

Don Ryan Center for Innovation Board of Directors Meeting

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

October 09, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order by Arvantides

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Director - Chair Jim Biggs

Director - Vice Chair Kerri Murphy

Director Kevin Ryan

Director Houssam Aboukhater

Director Ashley Feaster

Director Jerry Reeves

Director Walter Nester

Director Latoya Salters

Director Larry Toomer

Ex-Officio Natalie Majorkiewicz

Ex-Officio Lisa Sulka

Ex-Officio John O'Toole

Ex-Officio Rod Casavant

Ex-Officio Chris Trott

Ex-Officio Paul Arvantides

Ex-Officio David Nelems

Ex-Officio Kristin Ling

Ex-Officio Evan Welsh

ABSENT

Director Josh Gruber

Ex-Officio Bridgette Frazier

Ex-Officio Tom Henz

Ex-Officio Bernie Traywick

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 10, 2025 Minutes

July 10, 2025 meeting minutes were approved. Motion made by Nester, Seconded by Biggs. 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

Welcome New Board of Directors

CEO Arvantides welcomed new and existing board members. Board members and ex-officio members introduced themselves and shared their roles and connections to the Don Ryan Center and the Bluffton community.

Election of New Officers

The Board elected Jim Biggs as Chair and Kerry Murphy as Vice Chair, with a motion made by Ryan and seconded by Nester. The motion was approved unanimously.

Executive Advisor Board Position

The Board discussed the Executive Advisor Board position and its role in supporting the Don Ryan Center's mission and strategic direction. The motion was made by Director Reeves and seconded by Director Nester. The motion was approved unanimously.

Welcome New PT Innovation Manager

Evan Welsh was formally introduced as the new Part-Time Innovation Manager.

Board Meeting Dates 2026

The Board approved the 2026 meeting schedule. All meetings will be at 4pm. Director Toomer made the motion, seconded by Director Biggs. The motion was approved unanimously.

Master Lease Agreement

Staff presented the master lease agreement between the Town of Bluffton and the Don Ryan Center for Innovation for the new building, The Cove. Motion to approve the Master Lease Agreement was made by Director Aboukhater and seconded by Director Nestor and approved. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT

Financials through August were reviewed. Revenues exceeded expenditures, reflecting strong financial performance.

VIII. STAFF REPORT

Staff provided updates on key operational and strategic initiatives, including progress on the 2026–2027 strategic planning. Updates were shared regarding preparation for the opening of The Cove, which is nearing completion.

Staff reported continued progress on mentorship engagement, economic development partnerships, grant activity, and technology initiatives, including updates to the DRCI website and ongoing collaboration with partners to support business growth and innovation.

IX. DISCUSSION

The Board discussed local and regional economic development activity, including ongoing growth in the Bluffton area and potential workforce impacts from new and expanding businesses. General discussion focused on supporting sustainable economic growth while maintaining a strong environment for entrepreneurship and innovation.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 6pm

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, February 12, 2026