

BEAUFORT COUNTY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



BEAUFORT COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD Monthly Board Meeting Minutes October 20, 2021

Present: Chairman Ed Booth, Bubs Carson, Chad Keech, Dr. David Loope, Al Powell, Randy Roark, Commissioner Rebholtz

Absent: Ricky Credle, Joy McRoy, Archie Griffin, Don Sadler, Dylan Bowen, Clif Williams, Brian Alligood, Frank Etheridge, Andy Fisher, Rich Morin

Other Attendees: Martyn Johnson, Al Powell, Trey Goodson, Sarah Bernart, Vicky Hamill, Wes Watson, Sara Watson, Susan Squires, Jennie Bowen

Welcome: Chairman Ed Booth

Introduction: Martyn Johnson

Speaker: Brandi Bragg, Facilitator NENC Career Pathways

Provide overview of role as Career Pathways Facilitator

Introduce the Made in Beaufort County campaign.

NENC Career Pathways Facilitator works in 20 County area of Northeastern North Carolina for 3 workforce boards including Rivers East, Turning Point and Northeastern. This group has been working together for almost a decade. The focus is on career pathways in the area, that are projected to remain in the area with sustainable wages in high demand and require some type of post-secondary skill. We have been able to certify 4 career pathways and the implementation of those pathways.

The Made in Beaufort County campaign was made possible by a grant through NC Commerce, then 5 local employers input funds and Beaufort County Schools also provided funds for an extra video. The project, 2 years in the making, is a result of the efforts of several partners including Martyn Johnson and Beaufort County Economic Development. The Made in Beaufort County campaign offers several types of media including brochures that provide visual career paths for different jobs in Beaufort County. Brochures, flyers and large displays are available to schools and other organizations. Retractable Banners with stands are available to the partners for use at events and trade shows. The web site www.madeinbeaufortcounty.com provides information and videos

which feature local businesses. Made in Beaufort County is also on various social media platforms.

Career Pathways is creating an initiative, modelled after Made in Beaufort County, to extend into 5 neighboring counties (Bertie, Hertford, Hyde, Martin and Pitt). Part of that initiative is the Rivers East Academy which will train teachers in advanced manufacturing and for them to create awareness of these career pathways in their classrooms.

Plans are to conduct a ribbon cutting ceremony with the partners in combination with the opening of the Rivers East Academy.

Questions

Dr Loope: Brandi are you doing this in each of the 20 counties you're working with?

Brandi: We hope to but initially it will be Bertie, Hertford, Hyde, Martin and Pitt Counties. Beaufort County with the previous 5 counties, make up the 6 covered by funding from Golden Leaf for the Rivers East Academy.

Dr Loope: Just wanted to mention Beaufort Community College has their own Advanced Manufacturing Institute as well.

Martyn: The program was coordinated with the Work Force Development Team Sara Watson, Vicky Hamill and Wes Watson and it is gratifying the Advance Manufacturing Institute is the root of all of this and now being used as the model for other counties.

Jennie: Dr Loope this is kind of a spinoff of that original grant, we need to influence the influencers.

Martyn: This is going to drive students to the Advanced Manufacturing Institute.

Sarah: How often will you update those promotional materials?

Brandi: It depends on funding but hopefully every 2 years.

Chairman Booth welcomed new member, Commissioner John Rebholtz, he will be reading the County Report. Chairman Booth advised that we don't have a quorum to approve the minutes so we will table that until next month.

Community Reports:

Aurora, Clif Williams: Absent Martyn Johnson advised Clif Williams was out preparing for the Aurora Leadership Council. The Aurora Industrial Park is moving ahead and hopefully we can bring something to the Commissioners in December.

Bath, Bubs Carson: Bath High School celebrated its 100th Anniversary with several dignitaries in attendance. US Congressman Murphy, NC Secretary of Commerce Sanders and local dignitary Beaufort County Commissioner Waters helped commemorate the occasion. It was an event that recognized the importance and history of our community schools.

The Historic Bath Visitor Center hosted Bath Town After Dark. The 2-night event, a candlelight historical reenactment at Bonners Point, was well received by both residents and visitors. Annual Trick or Treat will be held on Saturday Oct 30, 2021 from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM. The Bath Fire Department and Sheriff's Office block off Main Street to allow a safe trick or treat environment. The Bath Christmas Parade is scheduled for December 5, 2021 at 2:00 PM. The parade is one of the larger events in the area and we are already taking entries for participation. Finally, one of the residents raised the issue of

poor cell phone service in the area and wanted to relay that information to our county leaders.

Belhaven, Ricky Craven: Absent Martyn Johnson offered to fill in. He advised ECU Professor Emily Yeager was doing a tourism study in Belhaven and that he had met with her and Lynn Davis.

Chocowinity, Joy McRoy: Absent Martyn Johnson offered to fill in again, there is a new sign for the Chocowinity Industrial Park, it is orange so it should attract attention. We also placed some flyers at the rest stop for local restaurants and economic development. Martyn mentioned there is no advertising on US 17. Dr Loope stated he tried to get a sign on US 17 for the Community College but the cost to DOT started at \$10,000.

Washington, Don Sadler: Absent Martyn advised Washington had Smoke on the Water and was successful. The Washington-Warren Airport is waiting on the state budget to move forward on airport expansion. Potential improvements include runway extension, landing lights, water, sewer, electricity extension, instrument landing system, and hanger projects.

Washington Park Dylan Bowen: Absent

Community College Update, Dr. Loope: Dr Gerard, Continuing Education VP and I will be attending the Aurora Leadership Council Meeting to discuss BCCC's role in the Aurora Workforce Development Center. Upcoming training: Air BnB Entrepreneurship Academy in May, Specialized equipment training for AAF Flanders and Sesame Technologies, Overhead Crane protection training for Pamlico Yacht works, seafood sanitation training for County Road Seafood and CPR/First aid for Hackney. BCCC had a 100% pass rate with Nurse Aid 1 completers. We have started a second Registered Medical Assistant course with the addition of a full-time faculty member. Dr Loope, in response to Trey's question, said the Air BnB course is open to anyone, but they are not actively recruiting from outside the 4 counties we serve.

County Update, Commissioner John Rebholtz: Quick Covid update, down to 4 cases yesterday and a little over 30 days ago we had 700 new cases. There are 9 people in the hospital and 3 patients on ventilators. County Finances are in excellent shape, right on budget almost across the board. They did agree to spend 1.3 million of the relief funds on improving the county water system. Beaufort County's average income is \$41,700 which places the county 26th out of 100 counties. Beaufort County is also 26th in North Carolina for expenses per student. The unemployment rate is 4.3% which ranks Beaufort County 60th lowest in the state. Students enrolled in post-secondary training/education equals 54% which ranks the county 77th out of 100 counties. 30% of Beaufort County children live in poverty. Update regarding Broadband, there is proposed legislation that includes a clause that states areas that have been awarded to private providers who intend to deploy service, those areas will be designated as served. Charter Communications and SpaceX were awarded coverage for several areas on the south side last year. If enacted, Beaufort County will be unable to implement the proposed broadband plans. We are in communication with our representatives regarding this legislation.

Beaufort County Business Update, Randy Roark: Unable to complete call from his phone.

NC East Alliance/EDPNC Updates, Trey Goodson, Sarah Bernhart: Several Webinars including one on Monday geared towards Rural Business and how you can be successful anywhere with today's technology. We will be attending the Offshore Wind Conference in Wilmington. As a result, we will be partnering with Hampton Roads to create a Webinar series in the spring. Workforce is the subject of 3 Webinars created and produced by EDPNC and Northeast Alliance. The first one focused on employing the Justice Involved, we had about 60 people to attend live and the recording went out to an additional 30 people. The next Webinar takes place the day before Veterans Day and pertains to transitioning Military and Veterans. The final is scheduled for December 2nd and covers Hiring People with Disabilities.

Beaufort County Schools CTE, Vicky Hammill: The Business Advisory Council is scheduled to meet on Thursday October 21, 2021 at the Skills Center. The meeting is part of a Comprehensive Needs Assessment that all school districts are required to do every 2 years. Coursework is created based on the stated needs of local business and industry. We work with Dr Loope and his staff to confirm accreditation and course alignment with the community college requirements. Thursday's meeting will include several local industries and we will be listening to them as they discuss their needs. The boatbuilding boat house is moving along with a pre-bid Friday and submittal of sealed bids November 15, 2021. We are hopeful the project will be completed next year. The Vet Assist program at Washington HS is starting in the spring and in preparation the Ag Teacher is completing some renovations. We plan to implement some marketing to promote our 3 Academies, Automotive Academy Northside HS, Police/Fire Academy Southside HS and the Boat Building Academy at Washington HS. The academies are open to students throughout the county and there will be transportation for the students. Steve Menninger is the new STEM teacher for PS Jones Middle School, he is very innovative and has a great rapport with the students. Social Media for Beaufort County Schools, [BCS CTE Facebook](#), [BCS_CTE Instagram](#) and [BCS_CTE on Twitter](#).

Director's Reports & Budget, Martyn Johnson: Introduction of Susan Squires, new Economic Development Specialist. Unemployment 4.5 % in August, doing very well, we are hopeful the free tuition at Beaufort County Community College will help to add much needed people into the workforce. Since the summer of 2019 we have had 12 Rise29 teams and have 3 currently working in the county. The registration is open now for the Spring Semester, any business interested in the program may contact me for an application. Beaufort County is improving due to the efforts of many people as we come out of Covid 19. Downtown businesses seem to be doing very well. As Commissioner Rebholtz stated we do have a population of low-income people who for whatever reason are not involved in the economy. We have about 17 projects now, ranging from using the Chocowinity Industrial Park as a container yard to metal working, yacht building, interest in affordable housing, air filtration, drones, maintenance facilities and food processing. The Economic Development Budget is right on track, the beginning of the year is the time we pay for databases and memberships for various organizations. Overall, the end of the year appears it will be very busy.

Dr Loope discussed an article from the Washington Post regarding a great exodus from the workforce and how people are rethinking their relationship with work.

Chairman Booth asked Dr. Loope about the current supply chain issues specific to trucking. Dr Loope replied he cannot get enough people into their truck driving classes and according to business owners, those who are hired quit after 3 weeks. It is a difficult job. There is a lot of demand for truckers and there are not enough trucks on the road.

Motion to Adjourn: Dr Loope
Second: Chad Keech