



**Board of Directors meeting \* February 2, 2022 – 9:00 am.**

**Call to Order:** Scott Seay called the meeting to order at 9:01 am.

**Attending were:**

Alan Baggett	Dr. Melinda Bowers	April Branscome
Michelle Crocker	Wyndy Crozier	Jean Anne Encardes
Louis Erickson	Dr. Michael Erny	Ron Garriga
Bill Imfeld	David Jefferson	Joel Paul
Scarlett Phaneuf	Scott Seay	Al Ward
Commissioner Mel Ponder	Holly Newton	

**CSOW staff members present:**

Michele Burns	Kelly Jordan	Will Miles
Sue Berntsen	Brad Balfanz	Shawn Knobel

**Scott Seay announced** that Juliet Milam has resigned her membership on the Board because of other commitments, and thanked her for her service.

**Approval of Minutes:** The December 1, 2021 minutes were presented – there were no questions or comments.

*A motion by Bill Imfeld, seconded by Louis Erickson, to approve the December 2, 2021 minutes as presented. All Ayes.*

**Finance Committee:** Shawn Knobel reviewed the Grant Spending sheet from Dec 31, 2021. Adult funds are nearly spent, but we have other funds which can supplement. We are spending about \$200K per month, which is on target. The new Get There Faster grant is over \$900K.

Budget Mod #2 is the addition of the Get There Faster grant.

*A motion by Ron Garriga, seconded by Wyndy Crozier, to approve Budget Mod #2 as presented. All Ayes.*

**Business Competitiveness Committee:** Michelle Crocker reported the BCC met Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> and updated the meeting scheduled for 2022 (3/10, 5/12, 7/14 & 11/10.) Will Miles gave an Eligible Provider presentation.

**Executive Committee:** Scott Seay said the Executive Committee did not meet in January.

**Career & Youth Committee:** There were no updates for the Committee.

## **Partner Updates**

University of West Florida – Dr. Melinda Bowers reported that their cybersecurity is partnering with Regions Foundation for a cyber-success program, free for eligible Veterans. Dr. Saunders gave a year-end address highlighting excellence in diversity, they are ranked among the best public regional universities in the South by the US News & World Report, #1 Florida State Universities system Metric 1, they are a Gold Military Friendly school, and are ranked in the Great Colleges to work for.

Okaloosa Schools - April Branscome said they are working with UWF on the Artificial Intelligence curriculum and an agreement with FWB Medical Center where Practical Nursing students will go to school on the hospital campus and earn certifications the hospital needs. Meigs and Davidson Middle Schools are starting carpentry programs.

Northwest Florida State College – Dr. Michael Erny said they are expanding the aviation program and apprenticeships are growing with new options in industrial maintenance, IT support and culinary. There is demand for graduates and they have the capacity to serve more. The programs align with local needs.

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University – Ron Garriga announced ERAU is the #1 undergraduate online university in the US News & World Report and they are #1 serving Vets, and #1 in aerospace engineering. ERAU has their SACS accreditation next week. January term 2022 was the largest term for registration in the University's history. He is leaving US Campus Operations to be Executive Director of Corporate Relations and Business Development.

Walton County Schools – Wyndy Crozier stated ECTC was named #1 for their automotive service tech program by Florida's Best News. The welding and HVAC building is progressing. The Instructional Service Center at Watersound is open. There will be a simulated ER at the DeFuniak Springs campus. They are looking for a full-time welding instructor.

Walton EDA - Bill Imfeld reported they had a holiday lull. A lot is dependent on completion of the 331 water & sewer project, expected by the end of March. There are new projects expected from the west coast which will be announced at a later date.

Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners – Commissioner Mel Ponder said the County will receive \$40M in American Rescue Plan funds they will use to expand broadband, stormwater projects and perhaps a new water treatment facility near Crestview. They signed a 40-year joint-use agreement with the Air Force for the airport, the longest in recent times. A 605-acre tract east of Crestview may accommodate up to 1200 affordable housing units with land-use changes. The development may take 15 – 20 years. Roadwork at FL 85 and Live Oak Rd. and some sidewalk projects in Niceville continue. The TDC expanded the bedtax through referendum last fall, they will hire a sports tourism person and destination stewardship person.

Military – Holly Newton reminded the Board of the Panhandle Job Fair March 18<sup>th</sup>. They were approved for an Air Force Aid Society Spouse Employment grant. Hire Our Heroes will be July 19<sup>th</sup>. Eglin A&FRC won the AETC Center of the Year award.

Get There Faster grant - Kelly Jordan reviewed the Get There Faster grant, in collaboration with Regions 1, 3 and 4. It is a DEO grant for \$900K for two years. We are interviewing for two staff members. Veterans and Military Spouses have preferred eligibility for support services. Programs are from the ETPL list and SkillBridge.

**Executive Director's Report:** Michele Burns reported we had about 50% of staff out in January due to COVID. We are at appointments only for now. We have positions open, some candidates have accepted positions and then found other employment, including remote.

The first Executive Directors' meeting is in Palm Beach next Monday. The four Panhandle regions are discussing ways to combine services and share resources. We currently share an accounting clerk with LWDB 1. Upcoming job fairs include Walton County Hospitality and the College ad Career Day in Okaloosa.

We will also host Ms. Devlin, DoL Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations and Management the week of March 14th but do not have the full details yet. Some of our team will also be attending the SETA Conference which is being held in Miramar Beach that same week. Our Vet team will use some of the Vet Incentive money to attend.

A Board Orientation is required, and a link to the video will be sent out to Members. Adjustments to the Board meeting schedule are in the packet, the next full Board meeting will be in June. Financial Disclosures for 2021 are due by July 1, 2022.

**Chair's Comments:** We are in need of two new Board members if you know someone interested.

**Roundtable Board Members Updates/Public Comments:**

- Scott Seay announced that by the end of March all CHELCO DeFuniak Springs facilities will be located on 331N.
- Alan Baggett announced that Feb 18<sup>th</sup> they will have Edsel Charles speaking on Future Housing Trends and How it Will Impact Your Business, New Home Forecast for Next Five Years and Inflation. April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> will be the annual Home Show
- Louis Erickson invited the Board to the Open House for their new location in the HSU building February 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 am.

**The next Board meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2022 at 9:00 am.**