



DESOTO DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, May 8, 2025

The Board of Directors of the DeSoto Development Corporation (DDC) met on **Thursday, May 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.** in the Council Conference Room located in City Hall at the DeSoto Town Center, 211 East Pleasant Run Road, DeSoto, Texas 75115, The meeting was streamed live on Facebook and archived on the websites.

As authorized by Section 551.071(2) of the Texas Government Code, this meeting may be convened into a closed Executive Session to seek confidential legal advice from the Corporation's attorney on any agenda item listed herein.

**“Pursuant to Texas Government Code Sec. 551.127, on a regular, non-emergency basis, members may attend and participate in the meeting remotely by video conference. Should that occur, a quorum of members, including the presiding officer, will be physically present at the location noted on this Agenda.”**

**REGULAR SESSION - THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER**  
by President Michael Baldwin at 6:05 p.m.

**Present:**

Michael Baldwin, Board President  
Felicia Pierson, Secretary/Treasurer  
Dr. Ahmad Garrett-Price, Director  
James Pruitt, Director  
Akilah Wallace, Director

**Absent:**

Dr. Micaela Herndon, Director  
Mark Jones, Director

**Staff Present:**

Matt Carlson – DDC Chief Executive Officer  
Antoine Long - Economic Development Manager  
Melba Hill – Administrative Assistant III  
Councilman Andre’ Byrd – City Council Liaison  
Majed Al-Ghafry – City Manager  
Adriana Castaneda – Deputy City Manager

**Also Present:**

Victoria Thomas, Attorney

Councilman Andre’ Byrd offered the invocation.



**REGULAR AGENDA— NEW BUSINESS**— Items for discussion and/or possible action:

1. Introduction of new board member James Pruitt  
The board extended a formal welcome to James Pruitt.
2. Finance Status Report as of April 2025 – Tracy Cormier, Director of Financial Services  
Finance status report for April 2025 to be provided at the June Regular Board Meeting.
3. Projects, attraction efforts, site visits, and general operations report  
Matt Carlson – Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Carlson delivered updates on the business plan goals, department goals, and staff personal and professional development plans, which are summarized in the attached report.

4. Discussion of agenda items for upcoming joint boards/commissions meeting  
Announcement of the next meeting on August 20, 2025, and the need for all boards to submit projects or programs for joint discussion and alignment, with a submission deadline of June 3, 2025.
5. Update on Healthy DeSoto Initiative -

The board and subcommittee provided an update on the Healthy DeSoto initiative, summarizing six months of exploratory work to chart a path for a healthy DeSoto and the need for external expertise to establish that path. The board had requested council approval for \$100,000.00 in professional services to further the Healthy DeSoto initiative.

Council members showed interest in the project but requested additional discussions, clarification, and community feedback before approving the expense. They agreed that the board must clearly outline the scope, objectives, and specific deliverables.

The next opportunity for a joint board and subcommittee presentation to the council will be in July 2025, allowing time for preparation and ensuring key members can attend. The board has requested to review the presentation before it is finalized and submitted to the council.

6. Discussion on the creation of DeSoto Tech Incubator Hub

The proposal to establish a tech incubator hub in DeSoto, in collaboration with HEXA co-working, was introduced. This initiative will utilize city-owned buildings and leverage HEXA's experience in other locations. The financial model explained how rent from the co-working space will subsidize tech start-ups for a two-year period. Mr. Carlson and Xavier Eagan, Managing Partner at HEXA, led a discussion regarding building improvements and leasehold arrangements. They outlined the responsibilities for structural improvements by the city and interior retrofitting by HEXA, as well as the lease terms and the reversion of improvements after five years.



The discussion also addressed future needs as the incubator space reaches full occupancy, including the potential use of flex space in the new bio flex area of the DeSoto Business Park. Staff presented a proposal to use rental income to establish a self-funding revolving tech fund dedicated to ongoing innovation support, which would decrease reliance on general funds. They highlighted the necessity of filling vacant spaces by targeting tech-forward tenants.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

The DDC Chief Executive lists items on the Consent Agenda and recommends them to the DDC Board of Directors for a single vote of approval. At the request of a board director, any item on the Consent Agenda may be removed for a separate vote.

1. Consider approving the minutes of the April 14, 2025, Regular Board Meeting.
2. Consider approving the financial statement for April 2025.

**The minutes for the April 14, 2025, Regular Board Meeting were approved unanimously, with a motion by Director Akilah Wallace and a second by Director Felicia Pierson.**

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION UNDER TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE:**

Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.087

1. Discussion of potential economic development incentives for Project Recreation.
2. Discussion of potential economic development incentives for Project Helix.

**Executive Session items were withdrawn.**

## **RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

No action was taken as a result of the executive session

## **BOARD AND LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPDATES**

Councilman Byrd announced that Mayor Rachel Proctor was re-elected for her last and final term. There will be a run-off for Council Seats for Places 3 and 5. Early voting is available from May 27 to June 3, with the election date set for June 7. The three bond proposals passed for the DeSoto ISD. School board seats ran unopposed, and on May 14<sup>th</sup>, the DeSoto ISD will have a Celebration of the bond issue passing at the Belt Line Conference Center.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

At 8:35 p.m.

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J. Matt Carlson—Chief Executive Officer