

**Pitt County Board of Commissioners  
Greenville, North Carolina  
Thursday, February 21, 2019 Minutes**

Board of Commissioners met on Thursday, February 21, 2019 at 4:00 PM in the Eugene James Auditorium, Pitt County Office Building, 1717 W 5th Street, Greenville, North Carolina.

**Board Members Present:**

Beth B. Ward, Chair  
Melvin McLawhorn, Vice-Chair  
Alex Albright, Commissioner  
Tom Coulson, Commissioner  
Mike Fitzpatrick, Commissioner  
Ann Floyd Huggins, Commissioner  
Chris W. Nunnally, Commissioner  
Mary Perkins-Williams, Commissioner

**Board Members Absent:**

Glen Webb, Commissioner

**Staff Present:**

Scott Elliott, County Manager  
Janis Gallagher, County Attorney  
Mike Taylor, Deputy County Manager/ Chief Information Officer  
Brian Barnett, Deputy County Manager/Chief Financial Officer  
Kimberly W. Hines, Clerk to the Board  
Mike Emory, Public Information & Media Relations Director  
Carla Hanson, Public Information Specialist  
Wanda Yuhas, Development Commission Director

**Welcome**

Chairman Ward welcomed everyone to the meeting.

She stated today's plan is to discuss enhancing industrial development for Pitt County. She stated the workshop will focus on three areas of discussion (1) industrial development; (2) economic development, and (3) entertaining a closed session with regard to the acquisition of property for industrial development which is time sensitive.

She stated as to the first, while the hiring of the Industrial Development Director is done by the Industrial Development Commission, the Board should send a clear and strong recommendation to the Industrial Development Commission to immediately appoint an existing staff member as Interim Director and aggressively recruit and hire a permanent Industrial Development Director as the Board of Commissioners recommended by motion on August 6, 2018, almost 7 months ago. She stated this must be a priority beginning now.

She stated as to the second, the Board of Commissioners decided on February 18<sup>th</sup> that it is not best for Pitt County to include industrial development in the Convergent public private partnership. She stated, as created by statute, Pitt County is named the "Industrial Development

Commission of Pitt County”, and our industrial development tax is limited to that purpose of industrial development. She stated the County Industrial Development Commission must remain in place, and under the leadership of its new Director, it will enhance our efforts toward industrial development.

She stated it is the expectation that the Convergent working committee will continue to address economic development, including retail, small business, and entrepreneurship. She stated this will benefit the entire county. She stated Pitt County will contribute to the economic public private partnership, Convergent, as a major investor. She stated with that contribution, the County will have a seat at the table and will allow the County to work collaboratively and seamlessly, referring matters of industrial development or economic development one to the other.

She stated she appreciates everyone discussing the topics so that a decision can be made that is best for Pitt County, while maintaining fiscal responsibility over the industrial development tax and its limited purpose.

Mr. Elliott stated industrial development would be related to the county’s current model and economic development would be geared more toward partnering with the P3 model. He stated one option is for the county to be a major investor versus a partner. He stated today’s meeting is meant for discussion to talk about the concepts the Chairman has laid out or additional concepts as the Commissioners desire.

Commissioner Coulson stated he has seen a copy of the current Industrial Development Commission Director’s job description as well as a marked up copy. He asked how fast an up-to-date copy can be provided. He stated he would also like to see a copy of the job posting, which in his opinion should have been made available six months ago. He stated he believes a strong economic development professional that is dynamic and preferably young should be sought. He inquired as to the timing of hiring a new Industrial Development Commission Director. Chairman Ward stated the hiring of a new Industrial Development Commission Director needs to be done immediately.

Mr. Elliott stated the Board of Commissioners communicated to the Development Commission Board on August 6, 2018 their desire to immediately appoint an existing staff member as Interim Director and aggressively recruit and hire a permanent Industrial Development Director. He stated because the county was discussing a P3 option, the Development Commission Board was unsure as to the best direction. He stated a sub-committee of the Development Commission Board was formed. He stated the sub-committee rendered a recommendation to the Development Commission Board to only hire an Interim Director at this time. He stated in reality, the hiring and firing rest with the Development Commission. He stated they should respect the input and guidance the Board of Commissioners provides. He stated the next scheduled meeting of the sub-committee is February 28, 2019.

Commissioner Coulson asked how autonomous the Development Commission is. He asked if the Commissioners have any ‘say’ into the hiring of the new Director. Mr. Elliott stated the Commissioners have a budgetary ‘say’. He stated once the monies are allocated through the budget process, the monies can be spent as deemed appropriate by the Development Commission. Mrs. Gallagher confirmed the authority is budgetary and within the appointment to the Development Commission.

Commissioner Nunnally stated he believes it would be productive to hear a report from the Pitt County Development Commission rather than hearing it through padded walls. He stated that would mitigate any miscommunication.

Vice-Chairman McLawhorn asked Mrs. Yuhas to report on the status of hiring a new Director.

Mrs. Yuhas stated she did an initial review of the job description and made some changes. She stated Randy Walters, Chair of the Development Commission Board appointed an ad hoc sub-committee to look at the job description. She stated as the working group was going through the process of the P3 consideration, the Development Commission Board voted that an Interim Director would be named. She stated there was also concern with the unknown, how the position would be recruited and advertised. She stated up until recently the job description was not well defined. She stated the Development Commission hires and fires and that process cannot be deferred.

Commissioner Huggins spoke about the Commissioners August 6, 2018 vote to aggressively recruit and hire a permanent Industrial Development Director. She stated the motion was an inferred directive. She stated the Board of Commissioners desire is to continue with a strong economic development director. She stated she would think the ad hoc committee would have gone ahead and pursued recruitment and hiring. She stated she is concerned that the county is behind on recruitment and hiring as well as the job description.

Commissioner Perkins-Williams stated this an opportune time to do some upgrading for the Development Commission. She stated there are outlining municipalities (i.e. Bethel and Fountain) that need growth opportunities in economic and commercial development. She stated Mrs. Yuhas has reminded her since she has been a Commissioner that the Pitt County Development Commission does not offer commercial development.

Chairman Ward stated if the P3 group continues to move forward, they will focus on commercial development. Mr. Elliott confirmed one major element the P3 group will focus on is commercial development.

Commissioner Nunnally stated the purpose of P3 is to diversify and leverage assets within the community to include commercial development. He stated a lot of lower resource communities have gone to the P3 model. He stated since the County has decided not to go into the P3 direction, he would like to clarify, as the Pitt County Development Commission Commissioner representative, the strong sense of feeling of the Industrial Development Commission Board was that the County should move in the direction of a P3 partnership. He stated it is not reasonable to expect the Pitt County Development Commission Board could have put forth a job description in a national market without the clear direction of the Commissioners. He stated it was prudent for them to wait until a policy directive was made by the Commissioners. He stated the Commissioners made the decision on Monday, February 18, 2019.

Commissioner Coulson stated if the City of Greenville enters into the P3 with Convergent and they attract the private-sector contributions and the County contributes as well, it will allow the municipalities to grow. He stated there are 6,231 small businesses currently in Pitt County.

Commissioner Albright asked for clarification on entrepreneurship. Mrs. Yuhas stated the Development Commission maintains the Technology Enterprise Center which is a technology based business incubator. She stated that is how entrepreneurship became a component of the

Development Commission. She stated the Development Commission also partners with ECU's Miller School of Entrepreneurship.

Mrs. Gallagher stated it is her understanding that industrial is industry and those things that feed it. She stated you approach industrial development from your existing industry retention, new business recruitment and the growing of industries. She stated that is then grown through a component of entrepreneurship. She stated she does not believe there is intent to currently exclude what is being done. She stated the goal of the P3 partnership is to fill in where there can be enhancement in areas beyond industrial.

Mrs. Yuhas asked if the P3 initiative moves forward and they employ a fulltime entrepreneurship/small business individual, does the Industrial Development Commission remain in the game. Chairman Ward stated earlier in the year, it was mentioned that the position would be shared. She stated it should be a collaborative effort on both parts. She stated Pitt County will continue to promote entrepreneurship.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick asked if there is a time constraint on publishing the vacancy of once the job description is finalized and posted. Mr. Elliott stated as soon as a viable candidate is selected, an interview conducted and administrative steps are followed, the posting can be omitted. Mrs. Gallagher stated the Development Commission has followed the county personnel policy in the past in terms of advertisement of position. She stated the county policy states the advertisement must run for a minimum of seven days. Mrs. Yuhas stated it provides protection for the Development Commission employees by them following the county personnel policy.

Mrs. Gallagher noted within the personnel policy there is ability to appoint an Interim Director. She stated the Interim appointment does not have to be subject to the same lengthy national process.

**Motion:**

Motion to request the Pitt County Development Commission provide a report at the next regular scheduled meeting of the Board of Commissioners (3-11-19) including an update on appointing an Interim Director and the status of the job description.

Motion made by Commissioner Chris Nunnally.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Mary Perkins-Williams

Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Floyd Huggins asked if the request/motion needs to be renewed since it was already directed on August 6, 2018. She stated she would like a report as the status of the first request. Commissioner Nunnally stated the effect would be the same.

Commissioner Nunnally asked where the funds will come from if the Commissioners decide to invest in the P3 partnership. Chairman Ward stated there are sufficient funding options available and the allocation could be discussed at a later time.

Commissioner Floyd Huggins asked if two Commissioners would continue to serve on the economic development working committee. Chairman Ward stated one Commissioner would be recommended to serve as the county representative. Commissioner Floyd Huggins stated since the County pulled out of the P3 partnership, the group will have to rework their organizational structure.

Mr. Elliott stated on the private side, the funding levels for bronze, gold and silver sponsorship opportunities have not been determined. He stated the major investor figure has not been determined either.

**Motion:**

Motion to continue with industrial development and make a monetary donation as a major investor toward the P3 convergent working committee.

Motion made by Vice-Chair Melvin McLawhorn.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Mary Perkins-Williams

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion:**

Move to go into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(5) to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease.

Motion made by Vice-Chair Melvin McLawhorn.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Chris Nunnally.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Motion:**

Motion to return to open session.

Motion made by Commissioner Ann Floyd Huggins.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Chris Nunnally.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Adjourn**

**Motion:**

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Mary Perkins-Williams.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Ann Floyd Huggins.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly W. Hines,  
Clerk to the Board