



BEAUFORT COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting January 22, 2026, at 3PM

Present: Commissioner Ed Booth, County Manager Brian Alligood, Lynn Davis, Sarah Bernart, Mark Doane, Rod Gurganus, Susan Squires, Kaitlyn Edwards

Welcome: Commissioner Ed Booth

Introductions: Attendees

Approval of the Minutes: With a quorum, Commissioner Ed Booth approved the minutes.

BCED Update: Susan Squires

The Washington–Beaufort County Road and Utility Infrastructure Project is moving forward. We have received an IDF grant (\$ 1,254,675) to support the project (total estimated cost \$1,672,900) which will open approximately 35 acres for industrial development.

Following completion of the RFO process last month, The Wooten Company was selected to provide design, engineering, and grant administration services. We are currently awaiting a contract from the firm, after which the contract will be presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval.

The road and utility infrastructure project is expected to be completed later this year, and we look forward to the positive impact it will have on future industrial growth in the county.

There was discussion of BTW Global’s new facility on Industrial Drive which is expected to move forward following completion of the infrastructure improvements.

Kaitlyn Edwards, our Economic Development Specialist, has finished her final class with ECU for the North Carolina Certified Economic Developer program. This month she begins her capstone project and is expected to complete and receive her professional certification in June.

Even though it is still early January, we have already begun meeting with existing industries and hosting businesses that have potential expansion interest in the county. We recently met with Sesame Technologies, thanks to Sarah for including us in this effort. Ryan Woolard shared that the company is planning a 30-by-60-foot expansion to its existing facility. Sesame Technologies reported strong performance, manufacturing more than 231,500 parts in 2025.

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Our Office and others met last Tuesday with an aquaculture company from Washington State that is seeking to expand its trout hatchery operations. The company has been in operation for more than 80 years.

The company currently operates four large facilities in Washington and is now evaluating potential sites in eastern North Carolina including Beaufort County. The proposed project would involve an initial investment of approximately \$15 million and is expected to create between 35 and 50 jobs.

This project is being led by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture.

Key site-selection factors include water availability and permitting. This is a competitive project, and we will prepare an incentive package should the company decide to move forward.

On January 20th, we hosted a discussion at our office regarding the potential for construction of a feed mill in the northern part of the county.

Attendees included representatives for Senator Tillis, Senator Budd, Representative Kidwell, Commissioner Booth—who chairs the Economic Development Advisory Committee, Tim Ivey with the NC Department of Agriculture, Pete Anderson, Rod Gurganus with NC Extension, Sarah Bernart from EDPNC, Kaitlyn, myself (Susan Squires) , and Mr. Allen of L.H. Allen & Son Farm in Pantego and Dempsey Ange of Beech Ridge Pork Farm.

The proposal calls for the development of a feed mill to support several large hog farming operations using locally sourced crops. Construction costs are estimated at \$7–\$8 million. The land for the project would be donated by local farmers, and the facility is expected to employ three to five full-time workers.

The project is being evaluated through a collaborative funding approach, with potential grant support from multiple sources. Mr. Allen and Mr. Ange plan to meet with additional farms on January 29 to gauge interest and will report back on the outcome. Discussion included the possibility of conducting a feasibility study and economic impact analysis.

From a regional standpoint, the impact would extend beyond the 8 to 10 hog farms involved, representing roughly 35,000 sows. It would also create a local market for approximately 1 to 1.2 million bushels of grain from area farmers and reduce freight costs currently associated with hauling feed from Goldsboro.

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It was noted that the participating hog farms contract with Country View Family Farms, a U.S. family-owned company that raises antibiotic-free hogs and emphasizes biosecurity. The company has invested \$2 million in a truck-wash facility in Williamston to sanitize all vehicles entering and exiting their operations.

Our office currently administers several grant projects, including a \$200,000 Building Reuse Grant for Project Sprinter (Elite Truck), a \$25,000 Retail Building Reuse Grant for Project Event (Hometown Hall), and a \$200,000 Rural Health Building Reuse Grant for Project Well-Being (Agape Health Clinic in Aurora). We completed and submitted the December 2025 progress reports to the Department of Commerce to ensure all grants remain in compliance with reporting requirements.

There was discussion regarding other grant opportunities to support infrastructure improvements within the County.

Overall, it's been a strong start to the year, and we're excited about the momentum. We appreciate the continued support from all of you and collaboration from our partners, and we look forward to sharing more progress as these efforts move forward.

Lynn Davis provided updates from the Town of Belhaven regarding new and upcoming businesses.

Commissioner Booth called the meeting to end at 3:50 PM.