

Don Ryan Center for Innovation Board of Directors Meeting

The Don Ryan Center for Innovation, 7 Venture Drive, Suite #100, Bluffton, SC

February 12, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Present

Director - Chair Jim Biggs

Director - Vice Chair Kerri Murphy

Director Kevin Ryan

Director Houssam Aboukhater

Director Josh Gruber

Director Ashley Feaster

Director Jerry Reeves

Director Walter Nester

Ex-Officio Natalie Majorkiewicz

Ex-Officio Lisa Sulka

Ex-Officio John O'Toole

Ex-Officio Tom Henz

Ex-Officio Bernie Traywick

Ex-Officio Chris Trott

Ex-Officio Paul Arvantides

Ex-Officio David Nelems

Ex-Officio Kristin Ling

Ex-Officio Evan Welsh

ABSENT

Director Larry Toomer

Director Latoya Salters

Ex-Officio Bridgette Frazier

Ex-Officio Rod Casavant

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

October 9, 2025

October 9, 2025 meeting minutes were approved. Motion made by Nester, Seconded by Ryan. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

V. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE BOARD

No communication from the board.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Rebranding

The Board discussed a proposed rebranding initiative to simplify the organization's name from Don Ryan Center for Innovation to Don Ryan Center in order to better reflect the organization's expanded services and broader business support mission. Discussion included updates to branding, messaging, logo design, and the proposed tagline, "Empowering Business Success."

Board members expressed support for the rebranding effort and discussed the formal corporate name change process required through the Secretary of State. Motion made by Nester, Seconded by Aboukhater. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial performance through January was reviewed. Staff reported positive revenue and expenditure trends, with the organization remaining in a strong financial position.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

1. CEO Report

Staff provided updates on organizational growth, economic development partnerships, and ongoing strategic initiatives. Updates included continued outreach efforts to attract new businesses and tenants to The Cove and Landing Pad spaces. Staff also reported that an aerospace company had signed on to utilize the Landing Pad facility.

The Board received updates regarding mentorship initiatives, including approximately 60 active mentors currently participating in the program and ongoing efforts to expand mentor engagement and communication.

2. Madison AI Update

Nelems provided an update on the Town's implementation of the **Madison AI** platform. The platform is expected to launch for selected staff members within approximately 60 days, with future plans for a public-facing AI interface for the Town website.

3. Update on The COVE

Staff reported that The COVE at Buckwalter continues progressing successfully, with most commercial spaces leased and additional tenant discussions underway. Planning continues for future open house and ribbon cutting events.

4. New DRCI Website

Welsh presented the newly redesigned Don Ryan Center website, highlighting improved navigation, updated branding, enhanced educational resources, and better access to program information and services. Board members provided positive feedback.

IX. DISCUSSION

The Board discussed ongoing economic development activity in the Bluffton area, including tenant recruitment efforts, business growth opportunities, and community partnerships. Additional discussion focused on marketing initiatives, mentor engagement, and increasing awareness of the organization's services and impact within the region.

X. ADJOURNMENT

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026

DRAFT