

**Minutes of the Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.
Meeting of the Unofficial Board of Directors
Held Monday, May 22, 2017
At Holley Academic Center, Florida State University
Panama City Campus**

The following directors were present:

- Stan Connally
- Stephen Riggs IV
- Allan Bense, Unofficial Chairman
- Pam Dana
- Bob Bonezzi – Via Phone

Call to Order

Unofficial Chairman Allan Bense called the Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Unofficial Board of Directors meeting to order at 10:28 AM (Central), and Angela Sanders recorded the minutes.

Roll Call, Verification of Quorum

Angela Sanders called roll, and all board members were present, with Mr. Bonezzi on the phone.

Opening Remarks

Unofficial Chairman Bense stated that the purpose of today's meeting was to bring everyone up to speed on what happened during the last legislative session. Legislation has to be passed to move money from treasury to Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Bills were filed in the House and the Senate. The House formally passed the Triumph Gulf Coast bill, and sent it to Governor Scott. Governor Scott has until June 2 to sign the bill, not sign the bill and it automatically passes, or veto. Thank you to Susan Skelton for her unpaid commitment to working with the board. Mr. Bense indicated that once (hopefully) signed, the board will begin meeting to plan how to spend the money conservatively. Mr. Bense asked the board members for opening remarks prior to turning over to Ms. Skelton for deeper legislature discussion, then to Mike Burke and Lisa Walters to discuss action items.

Mr. Connally shared his hopes that they will work together as a regional community to strengthen and diversify the economy. Mr. Connally agreed that the board should act conservatively and ensure that any actions would generate a return on their investment.

Dr. Dana agreed with Mr. Connally's comments, and thanked the Florida Legislature for unanimously supporting the Triumph Gulf Coast bill due to the efforts from the Northwest Florida Delegation. Dr. Dana also thanked Unofficial Chairman Bense and former Senate President Don Gaetz for their efforts to educate leadership on how Triumph Gulf Coast will impact the area.

Mr. Riggs echoed fellow board members' comments and shared his excitement to finally be able to get the process started and is looking forward to working with local delegation to improve the economy and move the region forward.

Mr. Bonezzi thanked Unofficial Chairman Bense for his leadership.

Mr. Bense stated that there will be two more board members appointed, and the current members will wait for the new members before making any decisions. Mr. Bense gave an overview of Ms. Skelton's background working with the legislature before asking for her comments.

Ms. Skelton thanked Unofficial Chairman Bense. She stated that Mr. Bense and other board members were continuously checking in with her during the legislative session. Original legislation in the House was filed on March 16, and the Senate bill was filed prior to that. Ms. Skelton explained that the House bill was 7077 with companion bill 7079, and Senate bill was 364 with companion bill 2518. The final versions that passed were 7077 and 7079, but these were a compilation of both House and Senate bills. Ms. Skelton gave an overview of bills 7077 and 7079, and copies of the bills were available at the meeting. Mr. Connally referenced bill 7077, page 16, line 383, requesting clarification on which of the eight disproportionately affected counties qualify for rural infrastructure funds. Ms. Skelton, with confirmation from Kim Wilmes from Florida's Great Northwest, confirmed that not all counties qualified, only the least populated. Those counties are Franklin, Wakula, Gulf, and Walton.

Mr. Bense reminded that Triumph Gulf Coast is still not incorporated. He then asked Lisa Walters to go over action items. At Ms. Walter's request, Mike Burke gave an overview of Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.'s Articles of Incorporation. Ms. Walters identified the action items found in the Resolution Authorizing Incorporation of Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. as direct staff to file Articles of Incorporation, obtain federal employee identification number, and create Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. website. Also, looking for banking institution to serve as Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. checking account and to serve as flow through to be moved to the Triumph trust fund from the treasury. Ms. Walters and Mr. Connally have been working to compile a list of qualified public depositories. Mr. Connally suggested that the board starts looking at banks on the list that are chartered in the eight disproportionately affected counties, then expanding search to Florida if unable to find a qualified institution in that region with the goal being to stay as close to the area as possible. Dr. Dana agreed that was a good path for the search, but clarified that the board would be looking for an institution based in one of the eight counties but not necessarily in all eight counties. Mr. Connally confirmed. Mr. Riggs also agreed that working with someone locally with a vested interest that the board could call and talk to rather than working with a large national institution. Mr. Riggs also asked if this decision could be reached by taking a vote, and Mr. Bense confirmed. Mr. Bense then asked Mr. Bonezzi for any comments, and Mr. Bonezzi agreed that the money should be kept in the eight disproportionately affected counties if possible.

Mr. Bense asked if the board had any questions regarding the Articles of Incorporation, but no one did. Mr. Bense advised that Ms. Skelton has been interviewing people for the website. The board agreed they were ok with preparing to choose someone to create a website. Mr. Bense called for a motion to adopt the resolution to instruct the chair to take appropriate actions to address formation of the corporation, identify possible financial institutions, and begin development of a basic website. Mr. Connally made a motion and Dr. Dana seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Public Comment

Unofficial Chairman Bense opened the floor to public comment.

- Henry Kelley: Thanked Mr. Bense. Realizes that the grant process is way down stream, but he works with Okaloosa County School District and several of the colleges here and school systems have been collaborating on potential grants. Understands that the grants/proposals may be presented to county commissioners. Mr. Kelley asked for

clarification on if multiple counties are collaborating, if they will need to present to commissioners from multiple counties or how that will be handled. Mr. Kelley stated that he wasn't expecting an answer today, but wanted the board to consider those situations. Mr. Bense advised that Ms. Skelton had thought of that. Ms. Skelton advised that nothing prohibited proposals from showing up on multiple counties' recommendation lists. Mr. Kelley clarified that their concern is that as the process is designed they would need to include multiple sets of county commissioners on a single grant program when it's dispersed across multiple counties. Mr. Kelley is asking the board to consider that as the process is designed. Ms. Skelton indicated the award would be assigned to the project, but the process for that has not been established yet. Mr. Kelley thanked Ms. Skelton.

- Jim Muller: Looks forward to working with the board and advised that most counties have been through RESTORE processes as much as possible, and offered the services of the county RESTORE coordinators to look at potential processes for applications and evaluation criteria.
- Kim Wilmes: Clarified earlier response to Mr. Connally's question regarding the counties that qualify for rural infrastructure funds. Those areas are Franklin, Wakula, and Gulf Counties, as well as the City of Freeport in Walton County.

Mr. Bense announced that anyone interested in being added to the email distribution should include their email on the sign in sheets. Mr. Bense then asked the board for any closing comments. Mr. Connally followed up on Mr. Kelley's comment, and clarified that requests/proposals do not have to go through the county commissions. They are allowed to through independently. Mr. Connally also clarified that one of the areas the board may award funds is tourism. Mr. Connally stated that he would like to get educated on how these eight counties have participated in Visit Florida funding in the past and how the change proposed in the budget will impact the eight counties. Mr. Bense has tried to figure out how much Visit Florida allocates toward the eight counties, and estimates that it is between \$5 million and \$10 million. He thinks Triumph funds could be used to supplement the lost funding if needed. Ms. Skelton advised that Florida's Great Northwest held a meeting where there was concern that Triumph funds could not be used for marketing; however, those funds can be used for marketing so it's important for tourism development agencies to work closely with the Triumph board to help them understand how the budget changes will impact them. Dr. Dana explained that in recent years Visit Florida has done a better job of representing our area. Dr. Dana also thanked the legal team and Ms. Skelton.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by Unofficial Chairman Bense.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Sanders