

Meeting Minutes
Triumph Gulf Coast Board Meeting
By Conference Call
Bay County Government Center
Panama City, Florida
December 27, 2017
11:00 a.m. CT

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Allan Bense, Chair (by phone)
Stan Connally, Jr. (by phone)
Pam Dana, Ph.D (by phone)
Don Gaetz
Stephen Riggs, IV (by phone)
Jason Shoaf

EXCUSED ABSENCE:

Bob Bonezzi

Chair Bense called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. CT.
Executive Director Susan Skelton called the roll and announced the presence of a quorum.

Chair Bense welcomed everyone and told the members that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss hiring a Program Administrator. He then asked Dr. Dana to explain the process and to provide background on the proposed candidate for the position, Mrs. Cori Henderson.

Dr. Dana said that the Economic Advisor/Program Administrator Selection Committee, under the direction of Senator Gaetz, had met several times and discussed important characteristics and capabilities of a Program Administrator. Based on those discussions, Dr. Dana worked with Ms. Skelton and Dr. Rick Harper, the newly appointed Triumph Gulf Coast Economic Advisor, to develop a job description and to identify eligible, qualified candidates for the position. After review by Dr. Harper, Chair Bense, and Senator Gaetz, she said that a strong and well-qualified candidate, Mrs. Henderson, was identified. She then asked Ms. Skelton to describe the procedure for negotiation with the candidate.

Ms. Skelton said that once a candidate was identified, she discussed engagement requirements with the candidate and worked with Dr. Dana, Dr. Harper, Chair Bense and Senator Gaetz to arrive at the proposed terms of engagement, which are included in the letter of engagement prepared by Clark Partington (made available to members and the public at the website www.myfloridatriumph.com). Ms. Skelton said that while Mrs. Henderson's work with Enterprise Florida was statewide in nature, she had a good understanding of the economic needs of Northwest Florida and that she had worked with the

Florida's Great Northwest visioning project that led to the development of the Northwest Florida FORWARD Strategic Plan.

Chair Bense noted that Senator Gaetz had interviewed the candidate, and asked him to comment.

Senator Gaetz said that he had spoken with Mrs. Henderson for approximately one and a half hours and was impressed with her credentials, experience and knowledge of the economic development needs of the region. He said she has a very strong background in economic development and that he contacted former Senate President Tom Lee, a former employer of Mrs. Henderson, to ask his opinion of her readiness and capabilities. He said that Senator Lee had a very high opinion of Mrs. Henderson and strongly recommended her. Senator Lee is familiar with the work of Triumph Gulf Coast and thinks that she would be a good fit for the organization.

Mr. Connally said that he certainly supported this candidate, and wanted to know what expectations the team had described related to working location, travel and requirements to be present in the region on a regular basis. Senator Gaetz said that he had discussed this issue with Mrs. Henderson and noted that she currently travels the entire state on an extensive basis. He said he told her that she should expect to be in the region approximately 75% of the time meeting with applicants, and attending to related business. He said that he expected her to be flexible and available to be in the eight counties on a very regular basis. He said that in his discussion with her, she fully understood this requirement and was willing to make the commitment. He said he did not think it would be a concern. Mr. Connally said he was glad to know that expectation had been clearly expressed, as visibility is going to be very important, particularly in the early stages of the operation.

Chair Bense said that he thinks Mrs. Henderson is a very well qualified candidate and noted her experience with Enterprise Florida as a very good asset. He said that he has had experience working with that staff, and knows that she has strong skills in working with and vetting potential applicants, and working with them through the entire process.

Dr. Dana made a motion to approve the Letter of Engagement with Cori Henderson for the position of Program Administrator. Senator Gaetz seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous vote (6-0).

Chair Bense noted that with this action, the Triumph Gulf Coast staff is now fully in place and operational. He said that the foundation is now complete and the time has come to begin the review of the pre-applications and applications so that funds can begin to be awarded. He said that he is glad that the Board took the time to select a really good staff, and that it is now a pleasure for him to hand over the reins of a fully operational organization to incoming Chair Gaetz.

Incoming Chair Gaetz said that Ms. Skelton will be working with the team over the coming weeks to begin the process of “triage” on the pre-applications to determine which projects apparently don’t meet the criteria, those that might but may need more work to make a determination, and those that appear to meet the criteria and could move on to the formal application process. Staff will be preparing those lists to present at the next Board meeting for consideration.

Ms. Skelton announced that the next Board meeting would be on Monday, January 29, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. ET. Mr. Connally indicated that he would need to attend by phone.

Chair Bense summarized the 2017 activities of Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. and noted that it had been a very good year. He said that the funding was secured, the organization was formed, staff had been hired and that all was well with the operation heading into the new year. He said he was proud of everyone on the Board and appreciated all of the hard work. Dr. Dana thanked Chair Bense for his leadership in getting the Board to this point.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m. CT.