

Don Ryan Center for Innovation Board of Directors Meeting

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

May 14, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Director - Chair Jim Biggs
Director - Vice Chair Kerri Murphy
Director Kevin Ryan
Director Houssam Aboukhater
Director Ashley Feaster
Director Jerry Reeves
Director Latoya Salters
Director Walter Nester
Ex-Officio Natalie Majorkiewicz
Ex-Officio Lisa Sulka
Ex-Officio John O'Toole
Ex-Officio Rod Casavant
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 Josh Gruber
Ex-Officio Bridgette Frazier

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the February 12, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting were approved. Motion made by Aboukhater, seconded by Murphy. 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

Staff reviewed expiring Board terms and presented recommendations for appointments and reappointments to the Town Council.

The Board voted to recommend the appointment of Lindsey Hartman and Kevin Ryan as Directors and the reappointment of John O'Toole, Lisa Sulka, and Chris Trott as Ex-Officio

members. Motion made by Aboukhater, seconded by Feaster. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

Sofia Giordani, a summer intern from the University of South Carolina Beaufort, was introduced. She will assist with research, events, and program impact data.

Staff provided updates on program growth, partnerships, mentor engagement, AI training, and recent and upcoming community events.

The Center currently serves 17 program companies, including seven added since February. Leasing activity at The COVE remains strong, with new tenants in childcare, health and wellness, creative arts, aerospace, and banking.

VIII. TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial statements and the proposed FY2027 budget were presented. Staff reported that revenues continue to exceed expenditures, with rental income and Thrive program revenues performing above budget. The proposed budget reflects reduced Town support while maintaining conservative revenue projections.

The Board voted to recommend that Town Council approve the FY2027 funding request for the Don Ryan Center as presented. Motion was made by Aboukhater and seconded by Murphy. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Board also reviewed the organization's draft IRS Form 990.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NEEDED)

X. DISCUSSION

Board members discussed continued growth of the Don Ryan Center, mentor engagement, business recruitment efforts, and opportunities to expand outreach to prospective companies. Members expressed appreciation for the quality of the Center's programs and the positive impact the organization continues to have on Bluffton's entrepreneurial community. Discussion also included support for ongoing economic development initiatives and future collaboration opportunities.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

XII. NEXT MEETING DATE: THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2026