



**Board of Directors Meeting \* April 7, 2021 – 9:00 a.m.  
Virtual meeting**

**Call to Order:** Chair Juliet Milam called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

**Attending were:**

Juliet Milam	Dr. Melinda Bowers	April Branscome
Michelle Crocker	Bill Dillman	Jean Anne Encardes
Louis Erickson	Dr. Michael Erny	Randy Fleming
Ron Garriga	Bill Imfeld	Joel Paul
Rebecca Pazik	Scarlett Phaneuf	Scott Seay
Pam Tedesco	LaVonne Vasquez	Al Ward
Commissioner Mike Barker	Holly Newton	

**CSOW staff members present:**

Michele Burns	Kelly Jordan	Therese Baker
Will Miles	Brad Balfanz	Mikiko Tucker
RebekahThorgaard	Sue Berntsen	

**Approval of Minutes:** The February 3, 2021 minutes were presented – there were no questions or comments.

*A motion by Ron Garriga, seconded by Michael Erny to approve the Feb 3, 2021 minutes as presented. All Ayes.*

**Finance Committee:** Bill Dillman reviewed the Funds Availability sheet emailed to the Board & displayed on the screen. Options to expend Welfare Transition and Youth funds are being considered including outreach and a Summer Youth Program. If appropriate an extension of the funds will be requested. Performance incentives for staff will be considered in the future. Military Family program funds will be used for outreach as we reopen and a request for extension may be appropriate there as well. Juliet Milam commented that the staff received a 3.5% increase since one had not been given in over two years and reminded Board members that the WIOA required Financial Disclosures are due by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Executive Committee:** Juliet Milam reported the Committee met March 3, 2021 and the staff salary increases were approved at that time.

**Business Competitiveness Committee:** The Committee did not meet in March.

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

## **Partner Updates**

University of West Florida –Melinda Bowers announced they will have an in-person commencement May 8<sup>th</sup> at Wahoo stadium and 2020 graduates will also be invited to participate. They have 11 full programs on the FWB campus – including computer, electrical and mechanical engineering.

Okaloosa Schools - April Branscome said students are successfully completing their certifications. Okaloosa is partnering with Waste Management and other local businesses for the automotive program. There are medical internships at The Manor at Bluewater. Okaloosa Schools would like to partner for a Summer Youth Program if possible.

Military – LaVonne Vasquez announced the Hiring Our Heroes event April 29, 1:00-4:00pm. Registration is via their website and there are currently 17 employers.

Northwest Florida State College – Michael Erny stated they are also having an in-person graduation May 8<sup>th</sup>. There will be small groups rotating through all day. They have several programs preparing to launch in the Fall, airframe pilot drone and building construction specialist. They received approval from the State for the HVAC apprenticeship program.

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University – Ron Garriga said ERAU will not have an in-person graduation but will have in-person global graduations starting in September and any graduate may participate. ERAU was rated #1 by U.S. News & World Report for on-line under-graduate bachelors' degree program and for under-graduate programs for Veterans. They are also working with NWFSC's aviation program for 2+2 start here finish there.

Department of Children and Family Services - Randy Fleming said April is Child Abuse Prevention Awareness month, watch for the blue pinwheels. Shevaun Harris is the new Secretary for FL DCF, joining in February. They are beginning to return to the storefront offices, supervisors are planning for the return of the employees. They have the new CarePortal linking churches to the needs of children to help keep them out of foster care. It concentrates on specific needs for specific children. An invitation to the portal and training will be provided after the meeting.

Walton EDA - Bill Imfeld announced they have closed on another sale for Woodlawn Industrial Park with a truss manufacturer which will bring about two dozen jobs and a pending sale for Mossy Head Industrial Park for a specialty glass distributor warehouse. One of the key factors for pending out of state business is being able to find affordable housing for their employees.

Juliet Milam, on behalf of Nathan Sparks, One Okaloosa announced TeCMEN Industry Day April 14<sup>th</sup>

Walton Board of County Commissioners – Commissioner Mike Barker described a sidewalk project connecting the three schools near DeFuniak Springs - Walton High School, Maude Saunders Elementary and Emerald Coast Technical College. Walton County is partnering with the City of DeFuniak Springs and St. Joe for the project. They expect the first phase to be complete in 6 – 8 months.

Tri-County Community Council – Joel Paul said their offices are still open seeing people in person. They still have some funding to help people go back to work. The CARES money fluctuates.

**Program Updates:** Kelly Jordan reported we are still serving people in-person by appointment, virtually and by phone. Many are unemployment compensation related. The latest opportunity is with ID Me – a new contractor for DEO to verify eligibility information for fraud prevention. It sometimes takes five hours for the verification before the claim can be continued. The MFEA team is back on Eglin and a new hire for HFLD is anticipated, and the team is #1 in the State. The Veterans team has also stepped up and continue to serve. The DoD SkillBridge program is going well. She reviewed performance metrics and the success of the various programs and locations.

Kelly introduced Mikiko Tucker, CSOW's new Director of Communications and Business Services. Mikiko reviewed her goals for the future and announced the Virtual Job Fair with NWFSC April 15, 10am – 1pm. There are currently 59 employers registered. She is initiating a Facebook live Good Morning show to highlight services.

**Executive Director's Report:** Michele Burns discussed that it's already the last quarter of our program year. She is monitoring the legislative session for workforce issues. Some involve new term limits for Board members which can be difficult for small Regions. A Staff retreat was held Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> at Camp Timpoochee. The program was won from UF by participation in a Halloween program. Staff turnover has been an issue. Florida unemployment is currently at 5%, with Okaloosa at 3% and Walton at 3.3%. The next Board meeting is June 2<sup>nd</sup> with many critical votes including approval of new MOUs with our partners, the initial budget, approval of new LOPs and the election of officers.

**Chair's Comments:** Juliet Milam asked that CSOW staff leave the meeting for a special discussion. Bill Dillman recommended a salary increase for Executive Director Michele Burns. He recapped her salary and performance history and answered questions. The proposed increase is 3.5% as the rest of the staff received. Finance reviewed funding and the increase can be afforded and is sustainable.

<p><i>A motion by Louis Erickson, seconded by Michelle Crocker to approve the Executive Director salary increase as presented.</i></p>	<p><i>All Ayes.</i></p>
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Michele Burns then returned to the meeting and was advised of the increase.

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

- Juliet Milam reminded the Board of the Gulf Power Economic Symposium September 14 & 15 at Sandestin, registration is at [www.gulfpowersymposium.com](http://www.gulfpowersymposium.com)
- Louis Erickson asked that the Facebook Live broadcasts be posted to YouTube for later viewing and announced that Bit-Wizards is partnering with the Hsu Foundation to sponsor a room for their programming, infrastructure and digital marketing classes.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:51am

**The next Board meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.**