



**CAREERSOURCE CITRUS LEVY MARION  
Business and Economic Development Committee**

**MINUTES**

DATE: February 7, 2024  
PLACE: College of Central Florida, Enterprise Center  
3003 SW College Road, Ocala, FL 34474  
TIME: 9:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ben Whitehouse  
Deb Stanley  
Jeff Chang  
John Hemken  
Kathleen Betz  
Kevin Cunningham  
Kevin Sheilley  
Mark Paugh  
Pete Beasley, Chair  
Phillip Geist  
Scott Osteen

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Angie White  
Gary Smallridge  
Chris Cowart

**OTHER ATTENDEES**

Rusty Skinner, CSCLM  
Dale French, CSCLM  
Cory Weaver, CSCLM  
Melissa Saco, CSCLM

Chris Wilkinson, CSCLM  
Sandra Crawford, CSCLM  
Cira Schnettler, CSCLM

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Pete Beasley, Chair, at 9:04 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Cira Schnettler called roll and a quorum was declared present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Phil Geist made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 8, 2023, meeting. Ben Whitehouse seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**State Update**

Rusty Skinner updated the committee on the following items:

- CareerSource Florida will be having a State board meeting at the end of February. It is anticipated that the final documents for standardization of tools and services will

be provided.

- Two local development board areas have begun the process of implementing regional planning.
- There are several legislative issues that are being watched for future outcomes that may impact our services:
  - A potential change to the reemployment assistance program would require program participants to meet the requirement of five job applications per week by adding the requirement of at least one in-person application per week. This could negatively impact businesses that only offer online applications and increase fuel costs for participants.
  - The State is evaluating the benefits of creating a helpline for employers to report fraudulent participant activity. There are numerous negative consequences this could have on participants and business as well.
  - The Stronger Workforce for America Act (HR6655) may change the funding percentage requirements for local boards, timelines for ITA funding distributions, and workforce board structuring. A letter will be drafted and sent to congressional representatives addressing all concerns.
  - The State is also proposing changes to the child labor laws that may benefit businesses but could negatively impact young adult workers.
- The Education and Industry Consortium is coming together.
  - Joe Corley was appointed by Board Chair Brandon Whiteman to chair the Consortium. Joe Corley accepted the role.
  - The first meeting is expected to occur mid to late March.

#### Workforce Issues that are Important to Our Community

Rusty Skinner and Dale French will be meeting with clam farmers in Levy County, along with other state and federal agencies to address the regeneration of clam farms that were destroyed by Hurricane Idalia. The State has pledged funds for disaster recovery. The funds may be used for the labor of cleaning up the destruction of the clam farms and re-harvesting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

None

#### **PROJECT UPDATES**

##### Economic Development Partner Reports

Citrus:

- Kevin Cunningham stated that the Citrus County Chamber recently held Legislative Days in Tallahassee. Over 100 attendees met with state officials in numerous agencies. A major area of public concern is the traffic flow issues that will be generated on arterial roads from the advancement of the parkway through Citrus County
- Deb Stanley shared that the Citrus County School District received a two-million-dollar grant that will allow the welding program to be expended to all three high schools.

Levy:

- Scott Osteen shared that the below items:
  - The Nature Coast Development Council is in the process of updating their website. Completion is expected in May.
  - The board is working with community partners to host an annual event that will provide an opportunity for the board to share the county's economic development successes and future goals.
  - There are two projects that are in initial phases of discussion and development, one for a commercial park and one for an industrial park.

#### Marion

- Kevin Sheilley was happy to share that there are over 50 active projects in development in Marion County. Mostly in the areas of manufacturing and distribution.
- The expansion of Dollar Tree's distribution center has facilitated the development of the most advanced technology within the facility.
- Committee members were invited to attend two upcoming events:
  - The Exceptional Morning breakfast on February 21.
  - The Annual Luncheon on February 28.

#### MRMA

Kathleen Betz's shared the below highlights:

- The MRMA board is growing and welcomed a number of new members.
- The 2024 Welding Expo is slated for April 10.

#### Talent Center

Chris Wilkinson reviewed the report provided in the packet.

#### Event Report

Cory Weaver highlighted items from the Event Report. She noted increased attendance at hiring events and job fairs. This is a shift happening in workforce trends that will be watched going forward. There will be youth job fairs in all three counties this year.

#### Experiential Learning Contracts

Cory Weaver summarized each section of the report. Noting the successful completions that lead to employment.

#### Metrix Users

Cory Weaver shared details from the report, noting the most popular pathways and courses. Program usage continues to be consistent. The link to the Metrix program can be found on the CLM website.

#### Contract Reports

Sandra Crawford reviewed the performance report for Citrus and Marion counties and the youth report. Overall, the partners did well.

- County Reports:
  - Marion County continues to meet their goals.
  - Citrus County did not meet the 1st quarter goals, but we will continue to work with them to meet their goals by the end of the program year.
- Youth Report: Eckerd exceeded their goals for the first quarter.

Broadband Grant

Dale French provided an overview of the grant. He noted there was a Bootcamp held in December and another one scheduled for April. Updates will be provided to the committee quarterly. He also stated that the Florida Department of Labor was impressed with the grant response and initial implementation of the program. We are hopeful for successful outcomes.

**MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:49 a.m.

**APPROVED:**

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