

**TOWN OF BLUFFTON DON RYAN CENTER FOR INNOVATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

Live at The HUB – 7 Venture Dr, #100

June 8, 2023 Board Meeting

Board Members Present:	Berl Davis, Chair – Director; Walter Nester, Director; Lisa Sulka, Town of Bluffton Mayor; Bernie Traywick, Director; Kevin Ryan, Director; Jim Biggs, Director; Deborah Edmondson, Director; Neil Parsons, Director
Board Members Absent:	Matt Green, Vice Chair – Director; Edward Taylor – Director;
Ex-Officio Present:	John O’Toole, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; Rod Casavant, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; Tom Henz, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; Chris Trott, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member
Ex-Officio Absent:	Lindsey Mueller, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; Houssam Aboukhater, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member
Town Staff Present:	Kristin Ling, DRCI Marketing and Operations Manager; Paul Arvantides, DRCI VP of Innovation; Kimberly Roache, DRCI Innovation Manager; Natalie Major, Treasurer; Chris Forster, Asst. Town Manager
Town Council Present:	Larry Toomer Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member
Public Present:	No members of the public were present

I. CALL TO ORDER

Davis called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

II. Notice regarding posting of meeting per South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

III. ROLL CALL

Ling took roll call and confirmed that a quorum was present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Davis approved the Don Ryan Center for Innovation (DRCI) Board of Directors Meeting Agenda as presented.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 20, 2023

Edmondson made a motion to approve the April 20, 2023 minutes. Nester seconded the motion. All were in favor and the April 20, 2023 minutes were approved.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Every member of the public who is recognized to speak shall address the Chairman and in speaking, avoid disrespect to the Board, Town Staff, and other members of the meeting. State your name and address when speaking for the record. **COMMENTS ARE LIMITED TO THREE (3) MINUTES.**

There were no Public Comments.

VIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No comments.

IX. TREASURER'S REPORT

Majorkiewicz displayed the revenues and expenses through April. Marjorkiewicz noted the increase in program clients and that has positively impacted revenue. Revenues are over expenditures.

X. NEW BUSINESS

Nelems introduced new Ex-Officio Members to the board. Henz discussed his background in banking and his previous experience with the Hilton Head Island chamber and Trott introduced himself and provided information about his experience as a Parish Manager and former Principal at St. Gregory Catholic School. He also mentioned his role as a mentor and adjunct professor at Marymount.

XI. STAFF REPORT

Arvantides gave an overview of the activities and current status of the DRCI. He highlighted that the DRCI is experiencing high activity levels with program clients and partners and an increase in awareness of the DRCI within the community. Nelems reported that there are currently 17 companies being incubated at the DRCI, which is the highest number to date. There is a strong pipeline of potential incubated companies and he noted an increase in clients in the GROWTH Program and that there are many established Bluffton businesses that are seeking assistance from the DRCI.

Updates were provided on the progress and status of individual DRCI Program clients. Nelems updated the board on collaboration efforts with Providence College and the Ryan Incubator and mentioned a renegotiated contract with HubSpot to save costs. Nelems discussed the agenda for the upcoming town council meeting and that we requested consideration for changing the by-laws to accommodate up to 10 ex-officio members.

Ling provided an update on the partnership with Hardeeville, including a monthly newsletter and the Business 301 Event held at the Hardeeville Rec Center. The DRCI presented a new contract to the City of Hardeeville council for approval. An update was given specifically highlighting a new customer, Hardee Greens and a new connection with SBAC.

XII. OPEN DISCUSSION

Sulka spoke about the partnership between DRCI and BCEDC. She mentioned that the partnership is working well and highlighted their collaborative efforts. O'Toole mentioned the positive atmosphere at The HUB, noting a recent buzz, he described a very positive and busy vibe within The HUB's environment. Davis confirmed O'Toole's observation, stating that he also experienced the positive and busy atmosphere during a recent visit to The HUB. Forster gave an update on the pad at Buckwalter. Davis spoke about the Palmetto Electric Bright Ideas grant program and the DRCI agreed to review grant submissions.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Ryan made a motion to adjourn the Don Ryan Center for Innovation Board of Directors meeting. Davis seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 6:30. p.m.