



EDACC Existing Business and Workforce Development Committee		
September 12, 2025		EDACC Conference Room
Called by	Jean Garniewicz - called the meeting to order at 8:30	
Meeting	Existing Business and Workforce Development Committee	
Facilitator	Jean Garniewicz	
Note taker	Linda Peplau	
Adjourned	9:32 AM	
Attendees	Jean Garniewicz, Rick Evans & Kerry Bridges	
Staff/Guests	Cheney Eldridge, Anita Patel, Stuart Hilsman & Linda Peplau	
Meeting Agenda		
1 minute	Jean Garniewicz	
Discussion	Jean Garniewicz called for a motion to jointly approve the agenda for the September 12, 2025 , Existing Business and Workforce Development Committee meeting & the minutes for the July 11, 2025, Existing Business and Workforce Development Committee meeting.	
Conclusions	Motion: Rick Evans 2nd: Jean Garniewicz The motion passed unanimously (2-0).	
Minutes of Previous Meeting		
0 minutes	Jean Garniewicz	
Discussion	See above.	
Conclusions	Motion: Rick Evans 2nd: Jean Garniewicz The motion passed unanimously (2-0).	
Old Business		
14 minutes	Jean Garniewicz	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Masters 2026 planning.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Jean reported that she is very pleased with the house rental after driving by for a quick glance. She thinks it will work wonderfully for our 2026 Masters guests.○ Discussed the rental agreement contract for board dinner concessions.○ Anita Patel gave a status update on the caterer search for Masters 2026.○ Discussed dinner preferences, past successes and past disappointments.○ Reflected on Masters 2025 for the purpose of keeping what worked well and replacing what didn't serve us well.• Kerry Bridges entered the meeting at 8:44.• Jean reminded all attendees to vote in Columbia County's next election (Nov. 04, 2025).	

Updates	
17 minutes	Stuart Hilsman
Discussion	<p>Stuart Hilsman shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing Industry visit updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Healthwise/Nutritional Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 2 food plant and distribution centers (both 50k sq.ft). * Printshop for label making and branding. * Manufacturer of supplements & weight loss food/beverage items. * The company offers made to order products for private label companies. * Currently they have 80 employees. * They have a food scientist in house for research and development. * Rick & Jean suggest getting Nutritional Resources connected with Augusta Tech's work programs. • Stuart reported that he was invited to the CTAE Advisory Committee Meeting with CC Schools (9/17/25). • Reported on the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership Event (GaMEP) (09/09/2025 at ATC). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Event topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mastering Inventory Management * Shared strategies for efficiency and profitability ○ Several existing industries from Columbia County attended • Annual Wage/Compensation Survey update. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completed 2nd part of the survey last month. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Part 1 was pay data; part 2 was benefits/insurance. ○ Had 5 completions (down from 7 last year) ○ Tough year for participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Existing Industry night (Augusta Green Jacket tickets) was early (May) this year to use as incentives for survey completion. * Discussed future incentives for participants. ○ The survey yielded a report of salary increases for 2024 and projected salary increases for 2025.



New Business		
29 minutes	Cheney Eldridge & staff	
Discussion	<p>Anita Patel shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reported that she has been gradually updating the EDACC website. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing old content. Updating fonts <p>Cheney Eldridge shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared an update on feedback pertaining to the town hall meeting and shared she has been providing requested information as they come in. Horizon South signage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Horizon South Plaza front entry signage has sustained significant damage due to a car collision. Kerry Bridges suggested that EDACC inquire about possible insurance restitution for the damage. Rick Evans suggested EDACC inform the tenants of their efforts to get the signage replaced. Discussed HOA/Covenant Agreement, county right-of way agreements & future sign options. Provided an update on Augusta Technical College's President search: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The search yielded 3 strong finalists to recommend to the board. The state board will vote and make their decision known in the first week of October 2025. <p>Rick Evans contributed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquired about registered attendees for the SRSCRO housing study release on 10.08.2025. Rick Evans suggested inviting Julie Langham of Augusta Technical College to a board meeting for a presentation of what the college offers regarding workforce development & placement in our community. <p>Jean Garniewicz shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jean inquired about and opened a discussion regarding some new construction in the community. Jean inquired and received an update on the success of The Future Forward event on 09.04.2025 at the CC Exhibition Center. <p>Kerry Bridges shared the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared a positive outing experience at Sully's Steamers with his family. Kerry stated that he thinks we hit the mark with the past tax rebates. They allowed for growth of the Evans Towne Center Park community, and it is rewarding to see what the community has grown into with The Plaza, farmer's market, apartments, restaurants and retailers. <p>** Jean echos the sentiment of it being rewarding to watch the community grow. She opened a discussion on a backward glance to share the obstacles they overcame and the wins that are now in place. She credits the great minds in position before us all and applauds their hard work and vision. She stated that we should start looking forward to survey what else this committee can contribute to the community by exploring more opportunities for the area and creating a new vision to obtain. Setting new goals.</p>	
Adjournment		9:32 AM
Conclusions	<p>Jean Garniewicz called for a motion to adjourn:</p> <p>Motion: Rick Evans 2nd: Kerry Bridges The motion passed unanimously (3-0)</p>	
Next meeting: November 14, 2025 @ 9:30		Economic Development Authority Conference Room