

Meeting Minutes
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. Board Meeting
Northwest Florida State College
Niceville, Florida
October 10, 2017
2:00 p.m. CT

Members Present:

Allan Bense (Chair)
Robert Bonezzi
Stan Connally, Jr.
Pam Dana PhD
Don Gaetz
Stephen Riggs, IV
Jason Shoaf

Chair Allan Bense called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. CT.

Chair Bense thanked Dr. Devin Stephenson and the Northwest Florida State College for hosting the meeting. He recognized local elected officials from Okaloosa County and thanked them for hosting the board in their county. Chair Bense recognized the Enterprise Florida CEO, Mr. Peter Antonacci, and thanked him for his support of the Triumph Gulf Coast mission.

Executive Director Susan Skelton called the roll and announced the presence of a quorum (Mr. Bonezzi arrived shortly after the start of the meeting).

Chair Bense told the group that he expected the board to have a robust meeting and that he hoped much would be accomplished by the end of the meeting. He reminded the audience that Triumph Gulf Coast was not funded until the middle of June, that the first official meeting was in July, that by August the board had a legal and CPA team in place, and appointed a committee to work on drafting the awards application. The Chair recognized Mort O'Sullivan from Warren Averett (Audit CPA), David Tipton and Jennifer Davidson from Tipton, Marler (Operating CPA), and Scott Remington and Elizabeth Billhimer from Clark Partington (Legal). He noted that the board was not able to meet in September due to Hurricane Irma considerations, so that effectively, this meeting is the third official meeting of the board. He stated that the Application Drafting Committee has held two meetings since the last board meeting, and has made much progress. He recognized Dr. Pam Dana and the committee for the hard work they have done to date.

Chair Bense said that he knew there was still a lot of work ahead, and announced that the board would meet again on November 8 in Crawfordville (Wakulla County), and on December 8 in Panama City (Bay County.)

Senator Gaetz made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 16, 2017 Board Meeting. Dr. Dana seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

On a point of personal privilege, Senator Gaetz took a moment to publicly thank Mr. Stan Connally, Jr., and the employees of Gulf Power for the excellent job they did in getting power restored this week in the wake of Hurricane Nate. The company was able to get power restored to over 38,000 households in 24 hours.

Chair Bense recognized Ms. Kim Wilmes, CEO of Florida's Great Northwest for a presentation on the Northwest Florida FORWARD Strategic Plan and Initiative for regional transformation.

The presentation addressed the process for development of the strategic plan; the targeted industries identified in the plan, and the strategic focus areas within the plan. She noted that the five overall goals in developing the strategic plan were: a sustainable and enduring economic base; diversified industries and high wage employment growth; greater alignment of partner resources through regional collaboration; improving the vitality of all areas and populations in the region; and strengthen beyond traditional economic engines. Ms. Wilmes outlined the process used by the group to formulate the strategic plan and noted that 860 stakeholders from across the 13 county region (including all eight counties covered by Triumph Gulf Coast) participated in the process.

(Short video outlining how collaboration across the region increases national and international competitiveness in job market)

Ms. Wilmes then noted the targeted industries identified in the strategic plan and gave a brief synopsis of each area and its importance to the region. The targeted industries are: manufacturing; aerospace and defense; financial services / shared services; cyber security / IT; and water transportation. An overarching industry area that fits within each of the above industries is advanced industry (technology) / research and development.

Ms. Wilmes said that the participants in the development of the strategic plan have formed five Strategic Focus Areas as they move forward with implementation of the plan. The five areas are: talent; business vitality; infrastructure; entrepreneurship and innovation; and quality of place. She closed her presentation by stating the common elements of successful regional economic transformation. They are: visionary leadership with the will to follow through; clear understanding of regional assets, unique features and connective tissues on which to build a regional economy; regional common vision and priorities; public and private committed partnerships; readiness of developed sites, infrastructure and workforce; capacity to drive and sustain regional economic growth; and a clear understanding that this process takes time.

(PowerPoint presentation and video available under Past Meetings tab/ October 10, 2017 Board Meeting at www.myfloridatriumph.com)

Dr. Dana thanked Ms. Wilmes for a very thoughtful and helpful presentation. Mr. Connally thanked Ms. Wilmes for the presentation and the board for listening. He noted that over 800 from across the region participated, for the first time in a very long time, in putting forward a strategy. He said that while the strategic plan is not an absolute test for Triumph Gulf Coast spending, he thinks it is a good guideline, and noted that in the discussion of the application later in the meeting, there will be reference to the strategic plan. He said that the presentation was a good primer for the board members.

Dr. Dana was recognized to give the report of the Application Drafting Committee. She noted that the task given by the board at the August meeting was for the committee to have a next to final draft of an application ready for review. She said with one week left, the committee has a working draft for consideration at this meeting. She then gave a brief overview of the work process of the committee. She named the committee members, Mr. Bonezzi, Mr. Connally, Mr. Shoaf, and Dr. Dana. She said that the committee met twice to work through the drafting process. Both meetings were held at the Destin City Annex, and she thanked the City of Destin for hosting the committee for both meetings. She noted that both meetings were well attended with public participation. Dr. Dana said that both meetings consisted of much discussion with the members and the public about priorities to be included in the application.

Dr. Dana reported that at the first committee meeting, representatives of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity were invited to provide the committee with insights on grant applications and programs that the agency oversees to assist in developing the application for Triumph Gulf Coast. They spoke about the application process, project management and staff workload to oversee the various programs housed in the agency. During this discussion, it was highlighted that Enterprise Florida is currently undertaking a new grant program, the Florida Jobs Growth Grant Fund, which is very similar in nature to the Triumph Gulf Coast funding program. In drafting the Triumph Gulf Coast application, the committee used the Florida Jobs Growth Grant Fund application as a relevant foundation for development of our application. The legal team took that application, public input from committee meetings, priorities expressed by the board, and ideas from other available grant applications and developed the draft application for today's board review and eventual approval. She then asked the legal drafting team, Mr. Scott Remington and Ms. Elizabeth Billhimer, to explain the application, and its components to the board.

Ms. Billhimer told the board that the draft for consideration at this meeting takes into consideration changes, and discussions had by the committee at last week's committee meeting. She said that this draft is divided into several sections for clarity. She then gave an explanation of each section, including the general

application, and the various addenda for different types of grants, such as infrastructure, workforce development, marketing, etc. (Detailed description by section begins at 37:40 of the meeting audio file at www.myfloridatriumph.com)

Mr. Riggs asked if the application captured any information about whether a project was a priority project, and where it ranked, on a county priority list. Mr. Remington responded that there is no statutory provision for the counties to prioritize projects. Whether a county gives Triumph Gulf Coast a list that is prioritized is up to the county's discretion. Senator Gaetz noted that while the statute does not require counties to rank projects, there is nothing in statute that would prohibit Triumph Gulf Coast from asking counties to identify priorities. Mr. Remington agreed to that statement.

Dr. Dana stated that the Florida Jobs Growth application was used as a foundational document for two reasons; one was the similarity of the allowable and eligible projects under that program and the Triumph Gulf Coast program. The second reason was that the DEO application was designed for ample flexibility due to the diversity of eligible projects. She noted that such flexibility is very important to our process. She said that capturing the discretionary priorities identified by the board and the public was very important to the committee. She asked that board members focus on the list provided on pages 2 and 3 of the draft application to assure that those priorities are properly identified.

Mr. Riggs asked about the pre-screening process and how it would work. Ms. Billhimer described a one page pre-screening form that was developed from conversations at the committee level. She indicated that the pre-screening draft was written as an option, not mandatory. All projects, including those completing a pre-application, will still be required to complete a full application.

Chair Bense noted that his first reaction was that the application was very long, but upon review he recognized the importance of capturing the information requested, as the board is charged with making decisions about large amounts of money and needs as much information as possible. He said the thought the application was thorough and fair.

Mr. Connally told the legal drafting team that he did not understand that the committee intended for the pre-screening to be optional. He said that he could not figure out why an entity would fill out an optional form. He asked for clarification on the point. He said the pre-screening process could help an applicant think through a project, identify deficiencies, and could help match like projects for a stronger collaborative application.

Dr. Dana noted that the committee did vote to recommend a pre-application, a rolling application process, engaging a high level economic advisor, and engagement of some form of a project administration function for screening, and oversight of projects. She said the pre-application form was created by the legal

team based on the recommendation of the committee. Mr. Remington responded that the pre-application form could be mandatory, but that the legal team was trying to accommodate a calendar constraint that would allow for deployment of a successful project by the end of the calendar year. He noted to reach that goal; the application process would have to start today. For that reason, and in an attempt to streamline the calendar, the form was designed as an optional form. Senator Gaetz pointed out that a pre-screening process could assist in redirecting well intentioned applications that did not fit the criteria of Triumph Gulf Coast in a more appropriate direction, and that the process could be both educational and time-saving for applicants who may be better served in another program. Dr. Dana agreed that that was the intent of the committee.

Upon completion of the discussion, the board decided, without objection, to make the pre-application mandatory.

Mr. Connally asked if the standard that must be considered for income produced by new jobs is the national average household income or could it be regional. He asked if the bar is being set at an inappropriate level. Staff responded that the language is directly from the statute. Dr. Dana noted that the requirement could be discretionary. Mr. Connally asked the legal team to review and see if there was a way to place emphasis on exceeding the regional average as a more attainable goal. He asked them to identify an additional metric to measure job creation separate from the national average household income requirement. Chair Bense noted that if the application were to be approved at this meeting, it would be subject to adding the additional metric described above.

Mr. Riggs asked about the steps in the process. Dr. Dana said that the first phase would be submission and review of an "Intent to apply, or pre-application" form by designated screeners. Mr. Riggs asked if that phase would be handled but a committee, the full board or some other process. Mr. Remington replied that it would be up to the board to determine the methodology. He said it could be a committee, the full board, or hired staff or contractors that perform the screening function. If you choose the staff or contractor option, the process would work well because they would not be subject to the difficulties of scheduling committee or board meetings in compliance with the sunshine laws, and could offer guidance to the applicants in a timely manner.

Senator Gaetz spoke to the importance of sustainability and wanted to be sure the issue is highlighted in the application review. He asked for clarity and a definition of sustainability, and how an applicant will support a project in the out years to be added to #6 on page 8 of the draft application. Dr. Dana agreed and said such language could be added.

Mr. Shoaf noted that he had raised a question earlier, and had since heard additional feedback from some of the smaller counties, about small entities' inability to meet application requirements for providing detailed cost and impact

analysis due to a lack of properly trained personnel. He asked if any consideration could be given in that regard to allow those entities to identify an amount that could be applied towards those costs in the pre-application that could be used upon a successful project award.

Senator Gaetz asked Mr. Antonacci of Enterprise Florida if and how his organization deals with situations such as the one described by Mr. Shoaf. Mr. Antonacci responded that Enterprise Florida has no financial mechanism to underwrite such expenditures, but they can and do provide technical assistance by staff to communities, but he noted that even some of the smallest communities in the state that are motivated to participate have applied even without offered assistance. Senator Gaetz asked what would happen if a seemingly qualified applicant came to Enterprise Florida for assistance with determining things like return on investment, or other technical questions. Mr. Antonacci replied that staff economists would help the applicant by answering questions, or perhaps helping them with the basic, most rudimentary calculations, but that was the extent of their availability. Senator Gaetz then asked if, either with pay or for free, Enterprise Florida might be able to assist some of our smaller counties with the process. Mr. Antonacci indicated that they would be able to do so and provide the same service to applicants to Triumph Gulf Coast that they provide to applicants to their programs. Dr. Dana thanked Mr. Antonacci for his offer of assistance and noted that the Department of Economic Opportunity has offered to be of assistance as needed. Mr. Antonacci pointed out that Enterprise Florida and the Department had collaborated on the review of applications for the Jobs Growth Fund applications and that the process had been successful in identifying worthy projects and the cooperative effort had been beneficial. Mr. Shoaf indicated that the exchange had been very helpful, and that he would recommend to anyone applying to complete the pre-application process before approaching the state for help, but he was glad to know it was available. Mr. Connally asked staff to make sure that our website provided contact information for those agencies so that the applicants can have direct access to that resource.

Chair Bense indicated that it might be appropriate to explore a way to compensate the Department and Enterprise Florida for work done on behalf of Triumph Gulf Coast, both for their benefit and to assure that our expectations on the work product are met. Mr. Antonacci said that while he appreciated the concern, his organization has the capacity to do the work and could do so without compensation. He said that so much work has gone into building their process that it makes sense to leverage the work already in place to assist Triumph Gulf Coast.

Mr. Remington said that to further allay Mr. Shoaf's concerns, the statute specifically speaks to funding projects within the confines of s. 288.0655, F.S., the Rural Infrastructure Fund within the Department of Economic Opportunity. He noted that s. 288.0655, F.S., specifically provides for payment of the types of

expenses being discussed as part of its grant capability. He indicated that four of our small entities qualify for use of those funds. He said that his office has reached out to each of the affected qualifying governments to ask if they had utilized such funding in the past, and to be sure they were aware that those expenses were eligible for local match pursuant to both our statute and s. 288.0655, F.S., if used together.

Senator Gaetz asked if, in the description at the end of the application, the first stage identified was the pre-screening, the second stage is validation and the third stage is a board selection, he believed the fourth stage is indicated to be monitoring and reporting on performance. He asked if there needs to be a clear question, and response from the applicant, that the applicant will make available to the Triumph Gulf Coast any and all relevant records to comply with the monitoring, audit and review process. Chair Bense added that it would be important that any affiliate organization to the awardee provide such access to its records as well. Dr. Dana agreed that the question and answer should be added to the application. Chair Bense asked the members if they concurred. All members agreed to the change. Chair Bense directed the legal team to include this change, along with the two earlier changes, into the final draft for consideration by the board.

Dr. Dana restated the application process steps as (1) Pre-application; (2) Application; (3) Review and Due Diligence, to include scoring and board review; (4) Contract negotiations; (5) Project Award; and (6) Compliance, monitoring, reporting and reviews for the duration of the award.

Mr. Remington took up his presentation by first discussing a draft timeline that was put together to identify how quickly funds could be awarded under a best-case scenario. He said that the original goal was to be able to award funds by the end of the calendar year. He noted that there was planning time lost due to Hurricane Irma, but that it was still theoretically possible to do so if everything fell into place perfectly between today and the end of the year. He said if the board approved an application and pre-application today, formed a committee to select a program administration solution, scoring entity, and economic advisor, as recommended by the Application Drafting Committee. Also, there would need to be an application deadline for projects to be considered by a date certain. Understanding that there is a rolling application deadline, there will have to be some cut-off dates established for projects to be considered for a particular board meeting to allow staff to perform pre-application and application reviews. That does not preclude applications from coming in, just that those received by a set date will be considered in a particular batch. There is no pro or con to being in any particular batch. Mr. Remington noted that given the earlier actions of the board today, the November 15, 2017 deadline shown in the draft timeline should be for Pre-Applications.

Senator Gaetz again emphasized that in no way should such a deadline be considered “a race to the courthouse” to get applications in in any sort of expedited manner. Chair Bense agreed and said that it is more important to get an application right than to get it done fast. He asked if the timeline is too aggressive.

Dr. Dana and Mr. Remington clarified that the committee recommendation is for a rolling deadline process, but that to accommodate the review process, there may be quarterly submission deadlines so that there can be an orderly review by staff and the board. Mr. Remington pointed out the statutory requirement for 14 days prior notice of a project award on the website, which has to be built into any timeline. He said that building back from a known meeting date, the process can be designed with “consideration” deadlines for the next meetings so that applicants and board members can know in advance when the work must be started in order for consideration on a date certain. He noted that legal staff is proposing an amendment to the draft By-laws to allow, at any time, if a great project were put forth, that by super majority vote, the board could take up a project instanter.

Chair Bense asked how long it would take, once the pre-application was reviewed and given a “green light” for an application to move through the process. Mr. Remington replied that assuming the timeline, and if the board engages a project administration / scoring solution and economic advisor at the November 8 meeting, and pre-applications have been sent in and are available for review, he estimated that the application process might be able to be completed by January or February 2018 for an initial award.

Senator Gaetz asked Dr. Dana to distinguish between the roles of a program administrator and an economic advisor. Dr. Dana said an economic advisor would be a highly credentialed, well respected, possibly from outside the area that would be equipped to do high level analysis of a project’s return on investment, economic impact on the region taking into consideration the strategic plan for the region, and help Triumph Gulf Coast understand how a particular project ranks in comparison to other projects. She reiterated that the board would take that information into consideration, but that the board makes all final decisions. She said a program administrator could be one entity, or could be split into two roles. She said the program administration team would work alongside with the Executive Director to be the repository of applications, to assure there is proper organization and review including technical vetting, due diligence, and post award compliance. The legal team would handle contract negotiations with award recipients. A second element is independent scoring of the application for statutory compliance. The program administrator could be the scoring entity or that could be separated into two separate job functions.

Mr. Remington noted that technical scoring is just one objective metric in the ultimate decision process, along with discretionary prioritization, geographical

relevance (the ability to meet the statutory requirement for 5% of all awards to be made in each individual county). Chair Bense reiterated that it is important to understand that the statutorily required scoring is just one element in the overall decision process. Mr. Remington recommended that, if a committee is appointed to determine program administration needs, the question of whether to have the scoring entity separate should be considered by that committee. He noted that the economic advisor would be able to look at proposals after scoring to determine which projects would produce the most transformational economic impacts in the affected counties.

Senator Gaetz asked Dr. Dana if the committee envisioned a full Request for Proposal process that could take months to complete. Dr. Dana indicated that the committee's preference was to handle the engagement process similarly to how the legal counsel selections and CPA selections were done. She said the approach would be more of an invitation to negotiate than a formal process. Senator Gaetz said that the legal services selection process consisted of the committee inviting several law firms to participate, a review of the responding firms, and a public meeting to discuss independent review of the firms made by committee members which led to a recommendation to the board to engage our current legal team. Mr. Riggs said that the CPA selections were made based on knowledge of the work product of various firms throughout the region and a willingness to participate in our process. The committee held a public meeting to discuss recommendations which led to the engagement of our audit CPA firm and operational CPA firm. The members agreed that the RFP process is too cumbersome for our timeframe, and that either one or two subcommittees should be formed to consider the described needs. Mr. Connally asked if Mr. Antonacci could speak to whether Enterprise Florida could provide economic advisor assistance, possibly utilizing an existing asset that might be available to us. Mr. Antonacci said that they did not have an in-house economic advisor that could supply the level of review being contemplated, but that they had staff that could assist on the program administration side of the discussion. Mr. Connally asked that if a subcommittee is appointed, that the subcommittee consider reaching out to Mr. Antonacci to determine what options for assistance may be available at no charge to maximize the use of existing resources.

Mr. Remington said that if the appropriate staff is approved at the November 8 board meeting, shortly thereafter they could begin work on review of any submitted pre-applications. He said he hoped that the Application Drafting Committee could come back to the next meeting with recommendations on a scoring system or matrix for the application and what rubric to apply for consideration of the board on November 8. He said assuming all of those things; it would be possible for the board to make a determination at that meeting about when to expect the first awards to be made. Once that date is determined, the team could work backwards from that date to set the cut-off dates for that cycle. He noted that by that time, the economic advisor and program administrator could provide their insight as to how much time each would need to perform its

assigned responsibilities relative to the applications, as well as being able to have some real idea about workload based on the number of early pre-applications that may be submitted. He reiterated that if the revised By-laws are adopted today and if a truly stand-out transformational project is presented, the board could take action to move ahead by waiving the rules with a super majority vote if there is an emergency or exigent circumstances that could put such a project at risk.

Senator Gaetz made a motion that Dr. Dana's report, including the proposed application, with mandatory pre-application, be adopted with scrivener's changes to reflect the discussions that were had at this meeting (directing changes to the documents) and any other necessary editorial changes. Chair Bense reminded the board that there were three changes recommended and asked if everyone agreed. They did. Mr. Shoaf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0.) Chair Bense asked the legal team to have draft updates available for the members to review no later than Friday.

Senator Gaetz made a motion to appoint two subcommittees, one for the selection of a program administration solution and one for the selection of an economic advisor. Mr. Connally seconded the motion. Dr. Dana asked if it would be more efficient to have one committee perform both tasks. Staff noted that having two committees in the short time available would be cumbersome given consideration of meeting locations, member availability and public notice requirements. Senator Gaetz then modified his motion to appoint one subcommittee to handle both tasks. Mr. Connally seconded the modified motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0.)

Mr. Remington explained nine changes being recommended for revising the By-laws. **Mr. Connally made a motion to adopt the revised By-laws. Dr. Dana seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0.)**

Mr. Remington presented a proposed Public Records Policy for Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. **Senator Gaetz made a motion to approve the Public Records Policy. Mr. Shoaf seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0.)**

Mr. Remington indicated that staff is preparing a Frequently Asked Questions document to be placed on the website to help the public with questions or concerns. He noted that changes to the draft will be made based on actions of the board at this meeting and that the draft will need to be updated. The Chair directed staff to send out a revised version of the draft to members within five days, and if there are no additional changes or objections to have the document posted on the website.

Mr. Remington reported that the Directors and Officers Insurance Policy application is now complete, based on the changes to the By-laws made at this meeting. The board had previously authorized Chair Bense to procure the insurance, so no action is needed today.

Mr. Remington reported that based on his firm's research, it is their opinion that the board does have the discretion under the 2013 law and the 2017 law to make payment to the Executive Director for her pre-incorporation services, as well as to the Burke and Blue law firm, however we are waiting on one, hopefully final, opinion from Tallahassee on that fact. Chair Bense clarified that the board does not want to do anything that would not be acceptable to the Auditor General, so we are trying to get an opinion from that office prior to making those expenditures.

Mr. Remington pointed out that Ms. Skelton's contract requires that there be an employment review committee in place for performance review. He asked that the Chair appoint such a committee. The Chair appointed himself and Mr. Connally to serve on that committee.

Upon completion of the legal report, Chair Bense asked Dr. Dana to continue her discussion of scoring options for applications. She noted that it will be important for applicants to know in advance how they will be scored. She asked Mr. Remington to discuss available options for consideration. Mr. Remington said that there could be strict numeric scoring or ranges, such as A, B, C, D, F. He said the drafting team was working on a rubric and scale for projects that he hoped could be brought to the board for consideration at the next meeting. Senator Gaetz expressed a preference for a range model as opposed to strict numeric scoring. Mr. Riggs noted that a range model gives more flexibility and discretion to the board.

Mr. Connally noted that it is important for everyone to understand that the first round of applications will be a learning opportunity and that it is clear that there will need to be adjustments to make the process more efficient and effective. He thanked Dr. Dana for her leadership on the committee.

Ms. Skelton reported that an agreement with 2KWebgroup is in place to provide ongoing website services.

Ms. Skelton asked the board to consider approval of a contract with Digital Boardwalk, Inc., to provide computer backroom services related to general operations, email for members and staff, and legally required archiving of electronic documents (email and voicemail) for public records compliance. The contract for those services would be in the amount of \$797.89 per month for services and license fees, and an initial one-time cost of \$4747.98 for equipment and training. The equipment would include two fully configured laptop computers with full backup support. This would allow for immediate onboarding of an

additional staff person if needed. **Senator Gaetz made a motion to approve the request. Dr. Dana seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0.)**

Ms. Skelton reported that she is finalizing details for the November 8, 2017 Board Meeting and the December 8, 2017 Board Meeting. The November meeting is tentatively set for 1:00 p.m. ET at the Wakulla County Community Center in Crawfordville and the December meeting will be held in Panama City at 10 a.m. CT at the County Commission Chambers in the Bay County Government Services Center. Public notices for those meetings, with details, will be forthcoming.

As part of the financial report, **Treasurer Stephen Riggs, IV asked for approval of a motion naming Allan Bense (Chair), Don Gaetz (Vice Chair) and Stephen Riggs, IV (Treasurer) as authorized signers on the Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. accounts at the First National Bank of Northwest Florida and granting permission for one signer to execute expenditures for up to and including \$10,000. All expenditures greater than \$10,000 require two signatures. One authorized officer may make internal transactions between accounts held at the bank. Mr. Connally made the motion as stated by Mr. Riggs. Mr. Bonezzi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7-0.)**

Mr. Riggs reported that as of year to date, the Florida Prime account interest accrual is approximately \$1.1 million. The interest has been transferred to the Department of Economic Services Triumph Gulf Coast Trust Fund pursuant to statute, as has the interest from the bank account. He reported that he has been working with the accounting firms on a draft of financial policies and procedures and that he anticipates having a document for review at the next board meeting. Likewise, he said he anticipated having a draft operating budget for review and approval at the next or subsequent meeting once there is more clarity on some anticipated expenditures. The CPA and Legal firms are working together to make a final determination about which non-profit category we will qualify under and they are working on getting those requirements accomplished with the Internal Revenue Service. He said he anticipated that the IRS Determination Letter should be filed by the next meeting date. Mr. Riggs told members that the CPA firm is working on the design of a travel form that meets all Florida statutory requirements, and will have that done soon, but in the interim he told members to keep records of any travel expenses that they may want to have reimbursed.

Mr. Riggs confirmed that he had executed the Letters of Engagement with Warren Averett and Tipton, Marler, as previously approved by the board.

Mr. Riggs made a motion to approve the financial statements provided by the Tipton, Marler CPA firm for September 2017, and the year to date. Mr. Shoaf seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously (7-0.)

Senator Gaetz distributed a copy of an email he received from Representative Jay Trumbull in response to question that has arisen about whether Triumph Gulf Coast funds could be awarded for projects that exist on private property. He noted that Representative Trumbull was the Chair of the Select Committee on Triumph Gulf Coast last session in the House of Representatives, and the prime sponsor of legislation that amended the statutes last year. He asked that the email be provided to legal counsel for review and comment, as a matter of information. (Email attached at end of minutes)

Public Comment

Michael Langton, of Langton Associates, thanked Dr. Dana and her committee for the application drafting process. He said that the product improved at every step, including today's draft. He recommended that there be a formal public input process, and that application preparation be allowable as grant costs similar to the RESTORE Act grant programs.

Chips Kirschenfeld, of the Escambia County Natural Resources Department, thanked Dr. Dana and the committee for the work product. He said that as someone who had worked in the grant writing area for over 30 years, he thinks the application is "right on" and that it will meet the needs of the board. He asked for clarification about the types of infrastructure projects that will be considered. Mr. Remington directed Mr. Kirschenfeld to the discretionary priorities identified by the board to help in understanding what types of projects would be important. Chair Bense noted that the key word that is discussed over and over by the board is "transformational." The concept of transformational change is important to every board member.

Pastor Chester Davis, of North Port St. Joe, spoke to the need to recognize the unique location and needs of the North Port St. Joe community. He noted that it is an area that serves as a buffer between the industrial corridor and the town of Port St. Joe and needs assistance with revitalization of the neighborhood through economic development.

Nathan Boyles, Okaloosa County Commissioner, presented the board members with a packet of approximately 200 letters he had collected in support of funding infrastructure projects.

Jim Muller, Bay County RESTORE Coordinator, thanked the board for their service, and for allowing the opportunity to comment at each meeting. He recommended taking some funds and moving quickly, but then to take the time to modify the process as necessary based on real time experience. He asked for more time to review documents prior to meetings, and asked for more clarity on supplanting and whether it was legislative supplanting or all levels of government. He suggested that if the application were submitted electronically,

expandable text boxes would be helpful for the narrative answers. He agreed that applicants should have to provide verifiable back up to their rationale for success of a project. He questioned counsel's definition of a super majority for a seven member board.

Cory Henge identified himself as the youngest and most ambitious person at the meeting. He recommended that Triumph Gulf Coast reach out to institutions of higher learning about funding opportunities for workforce training. He asked when a decision would be made regarding the economic advisor and program administrator. Chair Bense replied that those decisions are anticipated at the next board meeting. Mr. Henge then asked that the proposed scoring rubric be made available for review prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Craig Barker, representing Northwest Florida State College, congratulated the board on the work done to date. He asked for clarification on page 10 of the application regarding the eligibility language and how it relates to non-governmental entities. Mr. Remington noted the concern and indicated that it could be stated more clearly about the intent of the question. Mr. Barker then asked if non-governmental entities can apply for grants, and Mr. Remington replied that they could.

Commissioner Doug Underhill, Chair of Escambia County Board of Commissioners, noted the importance of stressing sustainability at the front end of the process, and said that the pre-application will be a great tool for the county commissions to use for guidance as projects come to them for consideration. He said he thought that every commissioner in the region wants to be value added to this process. He said any additional guidance that the board can offer to the county commissions would help them to assist in streamlining the applications that the board ultimately considers.

Mr. Gerald Wingate, Vice-President of the City of Pensacola City Council, asked if all projects from all sources would be considered equally, or would projects with recommendations from county commissions going to be scored higher. He said the City of Pensacola plans to submit approximately 15 projects but the county requested that they provide five projects for county commission review. He wanted to know if all of the city projects would be considered or only those that come from the county commission. Mr. Remington replied that any application that is submitted would be scored and considered. He pointed out that there is a special allocation of funds for expenditure within the county but any project within the county may be considered for funding. Mr. Riggs said that if a project is a high priority for the organization, and is also a high priority for the county commission, that is a good thing and he encouraged groups to work together to put forward good projects that everyone can support. Senator Gaetz agreed and said that county commissions are required by statute to assist with vetting projects from their counties. He said he intends to give great weight to the recommendations of the county commissions.

Mr. Austin Mount, Executive Director of the West Florida Regional Planning Council and Chair of the Northwest Florida FORWARD Infrastructure Council, agreed with the comments of Commissioner Boyles and said that there continues to be a severe need for additional infrastructure across the region. He said that investment in infrastructure has an exponential impact on economic development.

Mr. Keith Wilkins, Assistant City Administrator for the City of Pensacola, said that initially there was concern because the statute did not anticipate a strong mayor form of government, the city commission and mayor have now been able to unify on a list of projects to be presented to the county commission and Triumph Gulf Coast. He asked how projects that fall into more than one category of funding be scored. Mr. Remington replied that the process is still being refined but that the goal would be for each project to have one score inclusive of all of its parts.

Mr. Connally thanked everyone for all of the comments and noted that, as at every other meeting, infrastructure comes up as a strong issue. He cautioned that Triumph Gulf Coast is not the only entity in the state can fund infrastructure and it is important that infrastructure projects reach out to other funding opportunities, as there will never be enough money in this program to fund the needs of all infrastructure projects. Senator Gaetz agreed and noted the importance of leveraging other funding sources at the state and federal level to maximize the impacts of the funds available from the BP settlement. He urged applicants to look for partnerships with other funding entities on larger projects.

Chair Bense asked for volunteers to serve on the Program Administration / Economic Advisor Committee. Dr. Dana, Senator Gaetz, Mr. Shoaf and Chair Bense all volunteered. Chair Bense asked Senator Gaetz to chair the committee, and asked the committee to set a meeting time and date.

Mr. Connally asked for clarification on the process timeline. Mr. Remington said that the pre-application process could open now, but that there would be no one to score the pre-applications until after the next board meeting, when the program administration team is brought on. He said there was no deadline for the pre-applications, per se, but that the first available time to score them would be after the next meeting. Mr. Connally restated the point that the board is ready to start accepting pre-applications now, but that they would not be scored or processed until after the next board meeting.

Chair Bense thanked Dr. Dana and the Applications Drafting Committee for all of its work, and thanked everyone for participating in the process.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m. CT

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Trumbull, Jay" <Jay.Trumbull@myfloridahouse.gov>
Date: October 3, 2017, 2:40:46 PM CDT
To: "Djgaetz1@gmail.com" <Djgaetz1@gmail.com>
Subject: Follow-up

President Gaetz,

It was great to see you a few days ago.
I wanted to follow up with you, re: Triumph. I have reached out to House staff and they confirmed, that the Triumph board is not prohibited from spending money on private property.

Look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

Jay Trumbull
State Representative
District 6
850-914-6300
Proudly serving Bay County