mr. Audette stated that mechanisms could be put in place to protect the taxpayer's money

Committee members would like additional information about how other Counties (Greenville and Spartanburg) set up this structure and requested that staff vet the process further by setting up meetings with the Gravity Center board members, York Tech Board members and York County Chamber. Once this has been done, report back to the ED Committee with the findings.

Next Committee meeting will be January 24, 2024 at 6:00pm.

Motion was made by Council member Watts Huckabee and seconded by Council member Tom Audette to go into Executive Session to discuss Economic Development Project Updates. Motion Carried.

There were no matters for consideration following Executive Session.

There being no further business a motion to adjourn was made by Council member Watts Huckabee and seconded by Council member Tom Audette. Motion Carried.