

DRAFT
Meeting Minutes
Application Drafting Committee Meeting
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.
Destin City Hall Annex
4200 Indian Bayou Trail
Destin, Florida
August 30, 2017
1:00 p.m. CT

Members Present:

Pam Dana, PhD – Chair
Robert Bonezzi
Stan Connally, Jr.
Jason Shoaf

Committee Chair Pam Dana called the meeting to order at 1:17 p.m. CT.

Staff called the roll and announced the presence of a quorum.

Chair Dana recognized the new Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. legal team, Mr. Scott Remington, Ms. Elizabeth Billhimer, and Ms. Kelsey Stone of the Clark Partington Law Firm. She recognized Ms. Lisa Walters of the Burke, Blue, Hutchison, Walters and Smith Law Firm and noted that Ms. Walters has been providing counsel to Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. for the past two years.

Chair Dana recognized a delegation from the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and asked for brief comments on their experiences with application processes within that department.

Ms. Kate Doyle, Director of the Division of Community Development spoke about the division's work with local governments in administering federal and state programs. She noted that the state is more flexible than the federal government in administration of such programs, recognizing the needs and limitations of local governments. The division administers federal community development block grants. She brought samples of contracts and applications for various programs and noted that some have gotten more difficult as more rules are applied to the programs. She indicated that some applications currently in use need to be revised and streamlined. She discussed the Rural Infrastructure Grant Program and said that it is more flexible than other grant programs and has a rolling deadline feature to accommodate the needs of the smaller rural areas. Ms. Doyle said that the department is developing the Florida Jobs Growth Grant Program based on the parameters set by the 2017 Legislature.

Ms. Katie Smith, Director of Partnership Engagement, spoke about the Quick Action Closing Fund and said that Triumph Gulf Coast could find good guidance

from that application sample and those used for Enterprise Florida grant programs.

Ms. Dornecia Allen, Contracts and Grants Manager for the department, spoke about the contract management procedures used for grant programs. She noted that a complete legal review and leadership review of each contract is done prior to any contract being sent out, and that the same review is done once the contract is executed by all parties. She noted that contracts specifically spell out the expected scope of work including all deliverables, tasks, reasonable and accountable expected costs, and budgets. Contracts also require identification of match funds, both cash and in-kind.

Mr. Stan Connally asked if the department would provide samples of the grant programs. Ms. Allen replied that those samples would be provided through staff.

Mr. Connally then asked about what the most common areas of non-compliance are once a contract is executed. Ms. Allen indicated that financial consequences for not-compliance are clearly stated in the contract, and that minimum compliance conditions are established in advance so there can be no misunderstanding about grant requirements. She said that contract language related to clawback provisions is clearly laid out. She said that grant managers monitor program progress and if there are problems, they try to work with grantees to avoid non-compliance issues.

Dr. Dana asked the group to discuss the different requirements applied to rural counties through the program formerly known as Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (now known as Rural Areas of Opportunity). Ms. Smith said that she would need to go back and check on provisions of those grant programs, but that she knew there was some additional leeway in dealing with clawback provisions for those programs.

Dr. Dana asked the department to discuss the number of grants in process at any one time. Ms. Allen indicated that there were usually about 400 grants open at a time, that she had a staff of three persons for review of the contracts, but that grant managers and contract managers handle the operational work on the contracts. She said that two grant managers handle approximately 42 programs. Ms. Smith indicated that in her office she had three staff members overseeing 300 grants.

Dr. Dana noted that the Florida Jobs Growth Grant Fund was established by the 2017 Legislature with very similar parameters to the ones applied to Triumph Gulf Coast programs. Ms. Doyle said that the new program has two tracks, Public Infrastructure and Workforce, much like Triumph Gulf Coast. She said that applicants for the Public Infrastructure grants must be local governments, but that there was more flexibility in eligibility for the workforce grants, but that applicants must be affiliated in some way with colleges or universities. Dr. Dana noted that if

the department and Enterprise Florida are already working on drafting applications, Triumph Gulf Coast could use ideas from that experience to inform the Triumph application drafting process.

Ms. Doyle noted that the department works with Enterprise Florida to create the proposal process and said that examples of proposal processes for both the public infrastructure and workforce tracks are available on the department website.

Mr. Jason Shoaf asked what types of Request for Proposals procedures are used for typical grants projects. Ms. Doyle responded that the application process serves that role and that the awards process may allow for and/or require competitive bids within the project. She said that the scoring process for the application would recognize a competitive component, then contract could require competitive bidding within the awarded project.

Dr. Dana thanked the representatives from the Department of Economic Opportunity. She then called on Ms. Walters to lead the committee's discussion of the application drafting process.

Ms. Walters told the committee that her purpose with the presentation was to begin the conversation among the members and with the public to determine what the important points and concepts are for the group going forward. The outflow from the conversation will inform staff as it undertakes the actual drafting process. She noted that while there are many different forms and examples of applications for programs available for review, the Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. application would be unique, with parameters determined by statute and by the members' directions. She noted that it is not often that different types of programs are competing with one another for the same awards, i.e., education projects competing with infrastructure projects within the same application process. She stated that her hope was to get enough information from the meeting for staff to be able to bring back a draft application for editing at the next meeting.

Mr. Connally said that he thought that job creation should be a priority, or at the least, there should be a weighting within the scoring process to support jobs that are at or above the county's average wage. He said that since economic diversification is a goal, the committee might want to look to other programs across the state that focus on target industry sectors and provide weight to those jobs in the application process. He noted that once target sectors are identified, the committee may choose to leave the process open, but it may want to consider giving some weight to the target sectors but not make the application exclusive. He also said that there might want to be some consideration, and possible additional weight, given to projects or programs that show regional impacts. Mr. Connally said that environmental impacts of projects need to be considered, and possible additional weight could be given to projects that employ

green building standards or otherwise benefit the environment. Ms. Walters noted that points could be given for projects that do no harm to the environment.

Dr. Dana said that partnerships across communities, or that have support from multiple government entities should be encouraged and rewarded. She asked if job wage thresholds should be set based on county or regional wages, and how the number of jobs versus the wage rate should be considered. She noted that a few high wage jobs in a smaller community might be more beneficial overall than a lot of low wage jobs. She noted that each situation might be different. Mr. Connally agreed and said that the committee should not exclude projects that create a fewer number of higher wage jobs. Dr. Dana noted that the measure for job creation could be different for different projects, and the concept of industry clustering should be considered as well. Also to be considered for prioritization could be programs that espouse a center of excellence, and industry and research and development proposals that are uniquely suited for the region (a topic discussed in the Florida's Great Northwest strategic planning document.)

Mr. Shoaf indicated that he thought it was important to measure economic impacts as part of the application process. Dr. Dana said that the board might want to ask the legal team to create a request for proposal for an economist to be able to review applications. Mr. Remington indicated that the legal team could create such a document. He noted that the application should be objective, but the board could add weight in consideration of issues determined to be of importance in the review of an application. Mr. Connally agreed that the board definitely needed to have the services of an economist available in the application process.

Mr. Bob Bonezzi noted that there were literally hundreds of communities that want high paying jobs and clean industry. He said that Triumph Gulf Coast would need to encourage projects that meet the objectives of regional transformation, and not just award any projects that apply. He said that simplicity should be a key factor in the application process.

Dr. Dana asked the representatives of the Department of Economic Opportunity how the department handles economic analyses of project applications. Ms. Doyle responded that economists on staff develop impact analyses for projects, and that applicants can provide impact studies as well. Dr. Dana commented that information provided by applicants may have some merit, but should not be accepted as the only review. The department concurred, saying that if an applicant has information and shares it, that information could be built into the list of deliverables as part of the contract. Ms. Walters reminded the group that the statute requires project update reporting to the Governor, President of the Senate and Speaker of the House each June and December. Dr. Dana emphasized that the veracity of information provided by the applicant/awardee needs to be ensured.

Dr. Dana said that she thought that priority should be given to funds being expended locally in the award process. She noted that industry clustering could generate opportunities for creation of regional job groups that could provide support across multiple projects. Mr. Connally said that while local expenditures are important, there might be some instances where it makes more economic sense to outsource components of a project beyond the local markets. He then said that grant training programs should get points for building skilled jobs within the region.

In a discussion of the actual application process Mr. Shoaf said that he thought it would be very important to know if an applicant had ever requested funds for a similar or same project in the past, what those sources of funding were, whether any funds had been awarded, and if so, how were the funds used. If not, why was the project denied funding.

Mr. Connally asked the legal staff what rights the board may have in requesting these types of information in performance of due diligence before awarding grant funds. Mr. Remington replied that the board should do whatever due diligence it thought appropriate because the expenditure of Triumph Gulf Coast funds emanates from a public funding source. Mr. Connally noted that there is a fine line between keeping the application process and requiring a thorough review and due diligence procedures. Mr. Remington said that the board could consider scalability of a project based on its size or the type of project involved. Due diligence could be different for a small amount of funding, or a simple program, than it might be for a complicated, multi-phase or multi-county project. Executive Director Susan Skelton said that the board might want to consider asking if the project qualifies for other funding sources within the BP Settlement suite of funding streams. Mr. Connally asked to have staff review the most common and useful types of due diligence that might apply to the Triumph Gulf Coast application process. Ms. Walters noted that most applicants would probably enter the process knowing that the board will be looking for viable, sustainable programs and projects. Dr. Dana said that there is nothing that would limit the board from asking for further information, if needed.

Mr. Shoaf said that he would like to have an applicant identify any affiliations it may have with any board members. Dr. Dana said that was possible and noted that board members are required to recuse themselves in any situation where there may be such an affiliation.

Mr. Bonezzi said that business owners in the region believe that this funding is a new and positive thing, and that he is concerned about governments being so involved in the process. He said the process should be simple and accessible to the private sector.

Dr. Dana asked the committee members if there was a preference for a closed application period, or if the process would be better served with a rolling or open

application period. All members of the committee agreed that an open application process is best, and the committee recommends having the application process open with no set application deadlines.

Mr. Connally asked if some sort of prescreening process, or pre-application process could be beneficial, perhaps an “intent to apply” notification. The purpose would not be to disqualify projects, but to determine if there were deficiencies that needed to be addressed in the full application process. Ms. Walters said that such a process could be used to assist applicants in preparing for the full application, and Mr. Connally noted that it could be a tool for informing applicants of opportunities for partnering with other similarly situated projects.

As part of the conversation related to partnering, Mr. Remington asked if there had been any consideration given by the committee members about how the process will interact with the statutorily provided county commission recommendation of projects. Ms. Walters noted that the county commission recommendation is addressed in the list of priorities, and said that each county commission could develop its own process for providing those recommendations to Triumph Gulf Coast. The recommendations would then be addressed as part of the scoring process for a project. She said that while there is not a formal process, it would be important for Triumph Gulf Coast to maintain good communications with the county commissions regarding their priorities. Mr. Remington asked if the board should consider establishing a deadline for counties to provide project lists to inform the Triumph Gulf Coast awards process.

Mr. Shoaf asked if counties would be required to provide a list of projects by a date certain. Mr. Connally replied that while counties may not know about all of the projects being considered by applicants in their respective counties, Triumph Gulf Coast has a statutory obligation to hear from the counties regarding their priorities, and the sooner the counties submit those priorities the better.

Okaloosa County Commissioner Graham Fountain addressed the committee and said that counties need to know if Triumph Gulf Coast wants the counties to use a uniform scoring process to assure that all of the information is in sync. Mr. Connally asked if 5% of all projects in a county have to come from the list of recommendations made by the county commission. Mr. Remington replied that projects not recommended by the county commission can be considered, but the statutes provide for those recommended by the commission to have weight in the prioritization process. Mr. Connally asked if a project not recommended by a county commission, but approved by the board, would still count towards the required 5% minimum expenditure. Mr. Remington replied that it would. Mr. Bonezzi then noted that the counties should get their prioritized lists to the board as soon as possible.

Mr. Shoaf noted that the application should indicate the proposed timeframe, completion date, and expected results as part of the provided data.

Ms. Skelton asked if the application should identify persons who are allowed to represent the project, i.e., a Point of Contact, with whom the board should communicate. Dr. Dana replied that it should identify any such persons. Ms. Walters said that the board would need to have a Point of Contact for each application, as well, to avert miscommunication with the applicant. Mr. Shoaf asked if all questions for all applications would go to one person on the Triumph Gulf Coast staff. Mr. Bonezzi said that the board might need to consider hiring a full-time grants manager to handle such communications. Dr. Dana concurred and said that there needs to be a determination of the business process for applications once received.

The next topic of discussion centered on funding sources and leverage of other sources to increase impacts of Triumph Gulf Coast funding. Mr. Connally stated that there may be times when Triumph Gulf Coast would need to commit to expending funds to move a project forward without prior knowledge of additional funding sources or commitments. He said that there needs to be some balance when requiring leveraging of other sources of funding, if such requirements are put in place. Ms. Skelton asked if the board intended to include in-kind match for resources other than cash (such as natural resources, use of equipment, or personnel time) that might assist some of the smaller entities with whatever match requirements are put in place. Mr. Bonezzi said that such match allowances were good because not every project will come with strong financial backing; he said some projects might come in as “a good idea.” Dr. Dana noted that in-kind match would be important to some of the rural communities. Mr. Connally said that he was open to the idea of in-kind match, as appropriate.

On the subject of performance reporting and performance measurement, Dr. Dana asked about the responsibilities of the recently engaged CPA firm. Ms. Skelton indicated that the firm was hired to take care of the day-to-day accounting and bookkeeping needs of the organization, not to take care of performance audits on project awards. She noted that such work could be contracted with that or another CPA firm, but that it was not currently in the scope of work. Mr. Connally stated that it would be important to maintain flexibility in the audit process because some groups will need more strenuous audits than others. Mr. Shoaf said that it would be important to have truly independent performance auditors, preferably not from the region. Dr. Dana reminded the group of Ms. Allen’s comments about the many steps involved in the compliance process after the contract is executed.

Ms. Walters then moved the discussion to the statutory requirement to use Triumph Gulf Coast funds to supplement, not supplant already planned projects and programs. Dr. Dana said it would be important to identify duplicative projects, so as to assure that funds are maximized and not spent to recreate already

existing functions. Mr. Shoaf asked if it would be appropriate for the board to reach out to federal, state and local agencies to ask about potential funding of projects from other sources. Ms. Walters asked the committee if such outreach should be done as part of the application process. Dr. Dana said that she thought a grants manager could perform such checks. Mr. Connally noted that the board would have to work closely with the legislative delegation on this issue to be sure that there is no supplanting. He said that there were situations when it would be appropriate and customary for the legislature, not Triumph Gulf Coast, to fund a project or program and that the board will need to guard against any form of supplanting at any level of government.

Ms. Walters asked the committee to consider the issue of paybacks, or clawbacks, for performance failure, and how such efforts should be handled. Mr. Shoaf said that he was not in favor of government bonding and believed that governments could be held accountable, but that he worried about protecting funds going to private entities. Mr. Bonezzi took strong exception to treating government one way and private business another. He said that the types of businesses that Triumph would be engaging would be strong and able to perform without a “stick” over their heads. Dr. Dana noted that it is commonplace for businesses participating in these types of grants programs to have “skin in the game” and clawbacks are not unexpected in the world of economic development. She said it would be good to see the types of tools being used by the local economic development agencies for guidance on the subject. Mr. Shoaf noted that he is very passionate and committed to small business, but that he is concerned that a business could file bankruptcy, close up shop and leave town without meeting its performance requirements. Mr. Connally said that all of the points raised were good and suggested that the committee look for business standards that are simple and not too invasive.

The next topic for discussion was the scoring process and how to weight priorities in that process. Ms. Walters reminded the committee that the statute requires a scoring process, but gives no guidance other than stating priorities to be considered. Dr. Dana said that it might be premature to discuss scoring or weighting the application input until the committee has a chance to see, and edit, a draft application. She said that she thought it would be important to have input from the entire board on this particular issue. Mr. Remington said that the scoring process is very important, but the board needs to reserve its right to weight priorities as it sees fit. He said the weighting of priorities would be very important. He likened the scoring to a set of guardrails for the board, but noted that the board should have and would have final discretion in the decision making process. Dr. Dana said that the Department of Economic Opportunity could provide guidance on evaluation processes. Mr. Shoaf said that the board needs that discretion in the final decision process and Dr. Dana noted that accountability would be important. Ms. Walters said that the application should provide all of the information needed from the applicant, but that the applicant will need to understand the subjective nature of the final decision process.

Mr. Connally said that the committee needs to recommend to the board that it needs to engage a program administrator to oversee the application process. Dr. Dana said the group needs an economic advisor as well. She asked if one person could fill those positions. Mr. Connally said that could be explored, as it might be more cost efficient, but that at a minimum the board needs to have that discussion. Ms. Skelton said that she could ask the Chair to direct the legal team to proceed with researching such a request for information. Mr. Bonezzi noted that the University of West Florida had a strong economic team in place. Dr. Dana said that the UWF team could be helpful and that the board could interact with them, but that they would need to be careful not to create any conflicts because she anticipated that the university would be interested in applying for project funding in the future.

Dr. Dana noted that Vice Chair Don Gaetz had provided the committee with a list of issues that he hoped to have incorporated into the application drafting discussion. She read the list of issues, including job creation, impacts of leveraging other funding sources, economic diversification, reliability of investments/investors, project scoring, local government support, and professional analysis and validation of applications. Dr. Dana pointed out that Vice Chair Gaetz' list fit squarely in line with the priorities the committee had been discussing throughout the meeting and that it was good that everyone was thinking in the same direction. She directed staff to ensure that his concerns are included when drafting the document.

Mr. Connally reiterated the importance of incorporating the concept of targeted industry sector into the process. He said that Florida's Great Northwest and Enterprise Florida have both identified target industry sectors for the region. He anticipated a conversation at the next board meeting when Florida's Great Northwest is scheduled to present its regional strategic plan for consideration. He said he hoped the board would be able to add weight to targeted sectors in the scoring process.

Ms. Walters completed her presentation by telling the committee that she believed that it had supplied enough information and ideas to allow staff to put a draft application document together for consideration at the next board meeting in September.

Mr. Bill Williams, Walton County Economic Development representative, approached the committee and noted that it was very important to include the concept of Public Private Partnerships (P3) in the application and awards process because such partnerships would be of great benefit to Rural Economic Areas of Concern. He said regional collaborations, such as the multi-county Freight Logistics Plan that the Florida Department of Transportation is working on with several rural counties (including Franklin and Gulf counties) help to incentivize local partnerships. He said this particular tool allows local

governments to work with the private sector. Ms. Walters agreed and said that anything Triumph Gulf Coast could do to encourage P3 opportunities should be considered. Mr. Connally noted that while the statute precluded benefitting any single entity, the board should look for ways for the private sector to work with governments to support economic diversification. Mr. Williams said that all the groups were asking for was to give them the tools that are already there that can be used to leverage funding for the benefit of the region. Dr. Dana stated that flexibility going forward would be important to the success of the mission.

Dr. Dana asked if there were members of the public who would like to address the committee.

Mr. Mike Langton, of Langton and Associates, spoke about the work that his organization has done, on a purely volunteer basis, to create a sample application and accompanying rules, for consideration of the committee. He said he took the comments from the last board meeting to his team and they created the documents. He said the board has a herculean task ahead, and much to do, but encouraged the members to try to keep the application process as simple as possible.

Mr. Alan Pierce, Franklin County RESTORE Council Coordinator, asked the committee to be cognizant of the fact that smaller entities, with less staff and expertise available, may need longer to get applications prepared. He asked the committee to allow for time for such groups to identify and develop partnerships so that the funds can be spent to the best benefit of the region.

Ms. Shea Ussery, representing Pump Boats USA, said that her group was preparing a request for a multi-year, multi-county project and asked if there would be limits or timelines for phases, or stages, of multi-year projects. Ms. Walters indicated that the board has stated a desire to do such projects, but would need to discuss further the spending and reporting requirements for multi-year projects. Mr. Remington said that it would be important to note that multi-year projects would be contingent on continued funding provided through the legislative appropriations process.

Okaloosa County Commissioner Nathan Boyles addressed the committee and said that he was optimistic that the Triumph Gulf Coast process would be better for the area than the federal programs had been to date. He noted that the 5% requirement may be detrimental to the overall regional progress, and said that while jobs are important, infrastructure is critical to moving the region forward. He said that the region is "behind the curve" with an infrastructure deficiency, particularly with traffic movement, both north to south and west to east. He said the traffic problems constrict growth. While the area has a great quality of life to offer, new jobs will flow from having the proper infrastructure in place. He supported using legislative and local government matching funds to move major infrastructure projects forward.

Mr. Christian Wagley, a member of the Escambia RESTORE Council, noted that they had a “competitive preference” category that Triumph Gulf Coast might want to consider. He said projects that had a positive impact on health care, housing or the environment got more weight in the prioritization process. He noted that the RESTORE process suffered some because categories were not well enough defined. He said categories of grants should be broken down as much as possible and well defined to assist applicants in determining which category and how to apply. He said such guardrails and specificity would ease the scoring process. Mr. Wagley said he was encouraged to hear the committee put importance on environmental component, as land is the greatest physical asset in the region. He said efficient land use should be a consideration. He thanked the group for its discussion on clawbacks, and said it is important for that concept to be clearly defined, as well. Mr. Connally asked Mr. Wagley to expand on his comments about land use, particularly land re-use. Mr. Wagley said he was not just referring to brownfields designations, but also to urban infill and reuse of previously developed industrial lands.

Mr. Camilo Geraldo, representing Southeast Industrial of Santa Rosa Beach, said it was important to recognize the role of small businesses, and that small businesses should get priority in the awards process, as it was the small businesses that were most affected by the oil spill. Dr. Dana concurred that, wherever possible, Triumph Gulf Coast should invest in local projects and people.

Mr. Jim Muller, Director of the Bay County RESTORE Council, said that applicants should have to provide a basis for any claims it makes relative to economic development and provide substantiating analysis. He noted that having fixed application deadlines makes the process “smoother” and that the committee could consider “out of cycle” exceptions for projects that come along unexpectedly. He said that perhaps the small counties could be allowed to expend funds from their 5% allotments to perform grant preparation tasks. He said that funds should be expended to create opportunities that are not currently available in the region, and cautioned that a complicated scoring process could cause major problems.

Mr. Chris Snow, representing Space Florida, told the committee that Space Florida is ready to assist Triumph Gulf Coast in any way. He explained that Space Florida is focused on aerospace and space projects and that they have specialized authority within the Florida Statutes to allow them to leverage funds in unique ways. He said that his organization has a rigorous due diligence process that could inform the Triumph Gulf Coast due diligence efforts and offered to share information to assist the committee in establishing such a process. He said Space Florida takes a hard look at cash flow and business practices for applicants going back at least three years. Mr. Snow reiterated that Space Florida wants to be a partner and resource for Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.

Ms. Carisse LeJeune, City Manager of the City of Destin, offered that there are best practices established for the American Recovery and Investment Act at www.grants.gov that could be considered in the planning process. She said that in considering the match requirements, it should be noted that small and rural communities might not be able to meet basic bonding requirements. She asked that layers of oversight and the approval process should be limited as much as possible for ease of use of the applicant. She pointed to the ENVISION rating system for utility infrastructure programs as an available resource.

Ms. Phyllis Spencer, of Niceville, indicated that she was a former owner of a small demolition and construction business, and that for small businesses the in-kind match provisions would be very important to their ability to participate. She said that ingress and egress issues related to infrastructure in the region are real and need to be addressed. Ms. Spencer asked if there would be categories for participation for individuals, small businesses and municipalities.

Ms. Jessica Bibza, of Pensacola, noted that the Escambia RESTORE application process was a very comprehensive process and should be considered when designing the Triumph Gulf Coast process. She said that the Escambia process was able to address the problem with comparing different types of projects (such as education and infrastructure). Based on what has happened in Texas with flooding related to Hurricane Harvey, she said that flooding issues should be in the forefront as funds are awarded, and that stormwater and wastewater infrastructure projects could make a difference in future storm recovery efforts.

Mr. William Harrison, of the Harrison Rivard Law Firm in Panama City, asked if the process was to be purely government-to-government, or if it is anticipated that private sector jobs will be created. He asked if the only investments would be with governments, or if private sector opportunities will be available. Mr. Connally responded that while the committee does not have all of the answers, the intent is to create private sector jobs. He said he hoped investments in public infrastructure projects and workforce development programs would lead to private sector job creation. He noted that the organization is still working through exactly how the process would work. Mr. Harrison said that his concern is that if the money is only for public infrastructure, he doesn't see how it enhances prospects for private sector jobs. Mr. Connally said that projects such as increased road capacity, aprons on runway tarmacs, and other public infrastructure projects could lead to enhanced economic development opportunities in the private sector. Mr. Remington noted that telecom and utility projects could be considered to enhance private sector job prospects, but that the statute is ambiguous on some concepts. He said that public/private partnerships could assist in job creation.

Mr. Warren Yaeger, the Gulf County RESTORE Council Coordinator, said that his county wants to figure out how to form public/private partnerships that can

create jobs. He told the committee that the eight counties of the region are available to help and to vet which projects could be supported in the local communities. He encouraged the committee to use the local county commissions as resources to get the best possible projects for regional economic transformation.

Ms. Walters thanked the committee for the positive discussion and indicated that staff would have a draft application prepared for consideration at the September 13 Triumph Gulf Coast Board Meeting in Niceville.

Dr. Dana announced that due to the amount of work done in this meeting, the committee would not need to meet on August 31, 2017.

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m. CT.