

**Minutes  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
Conference Call Meeting  
877-568-4106  
ID: 733-061-565  
April 20, 2021  
9:30 a.m. CT**

**MEMBERS PRESENT ON CALL:**

Lewis Bear, Jr.  
Allan Bense  
Pam Dana, Ph. D, Vice Chair  
Don Gaetz, Chair  
Ben Lee, Assistant Treasurer  
Stephen Riggs, IV, Treasurer  
Matt Terry

Chair Don Gaetz called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. CT and welcomed everyone to the call.

Executive Director Susan Skelton called the roll and announced the presence of a quorum will all members on the call.

The March 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes were approved without objection.

**Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Stephen Riggs, IV, Treasurer, presented the February 2021 and March 2021 Financial Reports. **Mr. Riggs moved to approve the February 2021 Financial Report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Allan Bense and approved without objection. Mr. Riggs then moved to approve the March 2021 Financial Report. That motion was seconded by Dr. Pam Dana and approved without objection.**

Chair Gaetz thanked Ms. Jennifer Davidson, CPA of Tipton, Marler CPA Group for providing the running Schedule of Funds that allows everyone to see all funds collected and expended in various configurations on a monthly basis. He noted that the document is very helpful in keeping tabs on which projects are moving forward and the committed and expended funds for those projects.

**Staff Report**

Ms. Skelton gave a brief Legislative Update. She noted that the Governor had signed SB 7054 which recreates the Triumph Gulf Coast Trust Fund within the Department of Economic Opportunity and removes future sunset reviews of that trust fund. Funds from this trust fund will be included in the final Conference Report on Appropriations and will most likely be moved to the General Appropriations Fund to be used by the State of Florida in its 2021-2022 Budget. She said that staff continues to monitor several other bills of interest, and that it appears that the legislative session will conclude on time.

The annual BP Settlement payment to the State of Florida arrived on schedule and the Triumph Gulf Coast funds have been received for deposit in our bank account either today or tomorrow. Mr. Ben Lee will be completing that task on behalf of the Board.

## **Legal Report**

Mr. Alan Manning, Legal Counsel, provided a review of Term Sheet Negotiations for Proposal 211 – Pensacola State College – Truck Driver Training Program and Facility for \$3,862,951. He explained that the proposal will support industry certificates in commercial vehicle driving. He noted that the term sheet is on the standard triumph template and has been approved by the grantee, and Legal Counsel recommends approval.

Chair Gaetz asked if there were any comments by the applicant, Pensacola State College. Dr. Debbie Douma, representing PSC President Meadows indicated the school's appreciation for the Triumph Gulf Coast consideration of this project and said that they are excited about the project's potential. Chair Gaetz then asked if there was any public comment on the proposal. No one spoke.

**Mr. Lewis Bear made a motion to direct legal counsel and staff to proceed to Grant Award negotiations with Pensacola State College for Proposal #211. The motion was seconded by Dr. Dana and passed unanimously on a roll call vote (7-0.)**

## **Program Administration**

### **Program Administrator's Report**

Ms. Cori Henderson, Program Administrator, reported that since the last meeting in March, staff has spent considerable time working with applicants and cutting edge education and workforce projects, while the regional economic developers continue to be very busy and focused on recruiting competitive job creation and expansion projects, many of which the region is a finalist for. At Triumph's urging, education institutions have continued to submit proposals that break down their traditional ways of doing business, resulting in an exciting new collaborations and outcomes. Combined with our Education Advisor Dr. Frank Fuller's expertise and understanding workforce needs of the future, a growing portfolio of workforce projects has set the stage for the region to be competitive in tomorrow's economy while also providing the education opportunities needed for jobs that support growing and resilient communities.

After taking a direct hit from Hurricane Michael, Port of Panama City is hosting a dedication ceremony for the new East Terminal and channel on Wednesday, May 12th. This was the first Triumph Gulf Coast project to receive funding.

On April 29, Northwest Florida State College will celebrate the ribbon cutting of the new Walton Works Public Safety Complex, a joint-use facility funded in part by Triumph's Training Center Grant and Walton County Sheriff's Office Workforce Grant.

In late March, Franklin School District held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Welding Lab Building co-funded with a Triumph grant.

Ms. Henderson noted that Board Members should have received invitations to both upcoming events.

Ms. Henderson then gave an update on the Florida's Great Northwest marketing grant and told members that there was a draft of the first print marketing tool being developed by VisionFirst in the meeting packets. She noted that the graphics and content are still being finalized. This one pager Introduction to Triumph and Targeted Selling Points will be used by our communities, regional and utility partners, and Enterprise Florida, to highlight Triumph's value to decision makers and consultants. Multiple versions will be available that highlight projects in different industries. The flyer is a small part of a new messaging platform of the region's benefits that has been developed utilizing stakeholder feedback, research, and the labor supply and demand study data that is part of this project.

Following five days of video shoots and company interviews, video is being edited and new photos of the region's assets, existing industries, Industrial parks, and Workforce programs are being incorporated into a variety of marketing materials for use by economic development partners across the region. Company case studies related to Triumph Investments, Triumph focused updates on the Florida's Great Northwest Website, and additional marketing content and tools will be part of a Summer campaign launch, followed by a roadshow type rollout showcasing the benefits of Northwest Florida, and Triumph, to spur additional business development leads and interest.

Work continues with the Department of Education on an agreement for a data analyst to extract data from the data warehouse to conduct the return on investment analysis originally conceived as part of this grant. The process to hire a data analyst is more complex and requires more partners than anticipated. An amendment will be presented at a future meeting once an agreement has been reached with all of the parties. The final draft of the first phase of the Labor Supply and Demand Research Report is available on Florida's Great Northwest website. The data is being used in meetings with prospective companies, has been integrated additional marketing pieces, and has been shared with the education providers in the region.

Chair Gaetz asked that board members who live in the Bay County Area would attend the Port of Panama City Port dedication ceremony because he that project is and has been and will be important to Bay County and the whole area as the region continues to recover from Hurricane Michael and COVID-19. He said it's important that Triumph show the flag at these events.

Staff has continued to work with grantees on the implementation of 39 active projects totaling over \$257 million worth of ongoing grants. Staff continues to monitor compliance on projects, and work through finance requests with our partners at Tipton, Marler CPA Group. As of April 16th, Triumph has received 254 pre-applications totaling over \$1.8 billion in requests. One pre-application for \$2 million was received since the last Board meeting, and staff recommended it as ineligible due to a lack of a public partner for infrastructure. Since the last board meeting, and as of April 16, Triumph had received four new applications, including the Port of Port St. Joe request which was received yesterday. Staff has been working very closely with all four of these applicants, and hope that at our next two meetings, we will be able to bring forth all of these good proposals.

Two Fast Track construction programs have completed all of their certificates: the Pensacola State College CDL Program and the Laughlin Tech Pipe Fitting and Construction Program. that spends the whole state programs.

At the end of April we will receive the first quarter's reports from our construction and education projects which will bring the project status checklist up to date. Mr. Randy Lewis, Construction Compliance Advisor, provided a report on his detail of work which was provided in writing to Board members as part of the Program Administrator's Report. Construction projects are becoming very busy and the road project in Okaloosa County is getting closer to breaking ground. Consequently, this list will continue to grow over the course of this calendar year. Chair Gaetz asked if there were any projects that appear to be lagging behind or veering off course. Ms. Henderson indicated that over the next several board meetings there will probably be quite a number of amendments to grant award agreements as awardees are better able to adjust to and project needs based on COVID-19 recovery efforts. The main concern seems to be with construction costs and availability of supplies and labor to do those projects. Dr. Fuller is working closely with a couple of the education institutions that are still digging out a little bit from delays related to school closures, but for the most part, things are looking pretty good.

Chair Gaetz asked if there were any additional questions regarding the report. There were none. **Dr. Dana made a motion to approve the Program Administrator's Report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bear and approved without objection.**

### **Economic Advisor's Report and Recommendations**

Dr. Frank Fuller, Education Advisor, presented the Staff Recommendation on Proposal #243 – Okaloosa County School District – Artificial Intelligence Learning Institute for \$2,840,000. He noted that the total project cost is \$5.7 million, and that Triumph funding would represent 49% of the total project. Triumph staff has reviewed the proposal and gives it a score of "A".

Dr. Fuller complimented the School District and University of Florida for proposing this initiative as this whole new arena of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) and the proposed new curricula will place the Triumph Gulf Coast region, and Okaloosa County, about three years ahead of any national trend.

Dr. Fuller then explained that the application seeks funding for creation of Artificial Intelligence Learning Institutes that will provide industry recognized credentials in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and in Drone. The institutes will become self-sustaining over time by receiving funding from the Florida Education Finance Program for CAPE certifications earned. The School District will provide 1100 FDOE approved CAPE certifications over a six year period at a cost of \$2582 per certification.

The program is proposed to be funded at **up to** \$2,840,020, which would complement envisioned funding of **up to** \$2.86 million from the Okaloosa County School District. More specific costs will be provided as several elements become known with certainty. Some of the costs are not yet known as the University of Florida produces each level of curricula. The school district will adopt that curriculum from the University of Florida. The School District will begin the implementation with the University of Florida providing the training for the faculty staff that would actually do the instruction. The University of Florida will modify or adjust some costs as they design curricula to be part of this program.

As the work goes ahead with these tests of achieving lower costs, any savings would be split equally between the school district and Triumph Gulf Coast thus preserving the funding ratio. While there are several types of existing certifications identified, including Microsoft, Small UAS Safety certifications, Visual Line of Sight Operations, Ground School, Autodesk, Inventory, Microsoft Technology Associate, etc., the applicant clearly knows that new certifications will be

developed and recommended for inclusion on the FDOE CAPE List, as this whole concept is introduced to the workforce in Florida.

While Annual Certificate Attainments numbers are suggested in the application, the Triumph staff finds that the least burdensome administration path would be to assess progress towards total cert attainment throughout the project through quarterly and annual reporting requirements and will require that 1100 certificates be attained before final payment is made.

The applicant commits that students will earn 1100 of the proposed certifications that are on the CAPE list and serve Triumph target market sectors. At the cost of \$2582 per attained certification, a total increase in household income expected from the program would be \$32.3 per dollar of Triumph investment according to Dr. Harper's analysis. For this reason, the staff rates the Program an A, in terms of economic impact.

The Okaloosa County School District emphasis on artificial intelligence curriculum will result in students leaving the K-12 school system with opportunities to further their studies towards careers as data scientists, machine learning engineering and architecture, big data engineering, business intelligence developers, among many others, are examples of evolving career fields.

The Okaloosa County School District will engage the University of Florida for curriculum development and teacher training. The University of Florida's College of Engineering is expanding its Engaging Quality Instruction through Professional Development (EQuIPD) grant and is adding the Okaloosa School District to the grant proposal to work directly with the county on this AI initiative. Going forward the University of Florida will seek additional partnerships beyond the ones they currently have. The University of Florida's Research and Engineering Education Facility commonly known as Reef is located in Okaloosa County and works with the Okaloosa County School District to provide facility space for summer programs or classes during the year as appropriate.

Okaloosa County School District also has existing articulation agreements with local, post-secondary institutions for dual enrollment and other graduation options for students.

A critical factor that businesses consider when relocating is quality of public education initiatives, such as the Artificial Intelligence Learning Institute that provides direct evidence to industry that the Okaloosa Schools and Triumph's other regional school districts can serve as national models for career and technical education. The Okaloosa County School District has and will continue to develop relationships with area military and industry to serve on advisory boards to ensure that the outcomes associated with this new initiative are credentials based and forward thinking. This project places Okaloosa County students in the best position to succeed and support the overall economic development of the region.

Chair Gaetz called on Okaloosa County School Superintendent Marcus Chambers for comments on the proposal. Superintendent Chambers said Okaloosa County is very excited to be able to submit this proposal to the Triumph board. One of the things that the School District is looking at in is what does the next generation of Okaloosa schools look like and Career and Technical Education is a major component of that next generation. "The School District believes that this artificial intelligence program not only will be a benefit to students in terms of giving them the skill that they need for artificial intelligence, but we also believe, when you look at Eglin, when you look at the tech industries in our area, we will be providing our students skills that will support our local economy. That's what the School District is trying to do in the county, is to create a pipeline from elementary, all the way to the workforce in this proposal, is part of

that vision, And we're very hopeful to be able to start this program and appreciate Triumph's consideration" said Chambers.

Dr. Dana noted that the proposal includes working with the Air Force and the University of Florida and said that those partnerships are terrific. She then asked the applicant to what extent they had considered working with the University of West Florida since they are quite involved with AI and cybersecurity, as well as with the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition in Pensacola as it seems like they'd be natural partners. Dr. Fuller responded that the reason that the University of Florida is part of this application is that they have been designated as the state lead on AI. He said that he couldn't speak on behalf of the Okaloosa County School District, but he thinks it would be a great opportunity to link in the University of West Florida and IHMC into the project. He thinks the district would be wide open to do that. The thrust of this project is to tie the Okaloosa project into a curriculum that is going to be rolled out as the curriculum for the entire State of Florida in 2 to 3 years.

Dr. Dana reiterated that she is in favor of these kind of proposals and thinks it's a great proposal. She said she does not want to dictate how they proposal reads and who are partners but is hopeful that the Okaloosa county will consider other potential contributors to this worthwhile project.

Superintendent Chambers said that the District is definitely open to additional partnerships and would definitely work with the University of West Florida and have those conversations as well. Mr. Riggs said that K-12 education is a passion for him, so he wanted to let the superintendent know that he was excited to hear about this proposal. He said getting children involved at a young age is vitally important. He said we can't wait until our kids get to high school to start worrying about whether they're going to be able to score well on their state assessment tests, so getting them involved early is critically important and with all of the AI and technology training anything we can do is great because that's where this economy going. Industry just gets more and more technical, technologically advanced and savvy. So, he is just excited about the opportunities that the project can bring to the region.

Mr. Bear said he was concerned about proposals that appear to operate in a bubble as opposed to a more inclusive, regional approach. Saying "we welcome University of West Florida into the conversation" doesn't tell us that Okaloosa County is going to reach out to the University of West Florida. We've seen over the years that the REEF is up and operating and then failing. Every time the money runs out the University of Florida pulls people back to Gainesville. He said he's experienced this over the last 10 or 12 years, where there is a strong program there and then all of the sudden there's no sign of the University of Florida, because the money ran out, so he would like to know how Okaloosa County is going to coordinate with other interested organizations such as University of West Florida or IHMC, etc. He said it's important that we see a plan for how that's going to happen before we fund two or three years of University of Florida and then they are gone again.

Dr. Fuller said that the plan going forward was to bring in an advisory committee, which would easily include West Florida and IHMC, the community colleges, and private entities into the advisory as instruction is going forward. The original intent was to try to get a baseline fundamental curricula alignment to go before we started getting deeper into the whole rollout of AI and Machine Learning. This project is an effort to develop the basic curricula, which will generate an enormous opportunity for more participation by other entities.

Dr. Fuller said he didn't see a problem with including the University of West Florida and the

Institute for Human Machine Cognition and anybody else who would like to be placed on an advisory committee and have a role in making recommendations. It would ultimately be up to the applicant as to how to structure such an advisory group.

Dr. Fuller said that the UF-Okaloosa initiative is just a first step. Then, to bring in a major level advisory panel, including businesses and other institutions could assist the project in the future.

The product proposed to be delivered is curricula development. It's a core to start with, and since the University of Florida had already been designated as the state lead on AI and was going to produce this curriculum it is a good place for us to start building AI into our K-12 future workforce.

The contract is for University of Florida to produce the baseline curricula. They're not engaged in this project past producing the products that the school district can actually go out and market in their own community to modify. They are not an exclusive long term partner on the project. UF is providing a baseline tool for the whole eight County Region, which will involve all the universities and community colleges and the businesses and the military and all the subsets going forward.

Ms. Skelton indicated that as staff moves forward with term sheet negotiations on the proposal, we would work with the school district and interested parties to facilitate the discussions contemplated in today's meeting. Chair Gaetz noted that since Triumph Gulf Coast is not governed by geographical boundaries within our eight county region, we have a unique opportunity to work across institutional boundaries to be a facilitator of early collaboration on this, and other, proposals. He pointed out that University of Florida is acting in the role of a vendor in this situation and that ideas from other entities could be helpful to the school district and the university in designing the curricula for the region.

Chair Gaetz directed counsel and staff to be sure that the term sheet is very clear that the work product generated by the University of Florida for the Okaloosa School District is owned by the district. Dr. Fuller said that the intent was that they would provide a basic framework that the school district could modify and adjust going forward.

Mr. Bense said that he would just comment that if a college or university was interested in participating on Triumph proposals, they should make an effort to let the Board know of their interest. He said some education institutions are participating a lot with Triumph and that the Board welcomes the opportunity to work with all of them. He said that he would recommend more participation and if he was representing one of those organizations, he would be at every meeting trying to figure out how to leverage the Triumph dollars to the best advantage of the institution and the community.

Mr. Lee then asked about the role of the University of Florida in the region and what programs would be impacted from the university's perspective. He said he knows the University of Florida, certainly, has a reach throughout the state. He said he knew that they operate through the Co-operative Extension Service as well as helping with four H programs and wanted to know how that interaction works in Okaloosa County and if they are going to be partnering with the University of Florida, and the Extension Service to reach additional kids with this program. On behalf of Okaloosa County School District, Mr. Horton said that part of the project development will be getting IFAS involved and making sure the reach of this project extended from Alabama border down to the Gulf Coast.

Chair Gaetz asked what the source of the School District match funds would be. Superintendent Chambers replied that the funds are expected to come from the County's share of federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) III which should be available in the near future for the county's discretionary use. Chair Gaetz instructed Mr. Manning to be sure that the funding source was noted in the proposed term sheet.

The Chair then asked if the University of Florida would be awarding university credit or honoring articulation for students earning certifications using the curricula developed for this program or if completers would earn credits or articulation from any post-secondary institution. The Superintendent replied that through the already established articulation process the district would articulate with any university in Florida that was able to do so, not just the University of Florida, but anyone for articulation of college credit, where appropriate. Dr. Fuller noted that the certifications that are going to evolve out of this program would have the State Articulation Committee at the Department of Education assign CAPE value credit to the certifications that will be used by higher education institutions to determine further credit and articulation opportunities. Chair Gaetz said that would seem to be an area of productive work between now and the time a term sheet is developed would be to, if it's appropriate part of the project, to be able to ensure that students who earn these certifications by successfully completing this University of Florida developed curriculum will have, earned, specific, higher education credits. He said that's been a feature of everything else that Triumph has tried to do, and all he is asking is that it'd be made clear one way or the other with respect to this project.

Chair Gaetz then asked if there is some sort of a description that shows how many certifications are going to be earned in each year and if there is there some kind of analysis that would show us how the district gets to the 1100 certifications? Dr. Fuller stated that there could certainly be a timeline of annual certification production goals included in the term sheet.

Dr. Rick Harper, Economic Advisor, said that there is a timeline anticipated, provided by Okaloosa County and it's important to note that Microsoft tool certifications which are envisioned for lower grades are in addition to the 1100 certifications pledged for this proposal. For the 1100 in these specific areas of expertise we do track whether the district is on track with the projected number of certifications every year, but in order to avoid the situation of having a contracted number per year, and finding that we need the contract modification, or that the district is not in compliance with a contract term, we, as a matter of course, add up the certifications produced every year. We are in communication with the district to ensure that they are on track, but we don't actually intend to count the number of certifications completed until we approach that 1100 certification deadline towards the project to make our bookkeeping simpler.

Chair Gaetz expressed that it had been Triumph's practice with respect to other educational projects that we do keep track of performance on an annual basis, and that we have an objective way of measuring performance and if it is industry certifications that is the result we're buying, then we have a contractual understanding with the district that in order for them to be on target, they can't wait till the last year to start producing students who are qualified for the workforce. So, if we're not going to be doing that with respect to this project, how will we know that that this project is proceeding apace if we don't have a metric by which to measure performance.

Dr. Fuller said that Triumph staff has set up a process that is currently being used wherein education programs are regularly monitored and receive reviews and interim scores to allow our staff and the educational entities to know if there are problems in complying with their



agreements. Every district that is off a little bit on their timeline has been issued a notice that they have to provide a plan to reach these targeted goals going forward by a date certain. The upcoming date for submitting those plans is quickly approaching, and then that plan itself becomes a quick measure of scoring out how well they're performing. If, in fact, they give us a plan that closes the gap or reaches the gap with a systematic design, and we ask them to assign budgeting to this corrective action. The whole Triumph compliance system right now is tracking where awardees are, evaluating what they've been through in their environment, and then asking them to produce a plan to get back closer to what we determine is a timeline for them to meet their ultimate goals. It's not a case of just waiting around until we get to the end, and then saying that they've been behind for the whole time, and they're still behind. Staff has set a target date to come back by June with a report of those who have implemented the plan and gotten quickly back to what would be anticipated numbers and report back at that point for districts that haven't been able to close the gap.

Further, Dr. Fuller noted that there has been a change of superintendents and chief financial officers in three of the districts and just for them to get up to speed in order to get into this plan has meant that Triumph staff has spent a lot of time meeting with them to get their priorities and our goals imbedded in the plans they have to get back on track using goals and plans that they were not a part of designing. There is a plan for those districts in place, and it's being implemented in documents that have been sent to the entities at the school district. One thing we have added is that we've asked the chief financial officer to sign off on every report going forward to assure that more than one person in the administration knows and understands the performance and financial commitments that have been agreed upon with Triumph Gulf Coast.

Dr. Fuller said that he believes with the upcoming quarterly reports in June there will be a clear picture of whether or not awardees are meeting benchmarks and an idea of what their plan is to stay on course. In that whole compliance review process, what staff has been able to do is to roll up all the experiences the awardees have had and try to get them back into the mindset that these are still compliance issues, and we understand the issues they've been through, but Triumph still has to look forward with the compliance requirements. Part of that whole process will be coming with recommendations for an extension of six months, or whatever fits in their plan, But their plan has to include budget components and that's the reason we asked the Chief Financial Officer in each district to sign off on these proposals.

Ms. Skelton pointed out that, for example, with the A and P workforce education projects, some of the classes are more than one year in duration and so awardees may not report any certifications awarded for year one but they may have certifications in year two or year three. She said that since we don't know yet what the curriculum design will be, we don't know what the duration of the classes and the reporting period would be. In order to comply with our need to know, we're following this reporting process, But as far as locking it down, contractually, we don't really know how we would do that at this point because we don't know the duration of the certifications themselves.

Chair Gaetz reiterated that if what Triumph is paying for is individuals who earn certifications that qualify them for the workforce in this emerging and important area then at some point there needs to be an accountability measure, a metric of performance and that it needs to be forecast in some manner. He said that at some point, we need to articulate a metric of performance that the public is going to be able to keep track of. We've done this with respect to every other educational institution, We've held them to a matrix of performance that is understandable and measurable. He said that he likes this project, and the Okaloosa County School District but we need to have an accountability measure and schedule built into our contract for this project.

Chair Gaetz then asked Dr. Harper if students earning certificates in the proposed program will be qualified upon receipt of these certificates for actual jobs in industries that require artificial intelligence competences or is it presumed that all or a good share of certification earners will need further education?

Dr. Harper responded that from his perspective as an economist looking at trends in the labor market and trends in technology and productivity that these are components of the necessary skill sets for workers to be qualified for high wage, high skilled jobs. Thus, there's a continuum of skills and these skills make up part of the credentialing to demonstrate knowledge of that continuum. There is certainly a set of certifications that is intended to be kind of compartmentalized indicators of qualifications for higher wages and then there are certifications that are intended to be part of a set of more extensive skills. For example, in the A and P world, there's a lot of seat time for each of these certificates and they take a substantial period of time and different sorts of skills. Thus, labor market values are implied by each one. He then asked Dr. Fuller or Superintendent Chambers, or Mr. Horton to comment on any of the individual certificates and whether they are intended to be fully self-contained, or merely a component of a greater set of skills.

Dr. Fuller responded that as these jobs evolve, the normal CPAC job reporting usually lags about three years behind what the actual job entails. For example, an electric company still will advertise for a lineman, but they'll have job descriptions that change as the skillset gets changed from the typical definition of a lineman into a lineman who's now using certain tools and diagnoses, diagnostic instruments in order to perform the required duties. So, what happens in the employment cycle, at least from the training side, if we train them in this subset that is going to be an evolution into the job, then that becomes a key indicator during the employment process because the employer is more concerned now about implementing this new diagnostic tool on the power lines, because it's now part of their function. During this transition process of evolution, the skill sets that you can get in place that fit the job description, evolve as the job does going forward. While the training may not guarantee employment, if they're interviewing and they have these subsets, the company is starting to move towards because they see the evolution of these skills in the workforce. The purpose is to get certificate earners into a ladder of skills that actually leads to more complex applications of AI.

Job descriptions will continue to evolve to include requirements for more and more AI and ML skills and it would not be prudent to tie final definitions of training down now because job requirements will continue to change. The skills envisioned in this initial effort are designed to get the pathway started and to put the region into a leadership role. If we don't start at elementary school, or if we keep waiting, until we've had enough committees to figure out what the puzzle looks like, then, we've lost a whole generation of kids that need to be started on these pathways.

Dr. Fuller reiterated that this proposal gives the region a clear beginning point for the future of workforce education in Artificial Intelligence and that Okaloosa County School District has a high performance level in initiating programs like this proposal and whether it's University of Florida, University of West Florida, or Notre Dame, the key is to get things started now, and modify it to fit the employment opportunities in our region. If we don't start students in this program in elementary school, and we don't have them well on the path at middle school, lining everybody up to do it all in high school is just a bad model.

Chair Gaetz asked if any member of the public wished to comment on Proposal #243. No one spoke.

**Mr. Bense made a motion to direct staff and legal counsel to begin negotiating with the applicant on a term sheet for Proposal #243. Dr. Dana and Mr. Bear seconded the motion which passed unanimously (7-0.)**

Chair Gaetz noted that the updated application for Proposal #245 - Florida A&M University – Artificial Intelligence and Data Science Education and Training in Aquaculture was not received in time for consideration at this meeting.

No one spoke during the Public Comment portion of the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:51 a.m. CT.