WALKER COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

101 South Duke St.
P.O. Box 445
LaFayette, GA 30728
706-638-1437

Minutes of the Regular Meeting
May 10, 2022

I. **Call to order at 10:00 a.m. by Andy Arnold**
Present: Chair Andy Arnold, Secretary/ Treasurer Jim Cole, Mark Chandler, Max Morrison, and Evitte Parrish (teleconference), Executive Director Stephanie Watkins. Others present: see attached sign-in sheet.

II. **Invocation given by Max Morrison**

III. **Approval of the Agenda**
Motion: Max Morrison made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mark Chandler, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.

IV. **Approval of Minutes**
A. **April 12, 2022**
Motion: Max Morrison made a motion to approve, seconded by Jim Cole, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.

V. **Financial Report**
Jim Cole presented the April financial report. He stated that there were no expenditures to report nor deposits except for interest earned. The account balance is $1,868,187.26.
Motion: Mark Chandler made a motion to approve, seconded by Max Morrison, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.

VI. **Labrie Project**
Representatives from Labrie made a presentation to the Walker County Development Authority Board in regards to their plans for additional capital investments and job growth at their facility in LaFayette. The company made introductions and shared an overview of Labrie including their current employment of 180 employees and current need for an additional 25 employees. The company experienced a change in ownership in August 2020 and asked the Board to consider the approval of assumptions and assignments of the current lease agreement and loan documents as well as a new PILOT agreement on the new improvements under the new ownership. After the presentation and discussion, the Board agreed to consider the company's proposal and asked that the company work with the

Authority's legal counsel and Executive Director to draft the new PILOT agreement for their consideration at the next meeting.

VII. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Stephanie Watkins stated under *marketing initiatives* that we are working to update the signage at our Northwest Georgia Business and Industrial Park in Rock Spring which will include painting and potential new lighting. We are also working towards GRAD certification of the Walker County Business Park. She stated that there have been several inquiries regarding the Business Park and the certification will enhance its marketability.

Regarding other economic development activities, such as existing industry visits, Mrs. Watkins stated that she and our Georgia Department of Economic Development Region Representative had met with three existing industries, BBT, Flex-A-Bed, and Hitson Cabinets. Mrs.Watkins stated that she received the necessary information from Audia's corporate finance department to complete the REBA grant project and submitted the final report for approval. She mentioned attending TVA's Economic Development Forum and shared information that she learned from the session, *Building a Community for the Future* which was about attracting and retaining talent.

Lastly, Mrs. Watkins stated that the TVA Workforce Invest grant application to help expand the Walker LAUNCH program had been submitted and a scoping call had been completed. As mentioned at the last meeting, this is a matching grant whereby TVA will consider funding requests up to $100,000 and no more than 70% of the total project cost which requires a minimum 30% match. While completing the budget portion of the application, it was determined that the total project cost would be $166,000 to purchase the Mechatronics equipment and software and hire an instructor. We requested funding from TVA in the amount of $91,000 and we anticipate that Walker County Schools would match the grant in the amount of $60,000. Mrs. Watkins asked the Board to consider providing the $15,000 matching funds as our commitment to the project. Commitment for all matching funds must be received by June 30, 2022.
Motion: A motion was made by Evitte Parrish that we commit to matching the grant in the amount of $15,000 with the condition that our legal counsel confirms that the Authority can use its funds in this manner, the motion was seconded by Jim Cole, 4 ayes and 0 nays, motion carried.

A copy of the Executive Director's Report is attached.

VIII. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

James Cole
Secretary

7/12/22
Date

Minutes prepared by: Executive Director, Stephanie Watkins