



Board of Directors meeting * December 1, 2021 – 9:00 am.

Call to Order: Juliet Milam called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

Attending were:

Alan Baggett	Dr. Melinda Bowers	April Branscome
Michelle Crocker	Bill Dillman	Jean Anne Encardes
Louis Erickson	Dr. Michael Erny	Bill Imfeld
Bernard Johnson Jr	Juliet Milam	Rebecca Pazik
Cheryl Pedone	Scarlett Phaneuf	Scott Seay
Nathan Sparks	Pam Tedesco	Commissioner Mel Ponder
Danny Glidewell	Diane Jackson	

CSOW staff members present:

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

Approval of Minutes: The October 20, 2021 minutes were presented – there were no questions or comments.

A motion by Scarlett Phaneuf, seconded by Bernard Johnson, Jr, to approve the October 20, 2021 minutes as presented. All Ayes.

Finance Committee: Bill Dillman reported the Executive Committee reviewed wages due to high staff turnover. Wages were increased by \$3K to \$8K per position, and the Executive Director’s salary was increased by \$10K. This should make CSOW more competitive and result in better staff retention. Shawn Knobel reviewed Grant Spending as of October 31. We are 1/3 of the way through the year and are at 32% overall spending – on target. We anticipate a budget increase for the staff salary adjustment. The discretionary funds’ balance is \$324,808.11.

Business Competitiveness Committee: Michelle Crocker thanked Will and Kelly for standing in. The next meeting is December 9. An updated schedule for 2022 will be sent.

Mission Moment Kelly Jordan is currently managing the Veterans’ program. She introduced Ken Wallace, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, who reviewed a program success story that began in 2016 and came to a successful conclusion recently. Over the five years, contact was intermittent, but persistence paid off when the participant recently got a job making \$28.00/hour.

Executive Committee: Juliet Milam reported no other updates for Executive Committee.

Career & Youth Committee: Juliet Milam stated there are no updates for the Committee.

Partner Updates

University of West Florida – Dr. Melinda Bowers related that, unfortunately, Argos football did not make the playoffs, but volleyball and soccer are moving up. The semester is winding down; there will be three commencement ceremonies at the Bay Center Saturday, December 11. December 22 – January 4 is winter break.

Okaloosa Schools - April Branscome commented there will be new carpentry programs at three schools next year funded by a new grant. Students (22 of 22) in the Crestview HS EMR program passed their EKG certification test. They are working with FWB Medical Center, where Practical Nursing students will go to school on the hospital campus. They are applying for a Triumph grant to build out a classroom area at the hospital. They are also working with the University of Florida on an AI program for next year and with Emerald Coast Robotics Alliance (ECRA) on a robotics program.

Northwest Florida State College – Dr. Michael Erny said the commercial pilot, drone, and airframe programs are up and running at the Crestview Aviation Center. There is an event Saturday, December 4 by invitation only for 35 high school students in the Propel series. A new building construction program at the DeFuniak Springs campus is drawing interest and building out, along with welding and cyber security programs. Apprenticeship programs are expanding in Niceville along with the CDL program. A transit technician (diesel mechanic) program will start in the fall. At FWB they have a remodeled medical laboratory technician lab and physical therapy assistant program. The academies are graduating in the next few weeks.

Vocational Rehabilitation – Diane Jackson introduced Cheryl Pedone, VR's new representative to the Board. Cheryl was recently promoted to Unit Supervisor. Diane thanked the Partners and reported that WIOA numbers were exceeded for Youth across the state this year. Partners for OJT sites are always welcome. Cheryl thanked Commissioner Ponder for the engagement for serving Youth. They are providing a 20-hour pre-employment course for ESE students.

One Okaloosa EDC – Nathan Sparks announced additions to their online relocation portal adding a Preferred Provider Directory for professional services. Today at 1:30 there is a Tri-County initiative meeting going into 2.0 of this initiative. There will be a new process identifying new partnerships. There is a virtual meeting link available for those interested. Okaloosa County is now part of Foreign Trade Zone #249 which can save tax, tariff and import duties.

Walton EDA - Bill Imfeld reported a defense contractor relocating from California to Freeport is at 11:59. SDI Labs is relocating from Garden Grove CA to Santa Rosa Beach. They are a technology company that accelerates testing for infectious diseases. Local education is involved in enhancing curricula for future workforce.

Okaloosa Board of County Commissioners – Commissioner Mel Ponder wished everyone Happy Holidays. Temporary fencing to capture sand along the Okaloosa Island beaches is being installed beginning today. Okaloosa County EMS is hosting a toy drive. EMS will receive significant pay raises effective immediately. The Women's Veterans Monuments were unveiled recently. Veterans' Park will include 2,200 linear feet of living shoreline, the first of its kind in the nation. Dunkin has selected North Okaloosa County for a new state-of-the-art commercial bakery and distribution facility. Kelly Jordan and Brad Balfanz joined the Youth

Leadership Council with a junior or senior from each Okaloosa county high school. Benefiting Exceptional Students in Transition (BEST) Council builds relationships for those with special or unique needs in the county and equipping them with workforce opportunities.

Executive Director's Report: Michele Burns asked Brad Balfanz to review tomorrow's Walton County Community Resource & Job Fair in DeFunaik Springs. This is a joint event and will be family friendly with fire trucks on display and a visit from Santa. Michele then reported we have finished our program monitoring and were very happy with the results. We did have 5 findings but two of which we had already identified prior to the monitoring. The amount of turnover and training new staff was certainly an issue over the last two years. Hopefully the increases that you were briefed on earlier will help with some of that. Right now we are down to a few openings and most of those are on the State side.

I talked about the "Get There Faster" WIOA competitive Grant for Veterans and Military Spouses, and we did receive word that we were one of the recipients of this award. This is the award that goes across the four regions in the Panhandle and we look forward to working with our partners on this grant. Escarosa will handle the financial piece of the grant. Our Region will receive \$901,806.00 through September 30, 2023.

Our VSO meeting will be on December 9th and we are looking forward to being able to provide lunch as we usually do not have the funding to do so.

Things are working out great so far with the partnership between us and Escarosa sharing an FTE in the accounting department. Our financial audit is still in the works at DEO – and our regular financial audit will be in January.

Lots of changes with the new staff coming onboard and moving people around, but also some very positive excitement in the center. Our Holiday luncheon was a huge success and everyone seemed to enjoy it. I would like to close for half a day on December 16th, so all can enjoy our Holiday Celebration.

Chair's Comments: Juliet Milam thanked everyone for their time and congratulated everyone on a great 2021. She wished everyone Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Roundtable Board Members Updates/Public Comments:

- Louis Erickson announced that Bit-Wizards has moved to the Hsu building at 70 Ready Ave. in FWB and will have an open house on February 16, 2022.
- Bernard Johnson announced the Gulf Power Symposium March 8 & 9, 2022 still in Sandestin.
- Cheryl Pedone asked for Walton County contacts to discuss OJT opportunities in Walton County.

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

The next Board meeting is scheduled for February 2, 2022 at 9:00 am.