



Levy County Board of County Commissioners

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To: The Board of County Commissioners
From: Mary-Ellen Harper, County Manager
Date: April 22, 2025
Subject: Economic Development

Commissioners,

Section 125.045, Florida Statutes, vests the County with economic development powers. Levy County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) Resolution 00-24, and subsequent Ordinance 2016-03, designated the Nature Coast Business Development Council, Inc. (NCBDC) as “the umbrella agency to coordinate the economic development activities in the public and private sectors pursuant to Policy 1.1 of the Economic Element of the Levy County Comprehensive Plan.” Throughout the years, the BoCC has provided funding to NCBDC to support economic development efforts that serve a public purpose.

The BoCC last approved a funding agreement with NCBDC for \$66,400 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The Agreement was from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. There is currently no funding agreement between the BoCC and NCBDC.

On Wednesday, April 9, 2025, NCBDC Executive Director Scott Osteen submitted his resignation.

I am looking for direction from the BoCC as to the desired next steps. Options include:

1. The BoCC could enter into a new funding agreement with NCBDC. The NCBDC would then commence a search for a new Executive Director.

If the BoCC wishes to pursue this option, I would suggest that the Board consider drafting a structured contract that includes specific performance metrics that are required in return for the funding.



Commissioners

Charlie Kennedy, District 1

Rock Meeks, District 2

Desiree Mills, Chair, District 3

Tim Hodge, Vice Chair, District 4

Johnny Hiers, District 5

- The BoCC could insource the responsibility for economic development by creating a county position to manage this function. The newly approved BoCC Organizational Structure already includes the Division of Economic Development and Tourism, which was designed to coordinate the economic development and tourism efforts. The Division is currently staffed by the Division Director of Economic Development and Tourism, whose primary function is Tourism, and one Administrative Assistant. The Division Director was tasked with coordinating with NCBDC, but could instead be tasked with overseeing a full-time employee whose primary function is economic development.

For discussion purposes, the Human Resources Department has provided the following cost analysis based on \$96,400, which represents the BoCC's annual contribution of \$66,400 to NCBDC and \$30,000 which is the approximate contribution from CareerSource to NCBDC. NCBDC has other funding partners that the BoCC could approach if the decision is made to insource economic development. The BoCC could also increase its own funding to this initiative if so desired.

BASED ON 96,400 available funds			
BENEFIT	RATE	REOCCURRENCE	ANNUAL EXPENSE
Sick Leave	0.00	Included in 2080 hrs per year	0.00
Annual Leave	0.00	Included in 2080 hrs per year	0.00
Bonus		based on years of service	
Life Insurance	3.70	Month	44.40
Health Insurance	449.08	Pay-period	11676.08
Retirement - FRS @13.63%	365.39	Pay-period	9500.11
Employer FICA	166.21	Pay-period	4321.40
Employer Medicare	38.87	Pay-period	1010.65
Worker's Comp 8810	0.0016	Annual (based on Salary below)	111.52
		Annual Benefit Expense	\$ 26,664.16
		Hourly Benefit Expense	\$ 12.82
Annual Salary	69700.00	Rate of Pay	33.51
Salary per hour + benefits = total hourly rate			\$ 46.33
			\$ 96,364.16
Prepared by:			
Karen Blackburn			
Human Resources Assistant			
04/15/25		BASED ON 96,400 available funds	

CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion currently contributes approximately \$30,000 per year to NCBDC to support economic development in the region. If the BoCC were to insource this function in the form of hiring a county employee, CareerSource would be willing to partner with the BoCC on this initiative. Career Source Chief Executive Officer Rusty Skinner, Jr., and Director of Operations Cory Weaver will attend the April 22, 2025, BoCC Meeting to share additional information related to the potential partnership for the consideration of the BoCC.

I believe that it is also important to note that a Board of Directors leads NCBDC. This board is comprised of members of our community who contribute extensive and diverse experience to the NCBDC's economic development initiatives. Should the BoCC choose to insource the function of economic development to a county employee, the BoCC may want to consider creating an Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) to advise on matters related to economic growth, business development, and community prosperity. The mission of an EDAB would be to foster a positive and supportive environment for businesses, attract new investment, and ultimately strengthen the local economy. The BoCC may want to consider inviting the NCBDC Board to be the charter members of the BoCC's Economic Development Advisory Board.

The Quarterly Meeting of the NCBDC is scheduled for April 24, 2025. Considering the recent resignation of their Executive Director, it can be anticipated that NCBDC will be looking for direction from the BoCC on the future of the funding agreement and whether they should commence a search to recruit a new Executive Director.