

**Meeting Minutes  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
Chautauqua Center  
Building 503  
908 U.S. Highway 90 West  
Defuniak Springs, FL 32433  
August 17, 2022  
10:30 a.m. CT**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

David Bear, Chair  
Bryan Corr, Sr.  
Reynolds Henderson, Treasurer  
David Humphreys  
Collier Merrill, Vice-Chair  
Jay Trumbull, Sr.

Chair David Bear called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. CT and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Executive Director Susan Skelton called roll and announced that a quorum was present with all members in attendance.

Chair Bear then thanked Northwest Florida State College for hosting the meeting and recognized Dr. Cristie Kedroski, Senior Vice President, Northwest Florida State College, to make welcome remarks. Dr. Kedroski thanked the Triumph Gulf Coast Board for coming to the Chautauqua Center Campus in Walton County, home of the Walton Works program supported by Triumph Gulf Coast. Dr. Kedroski said that Dr. Devin Stephenson, President of the College was sorry that he could not be at the meeting but that he was at the State Board of Education meeting making a presentation on the school's programs at the request of Chancellor Henry Mack, Director of the State of Florida's Career and Technical Training Education Office. She noted that Dr. Charlotte Flynn, a member of the Northwest Florida State College Board, would be in attendance at the meeting as well.

Dr. Kedroski welcomed everyone to site of the meeting, the Industrial Trades Building that houses the Walton Works program, welding, building and construction trades, cybersecurity, and drone technology programs. Additionally, in partnership with the Walton County Sheriff's Department, the college has constructed a fire training tower at the Sheriff's Department facility which includes a driving training pad and a shooting range to be able to provide comprehensive law enforcement and corrections training for the county and surrounding area.

Walton Works is a \$5.7 million project that commits to producing more than 1500 industry recognized credentials by December 2025. These credentials provide ladders to better employment opportunities for the citizens of the region. The project was funded by a \$2.7 million investment by Triumph Gulf Coast and a \$1.5 million investment by the Walton County Board of County Commissioners.

Dr. Kedroski introduced two students who have benefited from the Triumph investment in the project. First, Walton County Sheriff's Deputy Katrina Kane, a Walton County resident and

participant in the inaugural Walton Works Academy Law Enforcement Training program. Deputy Kane offered brief remarks and said that her class was the first one to be able to use the new driving pad. She said the new pad was a huge asset in training officers to be able to drive in all weather conditions, and at low and high speeds with multiple obstacles in the driving field with vision limitations. Deputy Kane said that the tower build-out has allowed law enforcement and fire personnel to practice safe building clearing skills and has been very helpful in everyday response situations. She thanked Triumph Gulf Coast for its support of these important training tools and capabilities. Dr. Kedroski said that the seven-month certification training program has addressed both wage rates for county citizens who participate, but also the critical need for trained certified response personnel in the region.

Ms. Zoe Elena Madano enrolled in the building construction specialist certificate program in January 2022 to learn more about the construction industry. She and her husband own a construction company. This fall, she enrolled in the second semester of a three-semester program. Upon completion of the three-semester program, she will have her Home Builders' Institute Certificate, and OSHA-10 Certificate. Ms. Madano explained to the Board that when she first came to NWFSC, she did not know anything about the construction industry, but wanted to learn more to assist her husband in their business. She said that she did office work and bookkeeping and translated for her husband. She said that she was a resident of Defuniak Springs and that her family's business had been landscaping around the area. She said she just wanted to learn more to better her family's opportunities to be successful. She said that prior to coming to this program, her family income was around \$3000 per month because she didn't know how to do proper contracts, and how to bid on jobs in a way that reflected true costs of the jobs, etc. With the training she has already received, including inspection requirements, Southern Building Codes, and OSHA requirements, the family has already benefited, and the business is now making around \$16,000 per month. The training has already been life changing for her and her family business. She said that without the training provided with Triumph funding, her business would probably not have survived. Since she started the training, she has also gone on to get her realtors' license and feels confident to compete in the construction market in the region. Ms. Madano offered her sincere thanks to the Board for its support of the program that is making those life changing opportunities for her and her family.

Dr. Kedroski pointed out that Ms. Madano's success can generate even more jobs in the community as her company grows and hires more local tradespersons. She went on to say that the Walton Works program is on track to produce 1570 certificates for students. As of today, the college has produced 863 of those certificates, which is 55% of the goal with over half of the grant period remaining. She gave a brief report on the NWFSC Center for Aviation Excellence in Crestview, also funded by a Triumph grant. She noted that for this semester, the program had 16 new students in the Airframe Mechanics classes with 25 additional students in the application process for the classes. The college anticipates a complete class of 24 students for the semester. There are 14 students enrolled in the Professional Pilot classes with an additional 22 students waiting for admission to the classes. Six students are enrolled in the Unmanned Systems classes for the semester with two applications pending. Dr. Kedroski again thanked the Board for its generous support of Northwest Florida State College programs across the region and said that the college looks forward to working with the Board in the future.

Chair Bear thanked Dr. Kedroski, Deputy Kane and Ms. Madano for their remarks.

### **Introduction of New Board Members**

Chair Bear introduced each of the newly appointed members of the Triumph Gulf Coast Board and gave a brief biographical overview of their experience.

**Mr. Bryan Corr, Sr.**, of Rosemary Beach, is the principal of the Corr Group, a real estate development company, and related companies. Prior to his career in real estate development, Mr. Corr served in various roles, culminating in President, of Otelco, a landline telephone company located in Huntsville, Alabama, and later founded a start-up cellular telephone business in Alabama and Georgia. He served as Chair of the Blount County, Alabama E911 Board and oversaw the design and implementation of the first stand-alone E911 system in Alabama. Mr. Corr was a founding member and Director of a start-up business to construct communication towers in Latin America that has constructed and leased approximately 500 towers.

The Corr Group is responsible for several major developments across the region. The 30Avenue Lifestyle Center, located at the intersection of U.S. 98 and County Road 30A adjacent to Rosemary Beach, was developed from the ground up. The center continues to be owned and managed by the company. The Corr Group owns and operates the Grand Panama Office building in Panama City Beach and has purchased other property in Panama City Beach for future development.

Mr. Corr is a 1982 graduate of the University of Alabama School of Business. He has served on the Board of Directors of Wireless One Inc., Community Bancshares, and Community Insurance, as well as the Board of Directors of the Rural Cellular Association, McPherson Oil Companies, and Network Management Services. He has served as District Vice President of the University of Alabama Alumni Association and holds a Private Pilot License with instrument, multi-engine, and jet ratings.

Chair Bear recognized Mr. Corr for comments. Mr. Corr said that he was pleased to be on this board.

**David Humphreys**, of Panama City, is the President\Owner of Linea Peninsular Inc. Linea Peninsular was started in 1984 and operates small container vessels trading between the U.S. and Mexico. Linea Peninsular originally operated out of Port Bienville Mississippi. After being devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, operations were moved to Panama City, Florida.

Mr. Humphreys has served on the Board of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida and supports various charities in the area. He completed his BBA degree at the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Mr. Humphreys enjoys boating and spending time with his wife and 3 children.

Chair Bear recognized Mr. Humphreys for comments. Mr. Humphreys said that he was excited to be on the board and said that the first time he heard about Triumph Gulf Coast he thought it sounded like a cross between Shark Tank and Brewster's Millions, but said he has since learned that this is a real opportunity to diversify the economies of counties affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizons oil spill. He said that listening to Ms. Madano's' speech today was the

exact reason he wanted to join the board and that it presents an amazing opportunity. He said it was a real honor and pleasure to have the chance to be on the board.

**Jay Trumbull, Sr.**, of Panama City, is the President/Owner of Culligan Water franchises with seven offices in Florida, Georgia, and Alabama. He owns a plumbing company and HVAC company in Panama City.

Mr. Trumbull served several years on the Bay County Planning Commission, the Panama City Housing Authority, the Bay Medical Board Foundation, and the Bay County Chamber of Commerce. He was appointed to the Florida Transportation Commission in 2011 and served as Chairman from 2015 – 2019.

Currently, Mr. Trumbull serves on the Board of Trustmark National Bank as well as several boards within his industry including Culligan Dealers of North America. He is a member of the Culligan Dealer Advisory Council and is currently president of the Southeastern Bottled Water Association.

Mr. Trumbull serves as an Elder at First Presbyterian Church in Panama City. He and his wife, Tammy, have been married for 34 years and have three children and seven grandchildren.

Chair Bear recognized Mr. Trumbull for remarks. Mr. Trumbull said it was an honor to serve and echoed Mr. Humphreys' comments. He said he hopes to contribute to the effort and looks forward to serving.

### **Review and Approval of June 28, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the June 28, 2022 were reviewed. **Mr. Collier Merrill made a motion to approve the minutes as circulated. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reynolds Henderson and approved without objection.**

### **Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Reynold Henderson, Treasurer, called on Mrs. Jennifer Davidson, CPA, to present the June and July 2022 Financial Reports. Mrs. Davidson gave a brief overview of each of the reports. Mr. Henderson asked Mrs. Davidson to explain to the new members about the interest that Triumph Gulf Coast must pay to the state each month. Mrs. Davidson explained that due to a statutory requirement, Triumph must deposit all earned interest into the State Department of Economic Opportunity Triumph Gulf Coast Trust Fund. That money does not come back to Triumph Gulf Coast unless it is specifically appropriated by the Legislature due to a glitch in the statutes.

**Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the June 2022 Financial Report. Mr. Merrill seconded the motion which was approved without objection.**

**Mr. Henderson then made a motion to approve the July 2022 Financial Report. Mr. Merrill seconded the motion which was approved without objection.**

Chair Bear then called on Mr. Henderson to give a review of Triumph Gulf Coast's current banking operations and any recommendations he may have for future banking operations.

Mr. Henderson reported that the Triumph Gulf Coast banking is currently done with the First National Bank of Northwest Florida (FNBWNF) in Bay County. The bank has only two locations, both located in Bay County. He said that the bank has served Triumph well up to this point and has been good to work with but is very limited in its capability to deal with the regular, complex banking activities of an entity of the size of Triumph Gulf Coast. He said that in looking for a regional bank that has a more robust, modern banking capability, he has had discussions with two banks: Progress Bank and Centennial Bank. He said that Progress Bank has a Walton, Okaloosa, and Bay footprint while Centennial Bank has branch locations in all eight of the Triumph Gulf Coast counties. He said that both banks had similar capabilities that would meet the Triumph needs, but that it seems more beneficial to have “brick and mortar” locations in each of the eight counties in the event that board members or staff would need to have in-person interaction with the entity.

Chair Bear asked if members of the Board had any questions, concerns, or comments about Mr. Henderson’s report. Mr. Merrill asked if Mr. Henderson was prepared to recommend that Centennial Bank be named as Triumph Gulf Coast’s new bank. Mr. Henderson indicated that that would be his recommendation. Mr. Merrill said that he knows that Mr. Henderson has done his research and would support that recommendation. **Mr. Henderson offered a motion that included adding two signers to the account, Mr. David Humphreys and Mr. Jay Trumbull, Sr.**

**Mr. Henderson made the motion for the reasons stated in his report to the Board, that Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., terminate its current depository accounts and transition said accounts to Centennial Bank. Further, the motion is to request that the authorized signatories on the new account be established as: Reynolds Henderson, Treasurer; David Bear, Chair; Jay Trumbull, Sr.; and David Humphreys. The motion was seconded by Mr. Merrill.**

Mrs. Davidson said that for audit purposes, it would be prudent for the Board to declare whether the signature changes were for both the bank account and the SBA PRIME Account. After a brief discussion, the board decided that there was no reason to change the current signatories on the SBA account. No further action was taken on the question relative to the SBA Account.

Chair Bear asked if there was anyone from the public that wished to be heard on the motion. No one came forward to speak. **On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (6-0.)**

### **Staff Report**

Ms. Skelton said that staff continues to monitor interim activities related to the 2023 Legislative Session and that there will be an Organizational Session of the newly elected Legislature two weeks after the General Election date.

The Auditor General’s Office continues with its annual audit activities and Triumph staff continues to work to respond to all audit inquiries. Ms. Skelton noted that the Auditor General has two teams of auditors present at this meeting as they conduct their annual member and staff interviews. She introduced auditors Christi Alexander, Justin Ferris, Chris Maxwell, and Josh Barrett.

Ms. Skelton reminded members of the upcoming transition to multi-factor authentication protocols that will be occurring on August 25 and to follow instructions to complete that transition.

Staff is requesting authority to hire a part-time Administrative Assistant to work with our Program Administrator to facilitate the growth of the compliance paperwork that must occur as new projects are awarded. Ms. Skelton noted that funds for this type of assistance were provided by this year's Legislature to accommodate the growth in Triumph's compliance review costs. The request would be to hire a part-time 1099 contractor as soon as possible at a maximum of 10 hours per week at a rate of \$18-\$22 per hour based on experience. This person would be available during some work hours, but the remaining work would be on a flexible work schedule that would allow for the ideal candidate for the position to be someone with prior executive level administrative experience, an educator, or a military spouse that has the needed skill set and personality to work with our very small professional staff. The position would include some everyday reporting tasks along with proficiency in using spreadsheets and a positive public facing personality. Staff requests that a job candidate would be interviewed by the Program Administrator, the Executive Director, and a final, binding interview by the Board Chair.

Chair Bear said that Triumph Gulf Coast requires 100% of the documentation for each project to be reviewed for compliance purposes. As we continue to add more and more grants, the workload grows exponentially. He said that staff is currently overtaxed and needs this additional assistance. Mr. Henderson said that he agrees that staff needs help. He cautioned that the money appropriated back to Triumph this year is not enough to get all the way to the end of the life of the Triumph program and that everyone, staff, and board members must always be cognizant of the need to carefully consider any administrative expenditures always. Ms. Skelton noted that for future grants, staff is looking forward to building in some bookkeeping assistance funds for the grantee to use prior to submitting documents or requests for funds so that the number of Triumph staff interactions with the grantee because something was not properly submitted to begin with can be reduced. Mr. Merrill agreed with the idea but cautioned that it be done with great care not to cause any concerns at the legislative level.

Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to speak on this issue. No one came forward to speak. **Mr. Merrill then made a motion to direct staff, and the Chair, to proceed in the hiring process for a part-time administrative position and to give the Chair final hiring authority. Mr. Henderson seconded the motion which passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Ms. Skelton asked members to review the documents provided and then sign the Board Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Forms in their meeting packets. She asked members to return those forms to her at the end of the meeting so that she could forward them on the Auditor General's Office.

## **Legal Report**

Legal Counsel Scott Remington gave a review of the proposed 2nd Amendment to Grant Award Agreement for Proposal #198 - Wakulla School Board – UAS/VSO Certification Program including an additional request of \$330,000 for 100 additional certifications (Original award for \$1,780,000). The School Board proposes a match of \$330,000 in funding for the expansion of the project. The expansion will increase training availability at the middle school level.

Dr. Frank Fuller, Education Advisor, indicated that the proposed amendment will help to keep up with demand for the training in the county and provide a more complete pathway for further education at the high school and post-secondary levels in the future. Dr. Rick Harper said that the proposal yields benefits that are in line with the costs. He said that the cost per additional

certificate would be \$3,300 which is well in line with other Triumph funded programs. The program would yield approximately \$25 in additional benefits to family income for every Triumph dollar invested. Triumph staff recommends this expansion of the original program and gives it an economic score of "A".

Dr. Sunny Chancy, Assistant Superintendent of the Wakulla County School District spoke on behalf of the proposed amendment. Dr. Chancy said that the district plans to expand the drone training program into their middle schools and will add two instructors. The Triumph funds would pay for one of those instructors, while the school district would pay for the other one. Mr. Henderson asked if there were plans to find industry partners for students in the training programs. Dr. Chancy indicated that they have already had interest from Eastern Shipbuilding to recruit welding students. While there are not specific jobs at the end of the drone training at this point, the district is encouraging developing skill sets that can translate into market requirements for jobs in the future.

**Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the amendment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Merrill.**

Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to comment on the proposed amendment. No one came forward to speak. **The motion to approve the amendment passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Mr. Remington then gave a status report on discussions with the City of Panama City and Eastern Shipbuilding on Grant Award Agreement for Proposal #185 – Panama City Industrial Complex for \$20,000,000 in response to the U.S. Coast Guard announcement of awarding of future Offshore Patrol Cutter vessels to a company in Mobile, Alabama. He said that counsel and staff have met with the City and Eastern Shipbuilding to assure that the parties are able to proceed with the contract. Mr. Remington explained that after Hurricane Michael, Triumph met with the parties to discuss a way forward if the Coast Guard changed course due to potential delays related to storm damages at the port facility. At that time, changes were made to our original agreement to allow for alternatives to the OPC vessels being produced would be available to be counted towards performance metrics required by Triumph Gulf Coast. After meeting with all parties, counsel and staff believe that the metrics will still be able to be met over the life of the contract. He said there is currently no need to amend our contract. He noted that Eastern Shipbuilding has filed a bid protest with the Coast Guard, and we will continue to follow that process as it moves forward.

Dr. Harper said that while contract circumstances have changed, the metrics of 900 net, new jobs have remained unchanged. The Return-on-Investment ratio has not changed with the loss of the future OPC construction, as the company continues to meet its contract obligations relative to the newly created jobs. The company will continue to produce the first four cutters in the series, and dependent on the outcome of the bid protest, will either gain back the next set of cutter production, or continue on their current growth projections based on new contracts to the facility. New contracts could be government or private sector that produce a like amount of work for the shipbuilders. The unknown variables in the scenario could actually result in an increase in the ROI to be determined by whatever course the federal government takes regarding the bid protest. He said that Triumph staff would be traveling to the Eastern Shipbuilding Group facility next week to assess current staffing levels and to begin the forensic process to assure that job metrics are on course. Initial indications on job creation by the company are strong. Ms. Skelton explained that the original contract called for the job counting to begin at the beginning of construction of the ninth ship, but since that ship will not be constructed under the current

situation, staff determined that it is important to begin the job counting and verification process to assure that the contract remains on course through its duration.

## **Program Administration**

Program Administrator Cori Henderson welcomed the new Board Members and again recognized Dr. Frank Fuller, Triumph's education expert, Mr. Randy Lewis, AIA, our construction consultant, and Dr. Rick Harper our economic advisor.

She explained that, in coordination with herself, Mrs. Jennifer Davidson, CPA, her business partner, Mr. Easton Ramer, CPA, and their staff, and Triumph's Legal Counsel, Mr. Scott Remington and Mr. Alan Manning, this makes up the team that does all intakes, reviews, recommendations and negotiations in the grant award process, as well as providing the oversight, compliance reviews and reimbursements after grants have been awarded. She said that none of this would be possible without the fantastic partnerships we have with the region's economic developers and the grant award recipients.

Triumph's grants are intended to transform the region by increasing household income and so far, the collaborative process has resulted in 50 executed grants totaling over \$350 million including more than \$105 million in education workforce training grants, and more than \$225 million in infrastructure investments, in addition to grants for ad valorem tax reductions and marketing of the region's workforce and infrastructure assets.

The more than \$105M in education workforce training grants have been primarily focused on Career and Technical Education (CTE) and include but are not limited to funding for industry recognized certificates starting in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in rural schools, unmanned systems, airframe, aircraft maintenance and pilot training at multiple locations, a joint venture with the University of Florida and Okaloosa Schools for artificial intelligence curriculum and instruction, a Florida State University new LAB STEM school supporting the post-Michael rebuild of Tyndall Air Force Base, near-doubling of nursing education in the eastern portion of the Triumph region, Cyber Security, new technologies, commercial driving license, welding, pipefitting, carpentry, HVAC, agriculture sciences, emergency management, and fire science to name a few.

These grants have been awarded to seven K-12 School Districts, two universities, four State Colleges, the Walton County Sheriff's Office, and two AMIkids locations. These grants will result in at least 29,977 national industry certifications or milestones in occupational categories most needed in our coastal economy.

The over \$225 million in infrastructure grants include expansions of two seaports, a major bypass to support military missions, an outside the Navy gate aviation industrial park and three industrial parks across the Highway 90 and I-10 corridor with most of those sites committed. Infrastructure job creation projects also include but are not limited to a large aircraft maintenance-repair overhaul campus, electrical transformer manufacturing, pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturing, marine manufacturing, and multiple logistics and distribution facilities which are expected to result in at least 16,273 net new jobs, with all Triumph incentivized jobs paying 115% or more of the area wage. Dr. Harper has calculated that the projects Triumph has invested in so far will result in more than \$800 million in net new family income annually in the region.



Ms. Henderson then proceeded to re-cap her formal Program Administrator's Report which had been previously circulated and posted. She noted that there are 42 active open grants with eight grants already completed. As of last week, Triumph has received 279 pre-applications requesting over \$2 billion for project funding. She said that there are two new pre-applications for nursing training proposals that staff is recommending as statutorily eligible for consideration. Triumph has received 116 applications totaling over \$876 million in requested funding. She pointed out that the regular report contains both a spreadsheet of current proposals status updates and a report from Mr. Lewis detailing all the reviews and site visits performed relative to Triumph funded construction project awards.

Mr. Henderson asked staff to explain what happens when a pre-application is received that is either not statutorily eligible for consideration or does not meet the criteria set by statute and/or the Board for further consideration. Ms. Henderson said that once the Board has approved the recommendations on eligibility, each pre-applicant gets a letter, either inviting the applicant to move forward in the process or explaining why the proposal is not eligible. All pre-applicants, regardless of statutory eligibility, may proceed to the application phase of the process, but staff lets them know that their proposals may not score well. Staff is available to work with pre-applicants to perfect their requests, or to explain why the proposal is not a good fit for this funding source.

**Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the Program Administrator's Report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Humphreys and approved without objection.**

### **Economic Advisor's Report**

Dr. Rick Harper offered a description and recommendation on Proposal #271 – Okaloosa County School District – Health Academy of Northwest Florida for \$1,291,000. The academy will provide industry recognized credentials for completion of training in health care occupations for high school students with match funding provided by both the Okaloosa County School District and its private sector partner, HCA Healthcare. The seven-year program will provide at least 432 Florida Department of Education approved Career and Professional Education (CAPE) certifications. The cost to Triumph Gulf Coast for each certification would be \$2988. The programs that are proposed to be funded by this grant would complement envisioned funding of \$2,374,000 by the school district and its private sector partner with the Triumph share of the proposal being 35.2% which is an attractive ratio for investment. The certifications are to be awarded to high school students who are then expected to either enter the workforce or pursue further education in the health care services sector such as Registered Nursing (RN) and other high wage jobs. This program will allow Okaloosa Technical College to waive the first 300 hours of basic health care training for prospective students who have completed the high school training program. The positive impact per household is expected to be \$27.9 for each dollar of Triumph investment. The Economic Impact Score for this proposal is "A."

Mr. Steve Horton, Deputy Superintendent of the Okaloosa School District, spoke on behalf of the proposed grant award and the project. He gave a brief overview of the project and thanked Triumph Gulf Coast for its consideration. He pointed out that Okaloosa County has historically been known as a leader in Career and Technical Education and is proud of its role in developing new opportunities for such educational programs.

He reported that the Triumph funded project providing development and training for Okaloosa students and faculty in partnership with the University of Florida has, today, 340 eighth and ninth grade students enrolled and taking those Artificial Intelligence classes and earning industry certifications in this cutting-edge field. He pointed out that Okaloosa County has a high number of military families, and their students, in the school system and this program has been of great interest to those families and the military community. He said that the district looks forward to expanding that program to other school districts in Northwest Florida soon.

Mr. Norton said that the proposal being considered today, with a classroom capability literally located on the campus of a major medical facility is “the definition of what pipeline education truly is.” Forty students are currently enrolled in the program and with the support of Triumph Gulf Coast that number will continue to grow to be able to get these and future students the skills they need to be successfully employed in the health care arena. He thanked the Board for its willingness to hear the proposal and thanked staff for its technical support in getting to this point in the process.

Ms. April Branscome, Career and Technical Education Director of the Okaloosa County School District, thanked the Board for its consideration and said that the process has taken over a year so far, but she is very excited for the future. She said the hospital has been very supportive of the program and has dedicated 6400 square feet of hospital space for the classrooms needed for training. There will be two classrooms and two labs on the hospital campus. The school district will partner with Okaloosa Technical College and is reaching out to other education facilities in the region to maximize use of the classroom and lab spaces and the number of students that can be enrolled in the program.

Students completing the two-year high school program will have earned a CNA, EKG, or potentially other industry certifications that will allow them to move directly into the workforce and/or continue their education. HCA Florida has committed to hiring students and to providing tuition assistance for those wanting to continue their post-secondary education in health services. Ms. Branscome said that this year’s program is open to Juniors and Seniors. Starting next year, the program will open to Sophomores. When those Sophomores become Seniors, they will be enrolled in a dual-enrollment program with the first year of their college being paid for prior to high school graduation.

Mr. Henderson made a motion to direct staff to move to Term Sheet negotiations with the Okaloosa School District for Proposal #271 – Health Academy of Northwest Florida for \$1,291,000. The motion was seconded by Mr. Merrill.

Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the recommendation. No one came forward to speak. The motion was passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)

### **Recognition of Service**

Chair Bear recognized the service of our Immediate Past Chair of the Triumph Board, The Honorable Don Gaetz who was a Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives appointee

and served on the Board from June 30, 2017 until June 29, 2022. He noted that President Gaetz is present at the meeting today and thanked him for all that he has done to create and lead this organization.

Chair Bear said that the entire state of Florida, and especially the Northwest Florida region, owes President Gaetz an enormous amount of gratitude because he had the foresight and dedication to assure that the impacts of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill would not have lasting negative effects on the coastal counties most disproportionately affected by that horrible event. His work to assure that the funds needed to repair the economy of our region were secured for the benefit of the future economy of the region cannot go unrecognized, and the residents of this part of Florida will be forever grateful for all that he has done, both as a legislator, as Senate President, and serving as the Chair of this Board for the past four years.

Mr. Henderson said that the work done by President Gaetz to get Triumph to where it is today has been incredible and that the current Board plans to follow his lead. He offered his thanks for all that President Gaetz has meant to the Board and to the state of Florida.

Mr. Merrill said that he vividly remembers that when he was appointed to the Board, the only direction he received from President Gaetz was, "Don't screw this up." He said that the Board must listen to those words and realize what a huge responsibility the state has given this organization to perform a critical function for the people of the region. One mistake could cause the entire funding resource to be taken away to the detriment of the future generations of residents of our region. The impact of this funding over the next fifty years in the Panhandle is tremendous and it is up to us, the Board members of today, to protect the good work done by our predecessors and to carry that good work forward. He said that without the leadership of Don Gaetz, none of this would have happened and none of the positive outcomes we are seeing today would have happened. He thanked President Gaetz again for all that he has done for all the residents of Northwest Florida.

Ms. Skelton read a letter into the record from former Board Chair and former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, The Honorable Allan G. Bense. Speaker Bense was unable to attend the meeting, but provided his comments in writing:

*Please read this out loud at the end of the meeting when Chairman Gaetz is honored.*

*To Triumph Gulf Coast Board Members, Staff, and others present, please allow me to say a few words.*

*To staff and everyone else, you will recall last month, as I said my goodbyes, I thanked all of you for a job well done. And once again I thank you for your service.*

*But now it's time to say a few things about Chairman Gaetz. First of all, he is my dear friend, counselor and windmill tilting soldier along with me and Don Quixote. He has lived his life serving people and in doing so has proven to be a classic Servant Leader. Were it not for his vision, Triumph Gulf Coast would never have been established. The guidelines, rules, and standards he established for Triumph have provided a clear path on how to properly manage \$1.5 Billion for our little neck of the woods up here. What great foresight!*

*Recently, a major Regional Newspaper compared how the state of Mississippi basically squandered their BP money, while Florida, via Triumph Gulf Coast, has done an outstanding job of creating new jobs and expanding the economy of the Panhandle. Don Gaetz, take a bow!*

*It gets better. We just received the Auditor General's Operational Audit for 2020-2021. Guess what. It said, "our audit did not disclose any reportable conditions regarding the administration of Triumph.....". That is unreal, and it is because of your outstanding leadership of this entity, and all of this money we control, that we received such a flattering report.*

*Under your outstanding leadership, we have put out into the marketplace hundreds of millions of dollars to fund good, solid, projects that will generate tens of thousands of jobs in the years to come. And all of this with absolutely no negative news articles or controversy. You have been careful not to swing for the fences; that can get you in trouble. Instead, you hit little bunts, singles, and maybe an occasional double- but you are putting runs on the scoreboard.*

*I want to close with a few words about Don Gaetz on a personal basis. But first everyone needs to put their political hat aside for a moment. Many of you in this room will recall the eulogy that Ted Kennedy gave for his brother Robert Kennedy over 50 years ago. It is a classic, packed full of wonderful descriptions of his brother. I feel the same about Chairman Gaetz. "Some men see things as they are and say why. Don Gaetz, ever the Servant leader, dreams things that never were and says why not!"*

*To everyone in the room, I must confess that I do not like Don Gaetz. I love Don Gaetz.*

*Thank you for allowing this to be read.*

*Allan Bense*

Mr. Remington thanked NWFSC for putting a face on the work that Triumph has done today, both with presentations by Deputy Kane and Ms. Madano, and through the posters scattered around the meeting room highlighting success stories created by this partnership. None of these successes would have been possible without the leadership of Don Gaetz. Mr. Remington said that it is well known that Gaetz is the visionary and the architect of the legislation, but that more credit is due for his tenure as Chair of the Triumph Gulf Coast Board. He has led this group through incredibly challenging times and put together guardrails and safeguards for the organization such that we have never made a bad grant, we have never had to enforce a clawback. All of this was created and implemented with the backdrop of not only the oil spill, but with Hurricanes Michael and Sally, which were devastating to parts of the region, at the pandemic outbreak of COVID-19 which impacted every part of everyone's lives. He said that the calm guidance of Don Gaetz was instrumental in keeping this Board intact and moving forward, no matter what the challenge may have been. He thanked President Gaetz for keeping the staff challenged throughout the process to meet his high standards and said that his leadership has made us all better professionals and better people.

Ms. Skelton closed with a reference to a plaque found on the FSU-Panama City Barron Administration Building and said that on that plaque was a poem that was one of her former boss', Dempsey Barron's, favorite poems that he picked to be placed on that building when it was opened back in the 1980s. She said that the poem seemed fitting in this arena today and paraphrased a quote from "The Builder" poem. She said that the poem was about an older man who toiled mightily to construct a bridge across a "chasm deep and wide." When asked why he worked so hard, the old man replied that the bridge was not for him, but for all those that will come behind him. Ms. Skelton said that Don Gaetz truly exemplified the message of that poem, and that all of the work done by him to bring Triumph Gulf Coast to this point will certainly benefit all who come after him.

Chair Bear said that his parents had hoped to be here today but were unable to attend.

President Gaetz made brief thank you remarks and said that he has been very fortunate to serve on the Board with such remarkable members and staff over the years. He said that what matters now is the future of the organization. He said that while \$350 million has been awarded to date, that leaves almost \$1.2 billion that is now in this new Board's hands to invest in the future of our region. He said that this group has the opportunity to do much more than the previous board members have done and to do much more good for the region. He said that in our area, where the creation of fifty new jobs has a real impact on a community, that the responsibility of this board is immense in making good, sound business decision for the good of the entire region. These projects that you consider can truly transform our economies and our communities. The defining moment for Triumph will not come when you make a grant, even a wonderful, big, promising grant. The defining moment will come when a grant goes sideways, when a return on investment begins to fall off the table, jobs aren't created, the matching funds don't quite come in. That is the time when all eyes will be looking at this board, when all of the politicians, and legislators across the state, will be looking out for their own constituents, and we never want them to be able to say that Triumph Gulf Coast is like all of those other economic development entities, where money goes in and maybe some good things come out, but a lot of money gets lost. The goal is for that never to happen because if it does happen, the money will be lost to our communities. He said that things happen, and that is when the people of Northwest Florida will be so fortunate to have the business judgement of the people who serve on this board. People who know how to deal with success, with performance, with failure and with recovery to make sure that the most is made of this funding to assure the important, transformative outcomes that the people of our area hope for can be realized.

President Gaetz thanked the Board for allowing him to come to the meeting today and said that he looks forward to the future good news of Triumph Gulf Coast. Chair Bear then presented President Gaetz with a memento of his service and invited him to come back to "heckle" the Board whenever he chooses to attend.

### **Public Comment**

No one came forward to speak.

### **Closing Remarks**

Mr. Henderson said he looks forward to working with the new members and said this is a very exciting time and that we have been given a lot to work with by President Gaetz and those that came before us. He gave a shout out to Walton County to bring the Board some good projects

that will bring more economic development to the county. He said he hopes the county will be bringing some great projects soon.

Mr. Merrill congratulated Chair Bear on his first meeting and said he looks forward to getting to know and work with the new members.

Mr. Trumbull said that the word that comes to mind when he thinks about President Gaetz and the vision, he had for Triumph Gulf Coast is "brilliant." He said the execution of the vision has been amazing, and as a new guy looking in from the outside, he just wanted to say thank you. He said he looks forward to learning from members and staff and to doing good work on the board.

Mr. Humphreys said that this first meeting has been great and very enlightening. He said it is exciting to see all of these new opportunities coming forward and that he is happy to be a part of the team and happy to meet everyone.

Mr. Corr said that he really liked hearing about all of the projects, and especially hearing about the long-lasting impacts that will come from them. He said he looks forward to working with everyone.

Chair Bear welcomed all of the new members and thanked staff for the "unbelievable hard work" behind the scenes to make things happen. He thanked all of the applicants that bring these wonderful opportunities for consideration and said that as of now, the new official title for Mr. Gaetz is "Friend."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:08 p.m. CT.