

February 2023 – June 2024 **172** Projects Were Worked



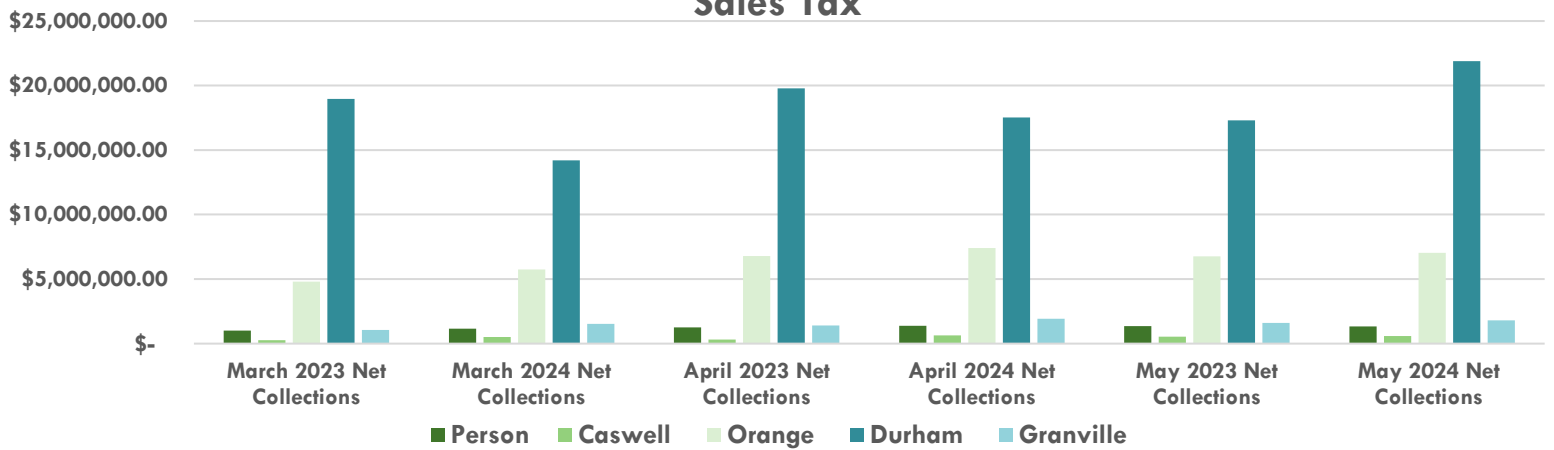
PERSON COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Top 3 Reasons Why Projects Were Not Submitted:

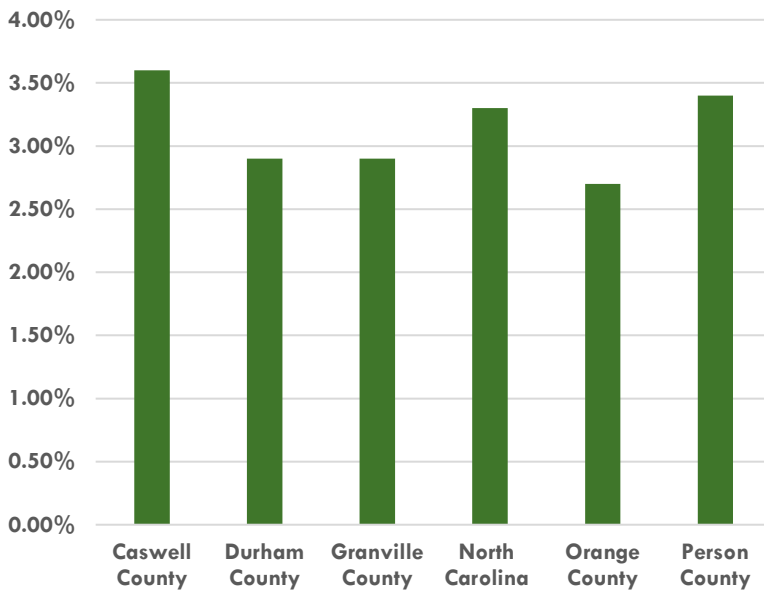
1. 5-10 Miles for an Interstate
2. 32ft – 40ft Ceiling Height
3. Close Proximity to a Major Airport

Person County Demographic Report

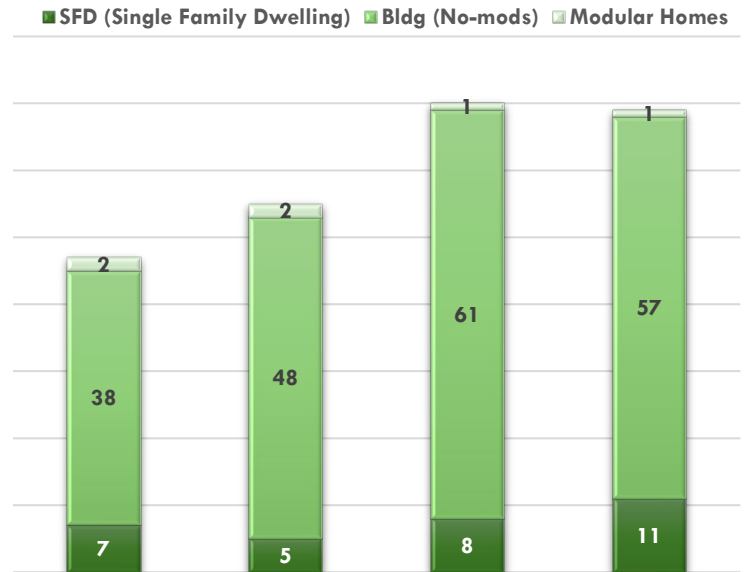
Sales Tax



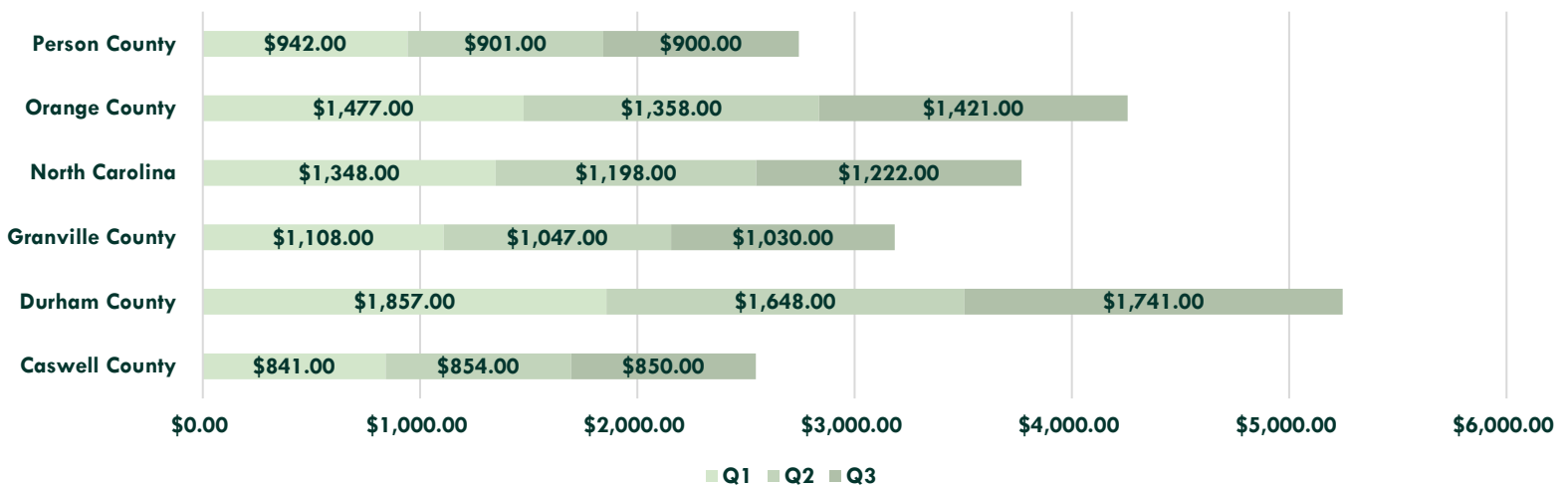
April 2024 Unemployment Rates



Permit Activity



Average Weekly Wage 2023



Minutes of the PCEDC Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Person County EDC Board Room
303 S. Morgan St., Roxboro, NC 27573
March 26, 2024

Voting Board Members Present:

Mr. Phillip Allen-Chairman
Mr. Donald Long
Mr. Jody Blackwell
The Honorable Merilyn Newell

Dr. Scott McKinney-Vice Chairman
Mr. Kenneth Perry
The Honorable Gordon Powell
Mr. Jay Poindexter

Voting Board Members Absent:

Ms. Sherry Clayton

Ex Officios Present:

Ms. Katherine Cathey, County Manager
Dr. Claudia Berryhill, Agricultural Representative
Mr. Brooks Lockhart, City Manager
Dr. Pamela Senegal, PCC President
Dr. Rodney Peterson, PCS Superintendent

Ex Officios Absent:

Dr. Rodney Peterson, PCS Superintendent

ED Staff Present:

Ms. Brandy Lynch, Director
Mr. Bryan Eatmon, Existing Industry Specialist

Others Present:

Mr. George Willoughby
Ms. Kim Strickland
Mr. Robert E. Hornik, Jr

ED Staff Absent:

Ms. Briana Whitt, ED Specialist (Minutes)

EDC Welcome and Invocation:

At 4:01 p.m., Chairman Allen called the meeting to order.

Mr. Scott McKinney gave the invocation.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Allen recognized The Honorable Marilyn Newell for the approval of the November 28, 2023, December 20, 2023, December 22, 2023, and January 23, 2024 minutes.

A motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved to approve the November 28, 2023, December 20, 2023, December 22, 2023, and January 23, 2024 meeting minutes.

Motion: Mr. Jody Blackwell

Second: Mr. Jay Poindexter

Ethics Training:

Mr. Allen introduced Mr. Horner to provide the board with the Ethics Training. Mr. Horner made the board aware that he did have a PowerPoint presentation that he would use as a guide. The ethics training is something that everyone on the board needs to do and be aware of. Mr. Horner gave a little information about himself, such as he is a member of the Brough Law Firm, filling in for TC Morphis today. But Mr. Horner's wife, who was from Virginia, told me in about 1995 that she was moving south because she was tired of the snow and the rain. She invited me to come along. I did, and I've been grateful to her ever since then. It turns out that Mike Brough, our namesake, the Brough law firm, was from the same hometown I was living in outside Syracuse. That's how we got it. It just turns out that he was doing the same law down here as I was doing up there. Anyway, here I am. We, in our firm, we do almost exclusively local government law. Probably 75% of our work is representing local governments. The other 25 may represent people with issues with other local governments or just some development work.

Mr. Horner talked about a few things this afternoon, such as the open meetings law, which as a public body, the EDC is subject to the open meetings law, the Public Records Act, and the statutes involved in those acts. Regarding conflicts of interest, there are some criminal statutes that you need to be aware of. Otherwise, there are general civil statutes and a lot of common sense involved in determining when you might have a conflict of interest and what you should do. The last item we'll talk about is Maybe a subject for quite a bit of discussion if you want it to be, is what do you do when you're not sure?

Mr. Horner started out by talking about the open meetings law. Open meetings law is actually found in Section 143, 318 of the general statutes. They are probably looking at 9 and 10 right now, but there are probably about 20 sub-statutes having to do with open meetings. The Economic Development Commission is a public body. It's a body that's been appointed by; it's created by law, appointed by the county commissioners or ex officios because of their positions elsewhere or ex officio members of the board.

The closed-session discussion is the exception, not the rule. Section 318.10, are you a public body? Well, yeah, you are because you've been appointed by your respective or by the board of commissioners or your other respective bodies. What does that mean? It just means that all of these rules apply to you and that you've got to be conscious of the fact that you're representing a constituency, not a private

corporation. Therefore, some of the things that private corporations can do, you can't do, or at least can't do through the same process.

Talking about official meetings. We run into issues or questions about this fairly frequently because in some communities, in Roxboro, in Person County, and other jurisdictions, we represent. If you're at a public gathering where there's no intention that it's going to be public business discussed, and public business, in fact, is not being discussed by a majority of the board. There's no concern about that being an official meeting. An official meeting really means when there's a quorum or a potential majority of the board together at the meeting, doing the public's business or talking about the public's business. Those meetings need to be held, noticed, and public access given to them in order for them to be valid. But these days, more and more people are more and more conscious of what's going on with public bodies and are more attentive to the business that's being done by public bodies.

Meeting minutes need to be kept of all public meetings and public bodies. There are multiple types of meetings: regular scheduled meetings, special called meetings, and emergency called meetings, electronic meetings (mainly used during covid).

Mr. Brooks questioned if they have run into a problem where people are actively doing active records management.

Mr. Horner responded, " Yeah, that's becoming more common in different jurisdictions. As a matter of fact, I don't think it's as prevalent as it should be. Because it is one way to, within the bounds of the law, kind of reduce your exposure to the 20,000-email kind of request."

Dr. Berryhill asked if it makes a difference whether the communication is only a municipal or public device versus a personal device.

Mr. Horner answered the question with, "the record is the content doesn't matter where it's located. You know, when it's on a personal phone, whether it's on your kids' phone, whether it's on your work, phone, could be your job at your office."

Economic Development Reset:

Chairman Allen started off by saying as the Chairman, can do a better job. The first thing was to support Ms. Lynch, director and have her in every way possible and would like to have a general discussion.

Mr. McKinney started off the general discussion by stating the reasoning for the topic being added to the agenda today is that there has been talk about the past meeting for various members of the board who didn't think the meetings were very meaningful. his idea that we will have a little discussion day about what information the commission members find valuable. What can we maybe modify and presented a different way? Is there something you're not getting? That you would like to get? We are asking Ms. Lynch to provide to us doesn't need to be so demanding that it keeps you from doing the more important parts of the job.

Ms. Lynch stated "I do try, you know, to get you all the information you need, that doesn't necessarily have to come in at our point. That's for you all to decide that I can verbally say just as well as when I'm reading the PowerPoint."

There is a database that Economic Development keeps which is a Salesforce database that every project that comes in gets logged, whether estimate, I don't submit, and sometimes the reason why I don't

submit is lengthy. Sometimes it's very short. Sometimes it's just that we don't have inventory. There is a ton of projects that I submit for that I never hear anything back from, I don't know who they are, I don't know what they are, I don't know what industry they are. So, it opens the door for a ton of criticism that I can't answer for. I can't answer why my project doesn't go forward. I can't answer why they don't call me back. I can't answer why they may have chosen later on another state.

Dr. Senegal questioned if there are any insights about the 50 projects that we weren't able to submit for? Does that give us any insights as Person County about what we should be focusing on to make ourselves more attractive, absolute investment, so what's the true line? Ms. Lynch stated that that one of the things that I have a list to talk to you about but that's one of the things that are taught to the county manager about is I have seen what these projects are asking for what we do not have Ron, and I have already started the process of looking at what is available inventory. Economic development is not just putting a new industry here. It's not, it's about making you want to live here, play here, build a house here, go to college here, open your own business here. Ms. Lynch needs freedom to do what I need to do to make economic development work in this county, because it changes every day, every second.

Ms. Newell questioned and asked for clarification on what Ms. Lynch, Mr. Eatmon and Ms. Whitt do just to understand the focus of the department. Ms. Lynch stated that she worked with the HR Department and the county manager to redo the system director position and not have one anymore. And one of the main reasons that did that was it wasn't transparent what that person did.

Strategic Plan:

Ms. Lynch started off with a brief update on a couple matters, update on GKN because it is a major talking point in the community NCWorks, commerce, Kerr Tar, Jody all went to visit them yesterday. They had a very good visit. From my understanding we are looking at about 82 employees that are displaced, 41 employees declined and 22 chose retirement. The last thing to be share is a small update on WRAL, I'll receive the marketing numbers next week, from the marketing numbers, we got just a tidbit. They were astronomically popular, look forward to sharing.

What we have found, and Bryan will attest is that we are seeing a shift from what they call a strategic plan to an action plan. And I told you all about this that a couple of meetings ago, and told you that we had worked with Ted Abernathy to do this great study, and provided our strategic made our strategic plan off of it. But I needed more condensed, I needed it more condensed and one pager kind of thing. Just that it's easy to read more concise, who knows what our plan going forward is what are what we want to focus on.

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, they have hired strategic project coordinators that they place in local government. So we have one of those resources working with us on the opioid settlement. And they were available to work on this project as well. Ms. Lynch stated what we did is we took the very big strategic plan, we went through it, we can did some items, we added some items to make it more transparent to make it more focused, then we came up with this beautiful sheet that makes it very clear what we're going to, what our purpose is, and what I hope we can focus on retaining the existing industry. Most economic development departments or commissions do this plan for a year or two.

EDC Minutes for March 26, 2024

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is proposed for Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in the Person County EDC Board Room 303 S. Morgan St. Roxboro, NC.

Adjournment:

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:05 p.m.

Motion: The Honorable Marilyn Newell

Second: Mr. Jay Poindexter

Date Approved

Secretary

Minutes of the PCEDC Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Person County EDC Board Room
303 S. Morgan St., Roxboro, NC 27573
May 28, 2024

Voting Board Members Present:

Mr. Phillip Allen-Chairman

Mr. Jay Poindexter

The Honorable Marilyn Newell

Mr. Jody Blackwell

Ms. Sherry Clayton

Dr. Scott McKinney-Vice Chairman

The Honorable Gordon Powell

Mr. Kenneth Perry

Mr. Donald Long

Ex Officios Present:

Ms. Katherine Cathey, County Manager

Dr. Claudia Berryhill, Agricultural Representative

Dr. Rodney Peterson, PCS Superintendent

Ex Officios Absent:

Mr. Brooks Lockhart, City Manager

Dr. Pamela Senegal, PCC President

ED Staff Present:

Ms. Brandy Lynch, Director

Mr. Bryan Eatmon, Existing Industry Specialist

Ms. Briana Whitt, ED Specialist (Minutes)

Others Present:

Mr. George Willoughby

Ms. Kim Strickland

Mr. Bo Freeman

Ms. Mikayla Berryhill

Ms. Julie Maybee

Ms. Sherry Wilborn

EDC Welcome and Invocation:

At 4:00 p.m., Chairman Allen called the meeting to order.

Mr. Scott McKinney gave the invocation.

Agriculture Presentation:

Mr. Allen introduced Mikayla Berryhill and Bo Freeman for their agriculture presentation. Ms. Berryhill started off by providing a little background about herself. Ms. Berryhill stated that she grew up on a small farm in Rowan County, then attended NC State and majored in Agronomy with an Agriculture Business Management minor, then worked in Union County for about a year and a half, once proposed to by her now husband moved closer and is now working as the Field Crops Area Agent of Person and Granville County. Currently, Ms. Berryhill is working on getting her Masters in Crop Science.

Ms. Berryhill stated that they were here to extend the research-based information from the universities (NC State and NC A&T) to the citizens of North Carolina. NC Cooperative Extension has over 1,058 professionals and 101 local centers across North Carolina. It is the second largest extension network, and Texas is first. 2% is the percentage of the workforce that produces food for the rest of the population in the United States. In 1840, around 60% of the workforce produced food for the United States; it will continue to go down, and the share of agriculture in total employment is at an all-time low.

Ms. Berryhill shared that United States farmers are some of the most valuable workers in the world. North Carolina has almost 43,000 farms, and the market value of their agricultural products sold is around \$18.6 billion. NC State is lucky to have a member named Mike Waldon, who came up with the number for the Economic Impact of North Carolina Agriculture and Agribusiness last week, which is \$111.1 billion.

For Person County, there are about 364 farms, and the market value of products sold is \$46.5 million. Person County's highest-ranking product is tobacco, 7th in the state and 8th in the nation for production.

Mr. Freeman stated that agriculture is in the background of everything we have, which hints when starting to look at agritourism, the longer ones have been the venues and the wineries. Many farms are now learning how to increase their profits, such as using the land for wedding venues or festivals. Some people even buy land, build a house on the property, and then rent it out as an Airbnb. One of the new trends is bridging; watching the birds will be a big venue, and it's something new to do outside and bring new people in.

Existing Industry Report:

Mr. Eatmon introduced himself to the board and gave everyone a little background on himself. Education and training are vitally important in economic development. So, he stayed abreast of what was happening in the state and the region. While working in Warren, Mr. Eatmon was involved with the Community Development Academy; I started that with the UNC School of Government. I just started that when he got pulled away here and then finished that up at the beginning of May. That was like a three-and-a-half-month course. That's drawing down on the importance of community development, and a lot of that has to do with housing, but also that interacts with economic growth because, without

housing, you can't have people. Also, I am continuing coursework with a certified economic developer course at ECU.

Mr. Eatmon has been developing a questionnaire to send to businesses previously. ED has just been going out and meeting with companies and continuing to do that. They were then asked these questions in person. The only problem is that they often need to have this information handy and dig it up from somewhere. Many, "I'll get back to you on that." And they don't ever get back. If you send them a survey and couple it with in-person interviews, we may get better data.

Another thing Mr. Eatmon is working on is a business resources brochure. This brochure will serve as a comprehensive guide for our local businesses, especially small businesses, to understand and access the various state, regional, and federal resources available to them. Mr. Eatmon is working diligently on this project, and we believe it will be a valuable addition once we get our website up and running. Having these resources readily available on our economic development website will make it easier for businesses to thrive. Dr. Berryhill and Mr. Eatmon have visited a few places and given him a few new contacts.

Bladen County Trip:

Ms. Lynch mentioned that she and Mr. Eatmon were invited to the Alexandria Center in May for a meeting to discuss potential collaborations and learn from their successful initiatives. They have taken in an RTP building that they closed down and revamped, putting millions of dollars in greenhouses between two buildings. Ms. Lynch said, "We sat in a glass boardroom and looked down on a restaurant that had fresh food. It had greenery everywhere. So that is a great resource for business, property, and industry."

Several months ago, Ms. Lynch attended a class at ECU. In that class, she was privileged to meet Tuck Eustace, a fellow economic development director in Bladen County. He was the guest speaker for the class instructor, Ernie Pearson. Chuck retired from Bladen County as their economic development director. He's also the executive director of Blyton's nonprofit Bladen's Bloomin and a business partner with Ernie Pearson. Ms. Whitt has compiled an information sheet comparing our county, Person County, with Bladen County. This comparison provides valuable insights into our county's economic development status and potential areas for improvement. The sheet is also included in your packet; you can see multiple graphs.

Ms. Lynch visited Chuck for a few hours on Wednesday and told him about Person County and our needs and issues. The next day, I was joined by county manager Katherine Cathy and Dr. Berryhill. Bladen County is like Person County, miles away from an interstate which, as you know, can cripple you. They started to think outside the box in the early 2000s. Bladen's bloom and took the lead to bring the county where it is today. The nonprofit participates in revolving loan programs with the county. They also get funding from multiple sources, such as the Golden Leaf Committee of 100, USDA, and other funding. The nonprofit has an industrial park that continues to grow today.

EDC Minutes for May 28, 2024

Many startups have grown and expanded, one of which has expanded seven times. One of the latest project openings was in November of 2023 when the nonprofit purchased several downtown build buildings damaged in multiple hurricanes. The nonprofit built a mixed-use facility with low market value rent to help businesses thrive. The next phase has already started, including more parking and buildings. The Industrial Park has grown over the last 20-plus years. It now includes an emergency services facility, an airport, and a Cape Fear winery. The winery has multiple uses, including a distillery cottage, restaurant, Event Center Spa, and a petting zoo with unique animals. The winery has grown so much that there were plans to build seven more cottages, and in recognizing the need of the county or their focus, the needs highlighted were a daycare and health care facilities.

Director Report:

Ms. Lynch started by discussing the demographic sheet handed out at every meeting. Hopefully, once the website is ready, the information from those forms will be added to it. At the last meeting, questions were raised about how many projects were worked on, so the economic development department came together and completed 159 projects from February 2023 to May 2024.

Ms. Lynch and Mr. Eatmon both attended the tourism summit at Unsalted, which also included other counties. They interacted with other counties and discussed how much tourism is a huge part of economic development. Guest speakers touched on the value of tourism, not only the value of it but also the number of dollars it brings in.

Ker Tar is funding a property study, and there have been biweekly calls for this project. Ms. Lynch participates in two committees for the 2024 Kerr Tar economic development summit. This year's title is Cultivate 2024. I worked with Duke in Dominion to get sponsorship for the guest speaker.

The Person County Economic Development website was designed on a no longer widely available platform. The Economic Development Department will now work with Capital B on a new website and is considering a six-month timeline.

All of the economic development departments attended job fairs. Mr. Eatmon attended one in Granville County, Ms. Whitt attended one in Person County, and Ms. Lynch attended a regional one in Vance County because of another meeting that day.

Ms. Lynch's whole plan was to launch the website, the logo, and these at the same time countywide, and because of the website and the issues we had with the developer, that didn't happen. We have to go backward from what was planned. The developers were supposed to already be on our website. However, the website developer had multiple issues with them, which, in turn, caused the department to cancel the contract with them and our hosting contract with them. So, the county has now that the IT department has worked to take over posts on our site with GoDaddy, and it's put me far behind them and the very disappointing website. Capital V has promised they will get us up and running quickly.

EDC Minutes for May 28, 2024

The architectural and architectural groups have been engaged for the Raleigh Regional Airport. The plans will include the terminal impossible offices and flex space and will allow county departments to use that needs to meet more in private.

Person County is home to the district softball Little League International tournament. The budget was presented to the Person County Board of Commissioners. The more ball tournaments that Person County hosts, the bigger the business.

Ms. Whitt could not be at our last meeting, so I recorded the meeting, as we typically do to do the minutes. Ms. Whitt went to retrieve the minutes, and they were gone, so Ms. Lynch worked with the IT department. They can see them, but they can't open them. Ms. Lynch spoke to the chairman, the vice chair, and the Secretary, advised them of the issue, and told them she had plans to try to type the minutes from memory. However, before she did that, the IT department returned and said, Hey, let's try one more thing; we found out last week that that would not work. Ms. Lynch will have to work to pull my memory back and do the minutes off that.

Lastly, Ms. Lynch got a phone call from Mr. Brooks. His update was that the city got approval to bid out the Western sewer project, which should start this week. The bid packet should go out this week, and the oxidation ditch has now been put into service.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is proposed for Tuesday, July 23, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Person County EDC Board Room 303 S. Morgan St. Roxboro, NC.

Adjournment:

A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:05 p.m.

Motion: Mr. Jody Blackwell

Second: Mr. Jay Poindexter

Date Approved

Secretary