

**Meeting Minutes  
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.  
Gulf Coast State College  
Panama City, Florida 32401  
December 11, 2024  
11:00 a.m. CT**

**Members Present:**

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

Chair David Bear called the meeting to order at 11:10 AM CT. Ms. Susan Skelton, Executive Director, called roll and announced the presence of a quorum.

Chair Bear introduced a special guest, Mr. Mark McQueen, Superintendent of Bay County Schools, and Former City Manager of Panama City. Mr. McQueen thanked the Chair for his introduction and stated that it is a real privilege to serve the great community of Panama City. He said it is a team effort and he could not be prouder of the Bay County faculty, staff, administrators, and community for getting behind what they are striving to accomplish.

The first item on the agenda was review and approval of the October 15th Board meeting minutes. **On a motion by Mr. Reynolds Henderson and seconded by Mr. Jay Trumbull, Sr., the October 15, 2024, Meeting Minutes were approved without objection.**

Chair Bear introduced Mr. Glen McDonald, President of Gulf Coast State College, and thanked him for hosting the Triumph Board at the college. He then invited President McDonald to speak.

Mr. McDonald expressed his delight that the Triumph Board chose Gulf Coast State College for their meeting venue this month. Then he provided an update on Triumph Project #207, the Gulf/Franklin Campus Nursing Simulation Center.

Mr. McDonald explained that the nursing programs at Gulf Coast State College are designed entirely to build upon each other seamlessly. An individual can begin with a certified nursing assistant license (CNA), progress to a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), or advance further to a Registered Nurse (RN) and ultimately pursue a Bachelor of Science Nursing degree.

He reminded everyone that Project #207 was approved in January of 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 outbreak, which produced a lot of challenges for them, including supply chain

challenges, construction delays, and limited access to nursing homes to perform activities. Additionally, the practical nursing program adjusted clinical hours to the hospital rehabilitation settings and used simulation instead of working in the nursing home during that time to meet its training requirements.

Mr. McDonald reported that the A-building remodel at the Gulf/Franklin Campus was fully completed in December of 2022 and has been in use since January 2023 for class laboratory skills and simulation. The D-105 Simulation Center remodel has been utilized by 100% of their practical nursing and LPN to ADN graduates for clinical time, and by Q3 of 2024, Project #207 had earned 280 certifications and licenses. By the end of 2024, an additional 11 licenses will have been earned bringing the total to 291 licenses, surpassing the grant award requirements. Their project completion date is still set for 2027. The Certified Nursing Assistant program now has 21 CNA graduates, and 100% of their CNA graduates work in the local area. The Practical Nursing program, after Triumph funding, now has 72 available seats, versus only 36 originally. 100% of their Practical Nursing graduates obtained their licensure on their first attempt. The LPN program is a one-year full-time program with 48 program seats. 95% of their LPN graduates work in the local area. The LPN-ADN Program (RN Program) is the ultimate registration license. In 2023, GCSC had 35 total graduates, and in the Spring 2023 cohort, they had 21 graduates with a passing rate of 100% on the national NCLEX test on the first attempt. Graduates of this program take a national test to get their RN certification and receive an associate degree at the same time. Mr. McDonald thanked the Triumph Board and staff for their flexibility, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also reminded the Board that by the end of the month, GCSC will have met its goal of certifications one year early and the college will continue to provide all the programs that they are currently providing under the grant. In closing, he thanked the Triumph Board and staff on behalf of the students and everyone at Gulf Coast State College for their funding of the Gulf Franklin Nursing Simulation Center.

Chair Bear thanked President McDonald and congratulated him on the successes GCSC has already experienced. Mr. Corr commented that Project #207 is a great example of a program that turned into a great success for everyone, and he thanked Mr. McDonald for that. Mrs. Weiss congratulated Mr. McDonald on GCSC's 100% pass rate on the NCLEX. She commented that she understands it is quite a feat as her daughter is also an RN. Mr. McDonald thanked the Board and staff for their support and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Mrs. Jennifer Davidson, CPA, presented the October financial statements. She stated that Triumph had total assets of \$626 million as of October 31, 2024. The Statement of Activity shows funds distributed in October were \$8.3 million, and the Statement of Activity for the Ten Months Ended October 31, 2024 shows funds distributed were \$62 million. The budget to actual comparison for the month of October shows Triumph Gulf Coast under budget for administrative costs by about \$10,000. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the October Financial Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Leslie Weiss and approved without objection.**

Mrs. Davidson then presented the November financial statements. She stated that Triumph had total assets of \$622 million as of November 30, 2024. The Statement of Activity shows funds distributed in November were \$6.2 million, and the Statement of Activity for the Eleven Months

Ended November 30, 2024 shows funds distributed were \$68.3 million. The budget to actual comparison for the Eleven Months Ended November 30th shows Triumph Gulf Coast under budget for administrative costs by about \$116,000. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the November Financial Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weiss and approved without objection.**

Mrs. Davidson reported that Mr. Henderson approved Triumph's 2023 Federal Tax Return and that she had also reviewed it prior to Mr. Henderson's review with a few corrections made. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the 2023 Federal Tax Return as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Trumbull and approved without objection.**

Mrs. Davidson shared copies of the proposed 2025 Operating Budget with the Board. Chair Bear asked if there were questions or comments on the proposed budget. Ms. Skelton took a moment to outline a few items in the budget including: a 5% rate increase for Triumph's IT services, proposed adjustments to contracts and salaries, the funds to replace two Mac Book computers that are at end of life, SmartSheet licenses for new hires, and SmartSheet training time. Additionally, at the recommendation of the Treasurer, travel budget for staff will be reduced from \$9,000 to \$5,000. As Mr. Henderson explained, when he studied the travel budget line over the years, he noted expenditures were remarkably underbudget, so it seemed wise to reduce the amount allocated. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the Proposed 2025 Operating Budget as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weiss.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposed budget. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on roll call vote (6-0.)**

### **Staff Report**

Ms. Skelton noted that the Legislative Session is scheduled for March of 2025. They have made Chair assignments and await their committees to be populated.

Ms. Skelton announced that the 2023-24 Auditor General Audit results are now in, and for the seventh year in a row, Triumph Gulf Coast has received a 100% clean audit.

### **Performance Review Committee Annual Meeting**

Ms. Skelton said that the Performance Review Committee met just prior to this meeting and prepared a report and recommendations for the Board's consideration. The committee was comprised of Vice Chair Trumbull (Committee Chair), Mr. Bryan Corr, Sr., Mr. David Humphreys, and Mrs. Weiss. Ms. Skelton then requested that Committee Chair Trumbull share their report and recommendations with the Board.

Mr. Trumbull shared that the Committee reviewed and approved Ms. Skelton's performance and recommended an increase in her salary. Following this announcement, Mr. Trumbull requested that Ms. Skelton present the remainder of the report.

Ms. Skelton reported that the Committee discussed the annual review of professional service contracts and recommended the continuation of all current contracts including those with Tipton Marler (CPA services) and Clark Partington (legal services).

Ms. Skelton reminded the Board of Mr. Randy Lewis' very challenging health issues this year and noted that while Mr. Lewis continues to work despite those issues, the Board and staff is happy that he is recovering nicely, and the Committee recommends continuation of Mr. Lewis'

Letter of Engagement with Triumph at the same rate as last year. Due to Mr. Lewis' limitations in performing some duties, Chair Bear approved the addition of Mr. Harold Branch as a second construction management advisor. Mr. Branch is handling on-site visits and working alongside Mr. Lewis as his backup. The Committee recommended the continuation of Mr. Branch's contract.

Ms. Skelton noted that every member of the Triumph staff team does stellar work. She commended Ms. Cori Henderson, Program Administrator, for taking on additional management responsibilities while continuing her operational compliance work. Due to her exceptional performance, the Committee recommended an increase in Ms. Henderson's pay.

Ms. Skelton also mentioned that, due to time constraints on discussion of issues related to the Economic and Education Advisors, the committee postponed their report and will present it at a future meeting.

The Performance Review Committee approved the promotion of Ms. Theresa Baker to Grant Compliance Manager with a corresponding pay increase.

Ms. Margaret Hitchcock was introduced and welcomed as a new hire. Since she is new, no performance review was necessary, but Ms. Skelton expressed excitement about her joining the team and working with Ms. Baker to get up to speed on compliance issues.

Ms. Juliet Milam, who has been with Triumph for a year, is recommended for an increased assignment based on her job performance. The committee approved an increase in her hours and rate to reflect her growing responsibilities.

Ms. Cecily Kopytchak, Administrative Assistant, continues to provide great support by managing meeting minutes, preparing press releases, and assisting with the Semi-Annual Report to the Governor and Legislature. The committee approved an increase in her hourly rate to reflect her growing responsibilities.

**Mr. Henderson made a motion to accept the recommendations in the Performance Review Committee report as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weiss and approved unanimously on a roll call vote.**

Ms. Skelton reminded the Board that Triumph has a report due on December 30 to the Governor, Legislature, Cabinet and Legislative Delegation outlining Triumph activities for the last six months. Staff will be working to finalize the report after the meeting and will need the approval from the Board to direct staff to complete the report and receive the Chair's approval before sending to the Governor, Legislature, Cabinet and Congress members. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to direct staff to complete the report and obtain the Chair's approval before staff sends to Governor, Legislature, Cabinet and Congress members. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weiss and approved without objection.**

## **Legal Report**

### **Annual Election of Officers**

Mr. Scott Remington, legal counsel, introduced the next order of business before the Board - the election of officers for the Triumph Board for a term of one year, beginning January 1, 2025.

Mr. Jay Trumbull, Sr. was nominated for the position of Chair by Mr. Bear and the nomination was seconded by Mr. Henderson. There were no further nominations and no objections. **The position of Chair will be filled by Mr. Trumbull by acclamation.**

Mr. David Humphreys was nominated for the position of Vice-Chair by Mr. Trumbull and his nomination was seconded by Mr. Henderson. There were no further nominations and no objections. **The position of Vice-Chair will be filled by Mr. Humphreys by acclamation.**

Mrs. Leslie Weiss was nominated for the position of Treasurer by Mr. Henderson and the nomination was seconded by Mr. Bear. There were no further nominations and no objections. **The position of Treasurer will be filled by Mrs. Weiss by acclamation.**

Mr. Bryan Corr, Sr., was nominated for the position of Assistant Treasurer by Mr. Henderson and the nomination was seconded by Mr. Trumbull. There were no further nominations and no objections. **The position of Assistant Treasurer will be filled by Mr. Corr by acclamation.**

Ms. Susan Skelton was nominated for the position of Secretary by Mr. Bear and the nomination was seconded by Mr. Henderson. There were no further nominations and no objections. **The position of Secretary will be filled by Ms. Skelton by acclamation.**

The Board then discussed the signers for the State of Florida PRIME account. It was recommended that the new signers be Mr. Trumbull, Mr. Humphreys, and Mrs. Weiss, representing three of the newly elected 2025 Triumph officers. Chair Bear asked the Board if there was any debate or discussion. Seeing none, **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the signatories as presented for the Triumph PRIME account. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weiss and approved without objection.**

The Board then discussed the signers for the checking account. It was recommended that the new signers be Mr. Trumbull, Mr. Humphreys and Mrs. Weiss, and Mr. Corr, representing four of the newly elected 2025 Triumph officers. Chair Bear asked the Board if there was any debate or discussion. Seeing none, **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the signatories as presented for the Triumph checking account. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weiss and approved without objection.**

Mr. Remington then introduced the next item for discussion - renewal of the general commercial corporate insurance and Directors and Officers liability policy. He reminded the Board that last year they voted to increase the policy from \$1 million to \$5 million with a premium of \$39,529.05. Upon renewal, there will be a policy increase by \$99 this year, and legal counsel and staff requests the Board's approval to move forward with execution. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the renewal of the D&O Policy as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weiss.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposal. **The motion passed unanimously on roll call vote (6-0.)**

As an informational item, Mr. Remington reminded the Board that last year they discussed the possibility of adding an additional cybersecurity policy to their insurance package. He noted that they did not proceed with it last year, but for further consideration this year, they have a quote for \$1 million worth of coverage in cybersecurity insurance for \$19,000/year. Staff recommends that the Board further discuss the potential risks and benefits and revisit this item at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Remington then yielded the floor to Mr. Alan Manning, legal counsel, who proceeded to report on grant awards and amendments up for approval.

Mr. Manning noted that since the first four amendments all involved Santa Rosa County, for efficiency purposes, he requested to present all the amendments at once and then provide time for Mr. Shannon Ogletree to speak before for the vote.

First, Mr. Manning introduced **Proposed Third Amendment to Grant Award Agreement #209 – Santa Rosa County Commission – I-10 Industrial Park – NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS**. This amendment provides for a match deadline date extension, creates a compliance budget category, and reallocates \$59,353 over seven years. It also updates the audit requirement language to the Triumph standard.

Second, Mr. Manning introduced **Proposed Second Amendment to Grant Award Agreement #240 – Santa Rosa County Commission – Santa Rosa Industrial Park East – NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS**. This amendment creates a compliance budget category and reallocates \$59,353 over seven years. It also updates the audit requirement language to the Triumph standard.

Third, Mr. Manning introduced **Proposed Second Amendment to Grant Award Agreement #251 – Santa Rosa County Commission – Milton Interchange Park – NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS**. This amendment creates a compliance budget category and reallocates \$118,705 over seven years, and it extends a match deadline to December 31st, 2028, for the private company. It also updates the audit requirement language to the Triumph standard.

Fourth, Mr. Manning introduced **Proposed First Amendment to Grant Award Agreement #331 – Santa Rosa County Commission – Bagdad Distribution Center – NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS**. This amendment creates a compliance budget category, reallocates \$83,094 to that category over seven years, increases company match to \$553,576, and shifts \$132,424 of pre-award match to 2027 to better reflect construction timing.

Chair Bear then invited Mr. Shannon Ogletree, Director of Santa Rosa EDO, to speak on behalf of Santa Rosa County. Mr. Ogletree thanked the Board for entertaining the amendments, and explained that his office, comprised solely of three employees, is tasked with managing almost \$50 million in Triumph grant funds, so they are requesting reallocation of existing Triumph granted funds to pay an additional employee for up to 32 hours a week for the next 7 years to help with compliance oversight. He noted that it has been a challenge for the three of them to keep up with invoices for the construction projects, to track the private construction dollars and to monitor the policies and procedures of the private companies to ensure the matches are there, so this reallocation of funding would be essential to allowing them to seek additional assistance with compliance.

Mr. Corr asked Mr. Ogletree how much money he anticipates needing to cover compliance in all four projects, and Mr. Ogletree stated that the amount should be under \$400k over a seven-year period. He explained that working with the companies to educate them on compliance is more of a challenge than they recognized in the beginning.

Mr. Corr thanked Mr. Ogletree for the estimate and noted that this information regarding cost of compliance is helpful for the Triumph Board to understand since the more recent, larger projects that Triumph is funding have different needs than earlier projects in terms of complexity.

**Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the Proposed Amendments for Grant Award Agreements #209, #240, #251, and #331 and Mr. Corr seconded the motion.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposals. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Mr. Manning then introduced the **Proposed Third Amendment to Grant Award Agreement #257 – Pensacola State College – Cybersecurity and IT Programs Expansion– NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.** This amendment reallocates remaining construction funds to the student fee waivers category and updates audit requirement language.

Chair Bear invited Dr. Debbie Douma, Dean of Grants and Federal Programs at Pensacola State College to speak. Dr. Douma thanked the Triumph Board for their consideration of this request. She noted that the remaining construction funds from their project were mostly due to cost savings or instances where they did not have to pay tax, so they are requesting reallocation of those funds to benefit students of the participating project with fee waivers. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the Proposed Third Amendment and Mr. Humphreys seconded the motion.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposal. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Mr. Manning introduced the **Proposed Second Amendment to Grant Award Agreement #264 – Wakulla County School District – War Eagle Career Academy – NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.** This amendment shifts remaining construction category funds to CTE equipment category and updates audit requirement language. Ms. Cori Henderson noted that, due to a last-minute change, Priscilla Colvin, Executive Director of Academics at Wakulla County School District was unable to be there to speak. She explained that for this project the building has been completed, and since these line items are for equipment purchases that had been envisioned for the program, Triumph staff sees them as equipment versus part of the construction of the facility, so staff is requesting to shift the funds into that category. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the Proposed Second Amendment and Mrs. Weiss seconded the motion.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposal. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Mr. Manning then introduced the **Proposed First Amendment to Grant Award Agreement #270 – Northwest Florida State College – Nursing Program Expansion – NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.** This amendment shifts \$3,521,677 from the personnel category to the construction category to cover unforeseen cost increases, shifts \$30,000 from professional development to recruitment due to delay in construction, and updates audit requirement language.

Chair Bear invited Dr. Cristie Kedroski to speak on behalf of Northwest Florida State College. Dr. Kedroski thanked Chair Bear and the Board for the opportunity. She provided a quick update on Northwest Florida State College and mentioned that they are looking forward to welcoming President-Elect Mel Ponder who will be joining them on January 2nd. Dr. Kedroski also explained that relative to the nursing building in particular, construction cost was higher than expected since the building is 50 years old. She commented that there were some concerns

with asbestos and the timing of the construction was such that materials and other expenses cost more than originally anticipated. That is why they are requesting a reallocation of \$3.5 million dollars. In conclusion, she announced that they should receive the keys to the finished building in April or May, giving them the summer to load in equipment, and prepare for students in the Fall of 2025. They hope to welcome the Triumph Board to the new facility then. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the Proposed First Amendment and Mr. Trumbull seconded the motion.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposal. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Mr. Manning introduced the **Proposed First Amendment to Grant Award Agreement #299 – Pensacola State College – Diesel Mechanic Training - NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.** This amendment creates a compliance budget category and corrects a scrivener's error in the original grant award agreement to reflect completion date of December 31, 2034. Ms. Henderson noted that this proposed amendment was requested by staff as it relates to discussion at the last Board meeting regarding compliance costs. PSC is now moving to shift the compliance costs to its own individual category, so that the Board can see those costs and staff can track them separately from the personnel category. She also noted that since PSC has several Triumph grants, staff wanted to go ahead and align their grants as similarly as possible on the budget categories.

Chair Bear invited Dr. Debbie Douma, Dean of Grants and Federal Programs at Pensacola State College to speak. Dr. Douma thanked the Triumph staff for their tremendous help with the compliance piece of these projects. She realizes it is a burden on Triumph as well as a burden on PSC, but they appreciate all the assistance that they receive. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the Proposed First Amendment and Mr. Corr seconded the motion.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposal. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Mr. Manning then introduced the **Proposed Fourth Amendment to Grant Award Agreement #233 – IHMC Center for Human Healthspan.** This amendment provides for an additional \$529,930 for the budget category of compliance and increases required match by \$1,589,790. Chair Bear invited Mr. Ryan Tilley, Director of Strategic Program Execution and Innovation, to speak on behalf of IHMC. Mr. Tilley thanked the Board and staff for their input and conversation to help develop a plan that is agreeable to all parties. Mr. Henderson asked for clarification on whether this amendment would be backdating anything, and Mr. Tilley assured him that it would not – it is all moving forward. Mrs. Weiss asked whether the amount requested was based on a certain number of hours per month for compliance and inquired as to how they came up with that number. Mr. Tilley explained that they looked out across a bookkeeper level and developed a salary. They looked at the existing grant they have now and the pending grant on today's agenda and broke that out to 60-75%. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to approve the Proposed Fourth Amendment and Mr. Corr seconded the motion.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposal. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed on a roll call vote (5-1, Humphreys-No.)**

Next, Mr. Manning introduced a **Proposed Term Sheet for Proposal #338 – NWFL Beaches International Airport – Project Spinner – up to \$25,000,000.** This project would support the expansion of operations of a private aviation company, including the construction of an approximately 100,000 sq ft MRO facility including but not limited to site work, foundations, utility extensions, parking areas, and other facility requirements to recruit Project Spinner. The



company has committed to create 500 new jobs in Bay County with an average wage of \$60,000 and a capital investment of at least \$107,500,000. The proposed MRO facility will be constructed and owned by Space Florida on Airport Authority property. The company will enter into a 30-year lease with Space Florida. At the end of the building lease, the facility's ownership will revert to the Airport Authority.

Chair Bear invited Ms. Becca Hardin, President/CEO of Bay County Board of Economic Development Alliance, to speak on behalf of Project Spinner. Accompanying Ms. Hardin were Parker McClellan, Airport Executive Director and Mark Sheldon, Chair of the Board for Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport. Ms. Hardin stated that this is a game-changing project not only for Bay County, but for the entire Triumph region. According to some economic impact data that Triumph Economic Advisor Dr. Rick Harper compiled, over the next five to seven years, this project will generate more than \$500 million for the local economy. The project is threefold: 1) The company has already purchased an existing facility in the City of Lynn Haven in Bay County. 2) They are also proposing to build a 120,000 square foot facility at The Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) that has access to a 10,000-foot runway, and 3) then adjacent to that facility, there will be an engine test cell. Since there are only a handful of test cells within the southeast right now, the company is having to truck their engines all the way to Michigan just to have them tested, so having a test cell in this community will be substantial. This project will create 500 new jobs and capital investment of \$107 million, and it is the single largest new company announcement that has ever been made through the Bay Airport Authority partnership. Ms. Hardin noted that this project could not have been accomplished without the support of Triumph Gulf Coast and its incredible staff. She then requested that the Board please approve the Term Sheet so that they might get to work on this amazing project. Ms. Hardin additionally credited Jennifer Conoley and her team at Florida's Great Northwest for generating this lead. She mentioned that her team met with the company initially in Chicago early this year and then they started getting traction from that. They also were very involved in another Triumph project, the InSPIRE program, and they are starting to see the aviation cluster coming to fruition with all the partners that Triumph has supported. Ms. Hardin closed by thanking Triumph again for all their support. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to direct staff to approve the Proposed Term Sheet and move forward with grant award negotiations and Mr. Trumbull seconded the motion.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposal. Seeing none - **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Mr. Manning introduced a **Proposed Term Sheet for Proposal #324 – Walton County Board of County Commissioners – Public Safety Communications System – up to \$20,152,671.** Funding of this project would allow Walton County to upgrade its public safety communication system with the purchase of a new county-wide P25 interoperable land mobile radio (LMR) system.

Chair Bear invited Mr. Tracey Vause, Chief of Emergency Services, Walton Sherriff's Office, to speak on behalf of the Walton County Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Vause thanked the Board on behalf of the Walton County Board of County Commissioners for consideration of this project. He stated that this project is going to provide a tremendous benefit to Walton and Bay counties, as it combines three communications cores and adds up to 21 total towers in Walton County to improve resilience and response during disasters. It is something Walton County has needed for a generation, and they are very appreciative of Triumph's support. **Mr. Trumbull**

**made a motion to approve the Proposed Term Sheet and to direct staff to move forward with grant award negotiations. Mrs. Weiss seconded the motion.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposal. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed on a roll call vote (5-0. Henderson abstained)**

Mr. Manning then introduced a **Proposed Term Sheet for Proposal #330 - University of West Florida – Watercraft and Vessel Engineering (WAVE) – up to \$3,320,000.** UWF is requesting funding to start up a Center for Water and Vessel Engineering (WAVE). The WAVE program will be located primarily at the Port of Pensacola but with additional space on the UWF Pensacola campus. It will serve as a research and development center for vessel engineering and related fields by connecting UWF faculty with organizations such as the American Magic.

Chair Bear invited Dr. Michael Reynolds, Chair of Mechanical Engineering and Construction Management, to speak on behalf of University of West Florida. Dr. Reynolds thanked the Board and staff for their support of this project. He noted that he has been in communication with American Magic Skipper Terry Hutchinson and some other folks downtown, and they are very excited for the opportunity to work with UWF students. In Mr. Merrill's absence and stead, Chair Bear commented that all the sailing and foiling activity that's happening is exciting, and he appreciates that the University stepping up to participate and assist with continued growth. **Mr. Henderson made a motion to direct staff to approve the Proposed Term Sheet and move forward with grant award negotiations and Mr. Humphreys seconded the motion.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the proposal. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

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

Prior to her formal report, Ms. Cori Henderson noted that it is often pointed out that Triumph dollars have been invested differently in each county. The benefit of this is each community has been able to maintain their own identity and priorities while the combined investments are transforming the entire region.

Transformation does not occur without growing pains. She calls this stage the "messy middle." The Board has seen some of the messy middle through the many amendments brought forward this year and by the comments of Grantees in their own annual reports. Knowing that partnership is necessary between Triumph and grantees, especially in the messy middle stage, she assured the Board that the staff team has spent 2024 meeting with all the workforce education projects to provide support and guidance, and they have begun meetings with the job creators.

There are a lot of success stories across the Triumph portfolio. In advance of the formal report's statutorily required Annual Report review and the Board's vote to continue funding or not for each grant, she shared a brief overview of some of the 2024 success stories.

Starting in the East, the \$20M War Eagle Career Academy grant to Wakulla Schools broke ground in September last year, and this fall, only one year later, students started taking classes in the building. The War Eagle Academy was featured during the recruitment process for Projects Boomer and Safety who both expressed the importance of it in their consideration of Wakulla and their workforce hiring plans.

Last year Franklin County began efforts to prioritize the economic development potential of the Apalachicola Airport and in December 2023, Triumph convened state and regional economic development entities at the airport for a meeting with the county. The momentum in 2024 has been impressive. The county attended a major MRO air show with Florida's Great Northwest on a scholarship from Opportunity Florida, they hosted a 2nd site visit from an aviation manufacturing company and hosted the Forgotten Coast Freedom Festival at the airport to build community support and interest. The festival was attended by the Commander of 325th Fighter Wing from Tyndall AFB and our own Mrs. Weiss and Triumph Education Advisor Dr. Frank Fuller. Franklin County also completed their first Triumph grant this fall, an emergency response equipment improvement project at the airport.

Gulf School District was an early Triumph grantee, and this fall the Welding expansion project appears to have earned all its industry certifications. Earlier this spring, the Wewahitchka HS students won the 3rd Annual Lively Tech Regional Welding Competition for the second year in a row. Gulf County also saw competitive project site visits this year including a recent announced unmanned systems company, that while not a Triumph project can provide future employment opportunities for the students in the Triumph funded Gulf Schools Unmanned Systems program.

In Bay County, The Collegiate High School at FSU completed its first school year and earned an "A" grade from the state. Earlier this spring Triumph staff confirmed the Panama City Eastern Ship Building project had met its 900 net new job creation commitment early. Regularly noted in reports from surrounding rural school districts is ESG's commitment to supporting local welding programs by sponsoring events and offering field trips for students to learn about future employment opportunities.

The Walton Sheriff's workforce education project, another early Triumph grant, earned the final of its 562 certs in 2024, also ahead of schedule. Walton School District is under construction for a new health science facility funded by Triumph that will offer students the opportunity to learn in a mock hospital setting. Triumph staff continues to work closely with the School District, Seaside and DeFuniak Springs on new grant requests.

In Okaloosa, the school district closed on and began renovating the building that will house the new north campus of Okaloosa Technical College in Crestview. And this fall the Shoal River Ranch Mega Site, water and sewer extension project was completed. This grant was the Triumph Board's first true spec construction project, and it has resulted in the announcement by Central Maloney of the location of their next NWFL facility and at least 350 new high wage jobs. Shoal River Ranch has since received grant funding from the Governor's Job Growth Grant Fund for road work and has been shortlisted for several competitive job creation projects.

Santa Rosa County saw significant job creation activity at Triumph funded industrial parks this year including Hershey's opening the doors at its new distribution facility this Fall and the ground breakings for Leonardo Helicopter, Buffalo Rock and Specialized Products with more company ground breakings scheduled in 2025. At the Santa Rosa Industrial Park East, Pensacola State College utilized remaining Triumph construction funds to add lighting to the CDL training track, allowing them to expand classes into the evening to help meet workforce needs of new and existing companies.

In Escambia, this Fall the City of Pensacola began renovations at the port facility American Magic will move into. The Board for Lift, aka Project Laser, is taking up its final approval this month for conduit financing through Space Florida for the new R&D facility on PSC's campus.

UWF began enrolling students in their expanded Direct Entry Master's Degree and Evening Weekend Bachelor's Degree Nursing programs and submitted the necessary accreditation paperwork to start a new bachelor's degree in Respiratory Therapy in 2025.

Ms. Henderson stated that these are just a few examples of this year's success and Triumph looks forward to celebrating more exciting announcements in 2025. She then proceeded to give her formal report.

As of Monday, December 2nd, Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. had received 345 pre applications totaling over \$2.9 billion and had received 149 applications totaling over \$104 billion. This year, Triumph executed grant award agreements totaling over \$642 million. Pre-applications for projects 345, 346 and 347 are recommended as statutorily eligible, and project 337 is one that has taken a little bit longer for a determination to be made; however, it is recommended as eligible with restrictions on use and location of the project.

Triumph staff is requesting for the Board to unencumber a little under \$4,000 of remaining funds in Gulf Coast State College's Unmanned Systems Boot Camp.

### **Annual Reports of Grantees**

Ms. Henderson reminded the Board that the Triumph Florida Statute contains an annual requirement for the Board to monitor, review and evaluate awardees and their projects or programs to determine whether an award should be continued, terminated, reduced, or increased. She noted that Triumph staff has reviewed all the grantees and their annual reports and provided Board members with a link to the same. In conclusion, she stated that it is staff's recommendation that the Board continue to fund Triumph's current portfolio of grants.

**Mr. Henderson made a motion to receive and accept the Program Administrator's Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Weiss.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the report. No one came forward to speak. Ms. Skelton added a special thank you to all the staff that helped to review and compile this large number of annual reports. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

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

Dr. Rick Harper began his report by introducing a **Recommendation on Proposal #341 – The Seaside School, Inc. – Dream Big Walton County – up to \$9,557,500** submitted by Seaside School, Inc., the oldest operating charter school in the state of Florida.

The Seaside School, Inc. is requesting up to \$9,557,500 in Triumph funding to be used to deliver 3,820 milestones consisting of either industry certifications or 15 credit hour bundles of college level courses via the Dream Big Walton County project. These milestones will be achieved over a six-year project (2025 – 2030), for a cost to Triumph of \$2,502 per cert / milestone. The match committed by Seaside School and its partners is for \$19,446,936 and will consist of privately raised funds (\$3.07 million), state appropriated funding (\$9.5 million), Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) (\$2.89 million), CAPE funding (\$1.35 million), Local Capital Improvement Revenue (LCIR) (\$5 million). The majority of the TGC funding will be spent on personnel, at \$7.12 million, with \$242,500 to professional development, \$950,000 to furniture, fixtures, and equipment, \$695,000 to cert fees and expenses, and \$550,000 to grant compliance. Triumph funding is projected to be 33 percent of total project cost.

To ensure long-term sustainability, the program will incorporate recurring costs such as maintenance, staffing, and utilities into its regular operations through existing revenue streams. Primary funding will come from the FEFP, which allocates funds based on the number of FTE students enrolled. Additional support will be provided by CAPE Industry Certification funding and annual grant applications to fund special projects. In addition, the Seaside School Foundation has a rich history of identifying philanthropic partnerships that will be working to support the sustainability and growth of the program. At a reimbursement rate of \$2,502 per certification, the discounted total increase in household incomes expected from the program will be \$33.4 per dollar of Triumph cost, which is high relative to the overall Triumph portfolio. For these reasons, staff rate this program “A” in terms of economic impact.

Dr. Frank Fuller provided additional background on the transition, emphasizing that this initiative presents an opportunity for Triumph to integrate Career and Technical Education (CTE) production with core academic education. This approach aims to balance the development of workforce-ready skills with academic pathways, ensuring that students can pursue both vocational training and degree programs. He highlighted that earlier efforts lacked a strong connection to degree options, but this project has made significant strides in aligning vocational programs with academic goals. Dr. Fuller praised the project for effectively addressing the needs of the community while integrating local programs. Notably, the FSU AI instruction project is now expanding into several counties, while aerospace programs are rapidly growing across the region. He further pointed out that this integration allows for quick adaptation to industry demands, enabling the tracking of students who complete certifications like FAA and A&P. This responsiveness is a key strength of the hybrid model, which makes it easy to adjust the curriculum based on emerging industry needs. Dr. Fuller also expressed hope that this model will expand to include postgraduate-level opportunities in the future.

Chair Bear welcomed representatives from Seaside School to speak, starting with Mr. Andrew Jordan, Board Chair of Seaside School, Inc. Mr. Jordan expressed his gratitude to the Board and acknowledged the hard work of Seaside School’s dedicated board members who ensure students and families in South Walton have access to high-quality educational opportunities. Mr. Jordan then introduced Dr. Jenna O’Donoghue, Vice-Chair of the Seaside School Board, and Dr. Tom Miller, Executive Director, who has been instrumental in the school’s progress and student success. In conclusion, Mr. Jordan shared his excitement about the remarkable transformation of Seaside School from a small community-driven initiative to a regional pillar of excellence. As a board member and a parent, he is proud of how the school prepares students for success, which positively impacts the entire region.

Dr. Miller then took the floor, thanking Mr. Jordan and introducing Kim Mixson, Principal of Seaside Neighborhood School, and Drew Ward, Principal of Seacoast Collegiate High School. Dr. Miller emphasized Seaside School’s strong partnership with Northwest Florida State College, highlighting their bold vision: to create a thriving educational ecosystem where students graduate with the skills, credentials, and experience needed to succeed in both higher education and the workforce.

Dr. Miller discussed their goal to ensure students graduate debt-free, equipped for high-wage, high-need industries, thus addressing workforce gaps in the region. He stressed that this vision would only be achieved through partnership with the Triumph Gulf Coast team, which will help triple the number of college graduates in Walton County. Planned initiatives include

certifications in AI, cybersecurity, business management, and a new associate degree in business administration, the first of its kind in the area. Funding will support staffing, Career and Technical Education (CTE) classrooms, and professional development for educators. Dr. Miller emphasized that this project aims to create new jobs and transform students' lives, preparing them for successful futures. He also outlined plans to hire additional staff to manage compliance, including a director, project manager, and third-party accounting firm to ensure proper fund utilization and meet compliance requirements. Dr. Miller concluded by thanking the Triumph Board for their support and the opportunity to speak.

Dr. Cristie Kedroski, Interim President of Northwest Florida State College, expressed strong support for the project. She outlined the long-standing relationship between the College and Seacoast High School, which dates to 2014, and their ongoing lease arrangement at the South Walton campus. Dr. Kedroski highlighted the College's desire to expand post-secondary education in South Walton, which they plan to do in collaboration with Seacoast Collegiate High School. She clarified that the College's role in this initiative is to provide post-secondary education as outlined in the grant application, including Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees in Business Administration, set to begin in Fall 2026. While Northwest Florida State College is not the fiscal applicant for the Triumph funding, Dr. Kedroski reaffirmed their commitment to delivering the secondary education component for these degree programs, with hopes for future expansion.

Mr. Humphreys followed Dr. Kedroski's statement by inquiring why Northwest Florida State College is not the grantee for the project, instead of Seacoast Collegiate High School. Dr. Kedroski replied that Northwest Florida State College is unlike Florida State University, in that it does not own and operate its own collegiate high school like FSU does in Panama City. In this situation, the college is not the fiscal agent owner and operator of Seacoast Collegiate High School. Mr. Humphrey asked for clarification on whether Seaside School is public or private and Dr. Miller as well as Mr. Henderson explained that it is indeed a public school, even though they do have a lottery for admission.

Mr. Henderson, a former Seaside School Board member, acknowledged the swift application process but emphasized that the concept and planning for the project have been years in the making. He highlighted the significant transformation this project will bring to Walton County. Additionally, Mr. Henderson pointed out that while Northwest Florida State College owns the land for the school, it leases the facilities to Seaside. Since the school is being built on state land, the real estate will ultimately belong to the college.

Ms. Skelton explained that the prolonged negotiations were primarily due to working through legal issues related to taxes and the complexity of the project's structure. She clarified that while the land and building are owned by Northwest Florida State College, Seaside School has leased the rights to construct the building on the site.

Mr. Humphreys inquired about the number of students the project will add to the school. Dr. Miller responded that when the expansion began last year, the high school had 170 students, with projections of 300 students next year and 500 in two years. This expansion will increase the number of dual enrollment college students from 100 to 300 over the next seven years.

Mr. Humphreys also asked if the school is open to everyone within the county, or region, and Dr. Miller clarified that students who live in Walton County are included in the first level tier of

the lottery, whereas students who live outside the county are in the second tier. Last year, their 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort comprised 170 applications for 100 spots and 130 of the applicants were from Walton County, but they also welcomed a portion of non-Walton students.

Dr. Harper noted that all Triumph dollars that are proposed to be expended will go toward instructional expenses and other operational expenses such as certification fees instead of building construction. He further noted that the Florida Charter School law requires that any public funding provided to support the building of an asset revert back to the County School District or the State should the charter school cease operation.

Dr. Fuller praised this as a major breakthrough project for Walton County. For about three years they have struggled with the domain, scope and function of the project and have finally come together with a profile project that Triumph can use to build other projects if they come forward.

Dr. Kedroski concluded by stating that there are some complex structures with respect to the lease MOU, as was discussed with the land and with the buildings that are being financed by Seacoast, and as the team works through the term sheets and the contract Northwest Florida State College certainly wants to be part of that discussion as well.

**Mr. Henderson made a motion to direct staff to move to term sheet negotiations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Humphreys.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the report. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Dr. Rick Harper then introduced a **Recommendation on Proposal #343 – Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners – Project Boomer – up to \$2,100,000** The Wakulla Board of County Commissioners is requesting a \$2,100,000 Triumph grant to purchase and develop a suitable industrial site (20 acres) within Opportunity Park to accommodate the expansion of an existing manufacturing business known as Project Boomer. The proposed Triumph award will partially fund acquisition of the site and development of a 100,000 square foot building to be occupied by the private sector partner. Substantial match will be provided by the County (funded via issuance of public sector bonds), and it is also expected that the FloridaCommerce Rural Infrastructure Fund will participate in funding. The private sector tenant will be investing in new equipment. The project guarantees total capital investment of not less than \$15,970,473. TGC funding will thus at most account for 11.6 percent of total project expenditure.

For this project, the private sector will guarantee 42 net new jobs paying at least 115 percent of the current prevailing Wakulla wage. The company also has operations in South Georgia and elsewhere in the Tallahassee MSA. The consolidation will allow Wakulla to retain 79 existing jobs that will move from those other locations (in addition to the 42 net new ones) that otherwise were at risk due to lack of expansion opportunity at the Tallahassee facility, and it will preclude a possible move to the South Georgia facility of all existing and new jobs. For the proposed commitment of 42 jobs (while retaining the existing 79) and an award of up to \$2,100,000, the cost per job is \$50,000. The TGC share of the total project cost is relatively low, and the project promises not only the creation of net new jobs but also the retention of existing jobs that were at risk of leaving the region. At this cost per job, the ROI per dollar of Triumph spending is expected to be \$17.4 with a total increment to regional wages of \$36.5 million (counting only net new jobs) over 10 years. If the retained jobs were also to be counted along with the 42, the cost per job would be \$17,355 per job, the increase in total wages paid would be \$105 million and the ROI per TGC dollar would be \$50.1. For these reasons, staff score this project as an “A.”

Chair Bear invited Mr. David Edwards, County Administrator, to speak on behalf of the Wakulla County Board of Commissioners

Mr. Edwards thanked the Chair and the Board for welcoming his team, and he also thanked the Triumph staff for working with them on this game-changing project for Wakulla County. He took a moment to recognize some attendees that were present in support of the project including Commissioner Quincee Messersmith, Wakulla Economic Development Board members, John Shuff, Kevin Vaughn, Jessica Revell, and Andy Geir. He also introduced Economic Development Coordinators Julie Dennis and Beth Cicchetti.

Together, the Wakulla County BOCC and the Wakulla Economic Development council have worked for over five years to attract new industries in the community. Partnership with N.G. Wade Investment Company, the owners of a private signature Industrial Park called Opportunity Park. Opportunity Park is a 240-acre private park with all infrastructure and zoning in place for development. The site has been evaluated as part of Duke Energy's Site Readiness program, and Duke has been a valuable partner in helping Wakulla market this property. The park currently has one tenant, CSG Systems, which is a multi-national corporate services provider who has been in the location for 26 years providing jobs to over 150 residents of Wakulla County.

Both projects presented today by Wakulla BOCC request funds to purchase property in Opportunity Park and construct the facilities to serve the operational needs of each manufacturer. Facilities will remain property of Wakulla County and they will enter a long-term lease with the companies that locate there. Wakulla County is prepared to access bond financing to cover the funding needed to construct the facilities and recoup their funds through these companies.

Decades ago, a residential subdivision was developed around Project Boomer's original Wakulla County facility, and the PUD significantly limited the company's expansion opportunities, as it will not allow them to build beyond their current footprint or operate multiple shifts with extended hours. To accommodate their growth, Project Boomer expanded to a second manufacturing facility in South Georgia. The company is now looking to accelerate the growth of their business and consolidate operations under one roof and is considering locations around the southeastern United States. Wakulla County is proposing to construct the facility at Opportunity Park that will accommodate their growth and needs and allow all the operations to come home to Wakulla County and keep those jobs in Wakulla County. This proposal will retain 79 Florida jobs, 59 of which currently are in Wakulla County. In addition, the company has committed to creating 42 additional new to Florida jobs, which will include bringing jobs home from their South Florida location. Wakulla County is requesting \$2.1 million, which equates to \$50,000 per 42 jobs.

The matching funds will be provided through a combination of bond financing from the county, a \$4.5 million award from the Florida Rural Infrastructure Fund and they have also applied for funding from the Florida Job Growth Fund.

Recently, the CEO of Project Boomer toured the Triumph-funded War Eagle Academy's new Career and Technical Education Center, located in Wakulla County; and was extremely impressed with the program. He noted that Triumph is really making a difference in the lives of the students there and that the level of professionalism is extraordinary. Project Boomer is looking forward to using the new resource to create a talent pipeline of high-wage jobs for



Wakulla's recent graduates, and the CEO said he could imagine recruiting 30 to 40 kids per year for the company, to work either in the Wakulla County facility or nationwide. Mr. Edwards closed by thanking the Triumph Board and staff for their support. He stated that Triumph's \$2.1 million investment is critical to helping them keep manufacturing jobs in Wakulla County.

Mrs. Weiss briefly disclosed that she served as a civil engineer on some of the expansion work that occurred at the current location in Wakulla County, and she has spoken with Scott Remington (legal) about it. However, she does not play any part in this project and admitted she only has first-hand knowledge of a very limited space. She noted that she helped expand the parking and stormwater facilities and she stated that it is a great location for Project Boomer to be able to consolidate all their facilities and have everything in Wakulla County.

**Mrs. Weiss made a motion to direct staff to move to term sheet negotiations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henderson.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the report. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Dr. Rick Harper introduced a **Recommendation on Proposal #345 – Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners – Project Safety – up to \$13,500,000.** The Wakulla Board of County Commissioners is requesting a Triumph grant of up to \$13,500,000 to purchase and develop a suitable 20-acre industrial site within Opportunity Park to accommodate the expansion of an existing manufacturing business from South Florida known as Project Safety. The proposed Triumph award will partially fund acquisition of the site and development of a 150,000 square foot building to be occupied by the private sector partner. The project guarantees total capital investment of not less than \$20,795,000 with the County (funded via issuance of public sector bonds) and/or grant funding from FloridaCommerce contributing at least \$7,295,000. TGC funding will thus at most account for 69.2 percent of total land purchase and facility construction. An additional \$10,000,000 of equipment will be installed by the private sector tenant. For this project, the private sector will guarantee 300 net new jobs paying at least 115 percent of the current prevailing Wakulla wage. They construct body armor for law enforcement and both body armor and equipment armor for the defense sector. For the proposed commitment of 300 jobs and an award of up to \$13,500,000, the cost per job is \$45,000. At this cost per job, the ROI per dollar of Triumph spending is expected to be \$19.3 with a total increment to regional wages of \$260.7 million over 10 years. For these reasons, staff score this project as an "A."

Chair Bear again invited Mr. David Edwards, County Administrator, to speak on behalf of the Wakulla County Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Edwards explained that Project Safety constructs body armor for law enforcement and both body armor and equipment armor for the defense sector. The company's global operations across multiple locations employ approximately 5,000 people. Project Safety was introduced to Wakulla County through a partnership with Florida's Great Northwest, an invaluable resource in attracting new industry to the county. Wakulla County is proposing to construct a facility within Opportunity Park that will house Project Safety's manufacturing and R&D operations. In addition to the attractiveness of War Eagle Academy, Project Safety has a synergy with FSU FAMU College of Engineering's High-Performance Materials Institute. This proposal will create 300 jobs in the Triumph Gulf region at or above 150% of Wakulla average wage. A southeastern United States location is critical for Project Safety to address the growing line of products that

supply to law enforcement sectors. Wakulla County is requesting \$13.5 million from Triumph Gulf Coast, which equates to \$45,000 per job. They estimate the total cost of the project to be approximately \$21 million. The company's capital equipment expenditures are estimated to be \$13 million, and matching funds will be provided through a combination of bond financing from the county in addition to grant funding. Wakulla County BOCC has a Florida Job Growth grant application pending with the Governor. In closing, Mr. Edwards stated that Project Safety is a transformational project for Wakulla County and the region. The addition of a second major defense contractor in Wakulla with 300 jobs paying over the county's average wage would be significant. Mr. Edwards thanked the Triumph Board and staff for the opportunity to present this proposal.

Mrs. Weiss highlighted the fact that this is the first true job creation project that Wakulla County has brought to Triumph, and by creating 300 new jobs it will be transformational. She commented that it gives Wakulla residents a place to live and work in the same space, allowing people to stay in the community. Ms. Skelton reminded the Board that Ms. Henderson always tells them economic development takes a long time, particularly in rural counties. Ms. Skelton noted this project is really the first huge piece that Triumph is seeing come together for small counties, and it has to do with the fact that that Wakulla County is willing to commit to do the economic development work. She expressed her excitement for the project and stated that it is a huge step forward for their smaller counties.

Mr. Henderson shared his hope that this super project will be a template for other smaller counties. Chair Bear expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to partner with Wakulla County on these projects. He is also very pleased that Triumph can provide support to these smaller counties. **Mrs. Weiss made a motion to direct staff to move to term sheet negotiations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Henderson.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the report. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Dr. Rick Harper introduced a **Recommendation on Proposal #342 – IHMC – National Center for Collaborative Autonomy – up to \$6,921,375.** The Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition (IHMC) proposal describes the National Center for Collaborative Autonomy (NCCA), which is intended to seed rapid growth of advanced collaboration between autonomous platforms and systems, and to develop methods for human operators to guide the systems and ensure their safe and effective operation. The Triumph funding request of \$6,720,805 represents 23 percent of the total project cost of \$29,688,238. Other funding sources in support of the NCCA include grant and contract-funded expenditures over a ten-year performance period of \$20,000,000, and IHMC internally funded support of \$2,967,433 over the performance period. IHMC is internationally recognized in three (3) distinct fields of research prominence: Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, and Healthspan, Resilience, and Performance. The envisioned NCCA will combine two of IHMC's research focus areas: Robotics and Artificial Intelligence. Scaling IHMC's robotics research to large, multi-domain collaborating autonomous teams will strengthen IHMC's position as a leader in robotics and AI research. NCCA will leverage advances in both research areas to spearhead the next generation of advancement provided by collaborative autonomy. Taking these metrics together, the total impact on the region measured is expected to be \$12.8 dollars of increased personal income (in constant dollars) per dollar of Triumph expenditure. For these reasons, Triumph staff rate the project as an "A."

Ms. Henderson explained that IHMC's budget categories include supplies and equipment, personnel, compliance support and external match expended. She noted that most of the Triumph funds fall into the equipment supplies category and they expect this to be the case with the IHMC grant which will include \$2.95+ million for supplies and equipment, \$3.59+ million for personnel, and \$174,620 for compliance through 2036. Their upfront contribution for personnel is \$2.9 million and they will have an additional \$20 million in external match expended in the categories of equipment, supplies, and personnel. Compliance is \$17,462/year for a total of \$174,620 over 10 years, up to 25% of an employee's time, and if any of that time is not needed, IHMC will not bill Triumph for the time.

Chair Bear invited Dr. Ken Ford, CEO Emeritus, to speak on behalf of IHMC.

Dr. Ford first thanked the Triumph Gulf Coast Board and staff for their continued support of IHMC and the broader Northwest Florida region. Dr. Ford stated that IHMC is excited to propose the establishment of the National Center for Collaborative Autonomy. This will be a visionary program that will position Northwest Florida at the forefront of research and innovation in this aspect of autonomous systems with wide-ranging implications for national security, disaster response and commercial applications. By addressing the growing need for scalable collaborative autonomy across domains to include land, sea, air and space, the National Center for Collaborative Autonomy will leverage the region's many geographic assets, military partnerships, and research expertise to create transformational opportunities. The \$6.7 million investment requested from Triumph will enable IHMC to acquire critical equipment, attract world-class talent beyond the substantial pool in place, and catalyze the influx of federal and commercial investments in the region, driving significant long-term economic diversification. The Center for Collaborative Autonomy will leverage decades of experience in leadership and collaborative autonomy research at IHMC. More broadly, IHMC is recognized as a leader in AI research. Six of its computer scientists have been elected fellows of The Association for the Advancement of AI. To put this in perspective, Dr. Ford noted that the Ivy League institution of Harvard has a count of 5 fellows. Collaborative autonomy is arguably the most urgent and important research area for the Department of Defense at present and going forward. From observing evolving tactics in Ukraine to preparing for potential conflict in Asia, the Department of Defense has shifted priorities to advancing U.S. capabilities regarding collaborative autonomous systems that work as teammates with units. Triumph's support for this Center will enable them to continue working at the forefront of this research area across the nation. IHMC is committed to ensuring this initiative delivers lasting impact, both regionally and nationally. They deeply value Triumph's partnership and look forward to working together to advance innovation, economic growth, and opportunity for Northwest Florida. Dr. Ford again expressed his thanks to the Board and staff.

Chair Bear asked if there were any questions or comments for Dr. Ford.

Mr. Humphreys inquired about the types of equipment IHMC anticipates purchasing, and Dr. Ford replied that he does not yet have the specific equipment in mind, since they will go out to bid to seek the best value. He anticipates much of the equipment will be along the lines of undersea systems as well as some drone technology and, at the research level, these components are quite expensive. Additionally, they will seek encrypted communications equipment, equipment for Internet of Things (IoT), and equipment for exploiting the infrastructure that one finds in place when one comes into a locale.

Mr. Corr lightheartedly asked whether Dr. Ford watched sci-fi when he was a kid, particularly “Lost in Space” or “The Terminator,” and he asked what would happen if a robot were ever to act “autonomously” and kill a human without someone telling it to. Dr. Ford explained that the point Mr. Corr raised regarding the relationship between machines and humans is critically important, and very undervalued until now. Recently, the concept has exploded because of Ukraine and other things, but he further explained that at IHMC they are not really building autonomous machines. Instead, they are building semi-autonomous machines that interact with humans, shifting the relationship with the human from that of operator to teammate.

Mrs. Weiss commented that she recently had a class that was talking about AI and one of the big topics of interest was the power demands of it. She asked whether IHMC is going to have to increase the power supply to the area to be able to support this project. Dr. Ford replied that Mrs. Weiss had asked the perfect question. He explained that the power demands she mentioned do not relate to all methods of AI, but instead relate to one particular method that is popular in private chatbot systems, like ChatGPT, and those which are called large language models. Dr. Ford stated that these systems are incredibly inefficient. He explained further that the power demands for these large language models, like ChatGPT and the others, grow at roughly half an order of magnitude a year, and in two years, times ten. The systems are completely unsustainable, and companies are building small and medium-sized nukes to drive just one data set. In closing, Dr. Ford stated that, in terms of the AI growth pattern, 90% of the advancement in the last four years has been scaled. He noted, however, that more processors need more power, so those aforementioned AI methods aren’t really scalable, and they also tend to be hallucinatory (i.e., error prone), so IHMC does not typically use them, especially since lives could potentially be at stake depending on the kind of project they are working on.

**Mr. Henderson made a motion to direct staff to move to term sheet negotiations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Trumbull.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the report. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

Dr. Rick Harper then introduced a **Recommendation on Proposal #346 – Bay District Schools – Districtwide Aviation, Health Care and AI CTE Expansion - up to \$8,075,000.** Bay District Schools (BDS) requests a Triumph award of up to \$8,075,000 to expand in-demand CTE programs across 5 traditional high schools, resulting in 2,880 new industry certifications and dual enrollment milestones over a ten-year timeline. The project will maximize collaborative partnerships with FSU Ascent and FSU InSpire and creates a new CTE framework to be adopted by FL DOE and available across Florida. It will increase dual enrollment at Haney, FSU, and Gulf Coast State College and create new computer science learning spaces for Bay students. Matching funds are proposed at \$8,000,000, so that Triumph funding represents 50.2 percent of total project cost, and the cost per cert is \$2,804. At a reimbursement rate of \$2,804 per certification, the discounted total increase in household incomes expected from the program will be \$29.8 per dollar of Triumph cost, which is somewhat better than the average relative to other Triumph awards made to date. For these reasons, staff rate this program “A” in terms of economic impact. Ms. Skelton then briefly mentioned that this Bay County District Schools project will be replacing an earlier project approved for Triumph funding, however, the funding amount will remain the same. She noted that this project update and pivot provides better direction for the funding than what the Board had originally approved.

Mark McQueen, Superintendent of Bay District Schools in Bay County, thanked the Triumph Board and stated that it was a privilege to come before them. Additionally, he thanked them for allowing Bay District Schools' previously approved grant-funded project to be modified and updated. He stated that in the past two years, there has been a monumental shift taking place in Bay County regarding the explosion of incoming industries such as healthcare and aerospace industries. With the various investments that Triumph has already made in the community, they are trying to be a force multiplier, and to that end, they are working with their teammates at Florida State University, Gulf Coast State College, and Haney Technical College to leverage Triumph funds as they try to extend career technical educational opportunities down to the 4th grade within the Bay County Schools system. This is part of a larger strategy to create pathways for their 28,000 students in Bay District Schools. They realize that not all their students will go to college, and many of them will go into career technical vocations.

Next, Mr. Johnathan Moore, Career Technical Education Supervisor at Bay District Schools, introduced himself and thanked the Triumph Board and staff for their time and commitment to working on this project modification. He specifically thanked Dr. Fuller and Ms. Henderson for their many hours of phone calls. He noted that Bay District Schools are now using CTE to touch and impact 6,484 students, which is right at 25% of all enrolled students in the county. He further explained the district's workforce development approach through a conceptual "hourglass" model. At the top and bottom of the hourglass are established programs such as FSU Ascent and InSPIRE, which are key educational initiatives in the area. Bay District Schools aims to act as the transitional middle piece of the hourglass, preparing students to enter workforce opportunities like Triumph's Project Spinner and other future projects in Bay County. The district is committed to connecting both ends of the hourglass by working closely with partners, including Florida State University, Gulf Coast State College, and Haney Technical Center, ensuring a strong and effective collaboration to meet regional workforce needs. Additionally, the district recognizes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will have a significant impact across various sectors, including aviation and healthcare. They plan to develop a core AI framework that can be adopted across all CTE programs throughout the state of Florida. This framework will help students understand the nature of AI as well as the implications of it—its benefits and risks. The framework will also be designed to be flexible, allowing for the addition of certifications and more specialized courses as the field evolves. In closing, Mr. Moore expressed his gratitude to the Triumph Board and staff for their ongoing support and efforts in advancing workforce development initiatives in the region.

Chair Bear asked if there were any questions or comments, and Mr. Henderson asked whether any money had been spent on the previously approved iteration of this project. Ms. Henderson replied and confirmed no money had yet been spent. She further explained that it was only the outcomes of the project that were modernized.

Dr. Fuller highlighted that, under the leadership of Superintendent McQueen, what began as a single-school project has now evolved into a comprehensive district-wide initiative. Looking ahead at the proposals, he pointed out that Project #336 will be coming from Haney Technical College and emphasized that these efforts are being integrated into a broader platform that spans from 4th grade to Haney, aimed at developing higher technical skills for students. He noted that the State of Florida is currently reevaluating the Certification and Performance Incentive (CAPE) platform, which has been highly successful in the state, with a focus on encouraging students to achieve higher skill-level performances. However, as with any program

in its early years, the CAPE system has primarily been utilized for more accessible, low-hanging opportunities that generate immediate funding. As a result, there is a need to reallocate some of the funding to focus on advancing students' technical skills. This project, Dr. Fuller explained, will serve as a trial to explore how high-tech skills can be integrated into the classroom, with a forward-thinking plan already in place to guide these efforts.

Mr. Henderson asked whether there is an arm of this program that feeds some of the nursing programs and medical industry. Ms. Henderson confirmed that health sciences is indeed a component of the updated grant. Additionally, Dr. Fuller reminded the Board that the last two Triumph nursing proposals have gone to simulation, which is a great platform to be able to deal with capacity and to change how fast they can deliver a skill. He stated that these two programs will likely be the first of their kind in the State of Florida. Instead of having to completely revamp a whole curriculum, which takes up the three years, these schools can simply update the parameters of their simulation software to make the changes they need to see.

**Mr. Henderson made a motion to direct staff to move to term sheet negotiations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Humphreys.** Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the report. No one came forward to speak. **The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0.)**

### **Public Comment**

Chair Bear asked if anyone from the public would like to speak about any items related to Triumph process, policies, and practices.

Grey Dodge, Director of Community Relations & Partnership Engagement, FSU – InSPIRE, then introduced himself and thanked the Chair and the Board for the opportunity to speak. Mr. Dodge thanked the Triumph Board and staff for their support of FSU's project InSPIRE. He stated that they are excited to bring new folks to Bay County to help the area grow. Their core team has been assembled, and they have launched a nationwide search for an executive director to run an R&D facility of this magnitude.

Secondly, his team has made a lot of great progress with their partners at ECP, Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport. They are hoping for an MOU to be signed at their next board meeting in December and then to have the LOI signed in January, so that they will be able to move forward with architectural engineering services for the facility at the airport.

Lastly, they are working on their first big funding request under FSU InSPIRE for an NSF engines grant for \$160 million. Among 300 applicants, FSU has already made the first cut and they are working diligently to further stakeholder involvement by bringing together a whole team for the Panhandle to support this effort. Mr. Dodge thanked the Board for having him.

### **Closing Remarks**

Mrs. Weiss expressed her excitement about the economic development in the region, and in particular, about the projects that came from Wakulla County. She thanked the staff for 100% on the audit, their extensive annual review and their diligence and attention to detail on all the projects. She stated that the Board appreciates all their help very much and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mr. Humphreys echoed the sentiments of Mrs. Weiss and thanked the staff, stating that they do a great job and make everything easier for all of them. Additionally, he thanked all the grantees with amendments who were able to get their compliance done without asking for additional funds. In closing, he highlighted the importance of Wakulla County's focus on job retention. He noted that there are so many people that are already here that they really shouldn't forget, and they need to make sure they are still comfortable in this area.

Mr. Henderson stated that it was a great meeting and that he is excited about all these projects. He said it is good to see the progress in Wakulla, Escambia, and all of the Triumph counties. He thanked the staff for all their hard work and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mr. Trumbull stated that it was a great meeting. He thanked Chair Bear for his leadership over the past two years and noted that the Chair always had a steady demeanor and was very informed. He noted that Chair Bear made it easy to be a Board member because he is so knowledgeable, and they have appreciated his leadership for the last two years.

Mr. Corr thanked Chair Bear for his service and congratulated Chair-elect Trumbull. He stated that he looks forward to the time, maybe five years from now, when it will be a little easier to connect the dots between the projects and the impacts they are making across the life of an individual. He envisions being able to track a student from high school through all sorts of programs, within nursing, aviation or other, and possibly see that same person be touched by Triumph 3-4 times. Mr. Corr thanked the Board and staff and wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Ms. Skelton thanked Chair Bear and the Board on behalf of the staff for their support, and she thanked all staff members and professional services as well. She wished everyone a wonderful holiday season.

Chair Bear thanked everyone for their patience and persistence in getting through this long meeting. He also congratulated Randy Lewis on his successful surgery and his health and recovery and asked that everyone please keep Randy and Victoria in their thoughts and prayers as they continue his recovery efforts. Additionally, he thanked staff for all their hard work and thanked all grantees for bringing such wonderful projects to the Board to enhance the Triumph area economically and diversify it so that they don't run the risk of the same disaster they had with the oil spill. Chair Bear also thanked Susan Skelton for another successful year and thanked both Ms. Skelton and Jennifer Davidson for another clean audit. Most of all, he thanked Ms. Skelton for her great leadership and stated that when he came to the meetings informed, it is because he talked to Susan, who always tells him what he needs to know. He thanked everyone on the Board and staff and stated that it was his honor to serve as chairman.

In closing, Chair Bear introduced his wife, Cindi Bear, who just attended her first Triumph meeting. He wished everyone Happy Holidays.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:52 PM CT.