

## **AGENDA**

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|--|----------------------|
| <b>1. Call to Order</b>                          | <b>David Peaden</b>  |
| <b>2. Public Notice (December 5, 2025)</b>       | <b>Chris Platé</b>   |
| <b>3. Roll Call</b>                              | <b>Chris Platé</b>   |
| <b>4. Public Comment</b>                         | <b>David Peaden</b>  |
| <b>5. Approval of Agenda *</b>                   | <b>David Peaden</b>  |
| <b>6. Office Items</b>                           |                      |
| a. Approval of November 2025 Financials *        | <b>Ryan Campbell</b> |
| b. Presentation of the Draft Audit               | <b>Saltmarsh</b>     |
| c. Approval of October 28, 2025 Board Minutes: * | <b>David Peaden</b>  |
| <b>7. Project &amp; Staff Updates:</b>           | <b>Chris Platé</b>   |
| a. Product Development                           |                      |
| • Approval to Bid Roundabout at The Bluffs *     |                      |
| • Acceptance of FDOC DRG Grant *                 |                      |
| • Approval to Bid FDOC DRG Grant *               |                      |
| • Update on Central Commerce Park – Phase 2      |                      |
| b. Community Partners Updates                    | <b>David Peaden</b>  |
| <b>8. Other Business</b>                         | <b>David Peaden</b>  |
| <b>9. Adjourn</b>                                | <b>David Peaden</b>  |

*Potential Action Item \**



PEDC Board of Directors Meeting  
October 28, 2025 Time: 10:00 a.m.  
CO:LAB 418 W Garden St. Pensacola  
First Floor Conference Room

## Minutes

### 1. Call to Order

Chairman David Peaden called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

### 2. Public Notice

Staff confirmed that the public notice was published on October 9, 2025.

### 3. Attendance

Chairman David Peaden	Present
Commissioner Steven Barry	Present
City Councilwoman Allison Patton	Present
Commissioner Steve Stroberger	Absent
Benjamin Boutwell (Town of Century appointee)	Present
City Councilman Casey Jones	Absent
Dr. LuSharon Wiley	Present
Dave Hoxeng	Present
Donnie McMahon (FloridaWest appointee)	Absent

#### Staff and support:

Chris Platé, Patrick Rooney, Tabitha Lee, Danita Andrews, Troupe Brewer, Ashley Saba

### 4. Public Comment

Chairman David Peaden recognized the public and opened the floor for comments. Mr. Brian Wyer addressed the Board and announced an upcoming community event titled *"How to Do Business with Escambia County"* to be held on Monday, November 3, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Ferry Pass Community Center, located at 8800 N. Ninth Avenue. District 4 Commissioner Ashlee Hofberger will serve as the guest speaker. There being no further public comment, Chairman Peaden closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

### 5. Approval of the Agenda

Mayor Benjamin Boutwell moved to approve the agenda; Commissioner Steven Barry seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

### 6. Approval of September 30, 2025 Board Minutes

Commissioner Barry moved to approve the minutes; Mr. Dave Hoxeng seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

## 7. September Financial Statements

Mr. Ryan Campbell with Frazier and Deeter discussed the September financial statements, noting revenues and expenses were both below budget for the month, resulting in a positive net position. He also reported that the annual audit is underway and progressing well. During discussion, Mr. Hoxeng expressed concern about the amount of money being held in the checking account and emphasized the need to maximize interest earnings. He asked staff to review options and bring back a best revenue recommendation for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Hoxeng moved to approve the current financials; Commissioner Barry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

## 8. Project & Staff Updates:

### a. Community Data

Mr. Chris Platé reported that updated community and labor force data would be released on **September 29**, and staff would provide a full update once the new numbers are available. He noted that the most recent report shows an **unemployment rate of 4.8%**, consistent with Florida's statewide average. The local **labor force remains strong at approximately 150,495**, a figure that continues to trend upward—an encouraging sign for economic development and business recruitment.

Mr. Platé explained that Escambia County's data has followed similar patterns seen in neighboring states, with occasional short-term dips followed by stabilization. He added that while the ongoing **federal government shutdown** could temporarily delay or impact future data releases, the long-term outlook for the regional labor market remains stable. The Board discussed the importance of maintaining the unemployment rate below 5% and using the updated labor data in marketing materials and presentations to prospective clients.

### b. Product Development:

#### **Tech Park**

Mr. Chris Platé reported continued progress at the Tech Park, noting that staff has held multiple meetings with a potential defense and technology-related company that has expressed interest in occupying the entire park. Discussions are ongoing, and another meeting is being scheduled. He emphasized that while the project is still in the early stages, it represents a major opportunity for the community, and staff will continue to monitor developments closely and provide updates as new information becomes available.

#### **Central Commerce Park**

Mr. Platé noted that the PEDC awarded the design contract on September 30, and the design team has already begun work. He anticipates completion of design and marketing materials by the end of December. Staff continue to coordinate with county partners and the design firm to ensure timely progress, and there are already clients showing interest in available sites at the park.

#### **The Bluffs**

Mr. Platé reported that the organization is moving forward with the preparation of biddable documents for the roundabout to ensure that FDOT funding is used before

expiration. Other design elements have been paused to focus resources on completing this key infrastructure component, which will help advance future development opportunities in the area.

**Midtown industrial Park area**

Mr. Platé explained that discussions with county staff continue regarding the Midtown Industrial Park and its potential uses. Staff will keep working with county officials to determine next steps and ensure alignment with community goals.

**Ellyson park**

Mr. Platé also reported that staff is reviewing opportunities to further develop Ellyson Industrial Park. Updates will be provided to the Board as conceptual plans evolve, and specific opportunities are identified.

**c. BR&E / New Opportunity**

Mr. Chris Platé provided an update on Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) activities and new opportunity development. He reported that staff is in the process of upgrading the Salesforce system, which will provide a more comprehensive and efficient tool for managing company data, projects, and site information. The new system will allow for better tracking of business contacts, parcels, buildings, and company engagement, as well as improved reporting capabilities for Co:Lab participation and compliance. He added that commercial activity has picked up, with increasing inquiries and site visits from both local and out-of-area prospects.

Mr. Platé also noted growing foreign direct investment (FDI) interest, particularly from European technology and manufacturing firms seeking to establish a U.S. presence. Staff will continue to pursue these international opportunities as part of FloridaWest's economic development strategy.

**d. CO:LAB:**

Mr. Patrick Rooney provided the Co:Lab report, noting that the new fiscal year began with \$11,000 in revenue for the month. Co:Lab currently houses 26 companies with 72% occupancy and a total of 61 employees. Two one-person offices were vacated but immediately re-leased to another existing tenant, maintaining steady occupancy levels.

Mr. Rooney shared that a tenant association meeting is scheduled in the coming weeks and that interest in the remaining small offices is strong, with applications already in process. He also reported on the industry breakdown of companies within Co:Lab—49% business services, 33% IT, 11% cybersecurity, and 7% advanced manufacturing.

Mr. Platé added that enhancements to the Salesforce system will include a Co:Lab module to track tenant participation, lease compliance, and engagement in required programs such as *1 Million Cups*. The system will generate reports to help staff better manage performance and participation across the incubator.

**e. Community Partners.**

Mr. Ben Boutwell provided an update on activities in Century, noting that Town Manager Mr. Murzin continues to make strong progress and remains highly engaged with local projects. He shared that the town is moving forward with plans to convert the old gymnasium into a new community shelter, a much-needed facility for the north end of the county. The project represents an investment of over \$10 million and will serve as both a shelter and a community hub for residents.

Mr. Boutwell added that Century is seeing positive momentum, with local leaders working hard to address community needs and attract additional investment. Board members commended these efforts and expressed appreciation for the continued partnership.

Mr. Platé also provided regional updates, including ongoing collaboration between the City of Pensacola, Escambia County, and FloridaWest. He noted the success of American Magic and related marine industry projects, which are expanding and creating more jobs than initially projected. The Board discussed the importance of sustaining these partnerships to support community development and business growth throughout Escambia County.

**9. Other Business:**

**a. Board Meeting Schedule (November & December)**

Chair David Peaden noted that the regular November and December board meetings fall near major holidays and asked members to consider adjusting the schedule. After discussion, the Board agreed that there were no urgent action items requiring a November meeting and that one combined meeting would be sufficient to cover both months. Members suggested meeting during the first or second week of December, with December 2 or December 9 proposed as potential dates. Staff will review schedules and confirm the final meeting date.

**10. Adjournment:**

Chairman Peaden adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.