

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

Live at The HUB – 7 Venture Dr, #100

February 9, 2023 Board Meeting

Board Members Present:	Berl Davis, Chair – Director; Matt Green, Vice Chair – Director; Lisa Sulka, Town of Bluffton Mayor; Walter Nester, Director; Bernie Traywick, Director; Edward Taylor – Director; Kevin Ryan, Director; Jim Biggs, Director; Deborah Edmondson, Director; Michael Cyzmbor, Director
Board Members Absent:	Bill Fuge, Director
Ex-Officio Present:	Lindsey Mueller, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; John O’Toole, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; Rod Casavant, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member
Ex-Officio Absent:	Larry Toomer Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member
Town Staff Present:	David Nelems, DRCI CEO; Kristin Ling, DRCI Marketing and Operations Manager; Paul Arvantides, DRCI VP of Innovation; Kimberly Roache, DRCI Innovation Manager; Natalie Major, Treasurer
Town Council Present:	N/A
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 – December 8, 2022

Nester made a motion to approve the December 8, 2022 minutes. Green seconded the motion. All were in favor and the December 8, 2022 minutes were approved.

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.

VII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

No Comments.

VIII. PROGRAM COMPANY PRESENTATION

Barbers of the Lowcountry

Brent Nelson of Barbers of the Lowcountry presented the Board with his story on how his local barbershop has grown from a small business to a thriving community staple, thanks in part to the support of the Don Ryan Center for Innovation. The barbershop, known for its top-notch grooming services and friendly atmosphere, has been a fixture in the area for over a decade. With the help of the Don Ryan Center, the Barbers of the Lowcountry have expanded their operations, upgraded their equipment, and implemented innovative marketing strategies. Through mentorship, business coaching, and access to resources, the Don Ryan Center has helped the barbershop navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and achieve remarkable growth.

IX. TREASURER'S REPORT

Majorkiewicz displayed the revenues and expenses through December. Marjorkiewicz noted that we are doing very well.

X. NEW BUSINESS

CEO Comments

Nelems gave an update on DRCI. We are very busy and are currently incubating 12 companies and have 70 mentors. The most at one time in DRCI history. Bill Fuge submitted his resignation along with Ray Deal. Both are currently too busy to attend the meetings. Deal suggested appointing Tom Henz to the board. Several members of the board are familiar with Tom and spoke very highly of him. We currently have 3 seats open and we will get the word out for applicants.

GROWTH PROGRAM PRICING

There has been some price sensitivity for a couple companies recently who are not STARTUP but not quite GROWTH. They are somewhere in between and the pricing for the GROWTH company is too much for these companies. The question was asked if we should have a tiered system based on revenue. The board discussed the options and gave guidance and said that DRCI staff can price accordingly.

"BETTER CALL PAUL" - BUSINESS HEALTH CHECK

Nelems announced Business Health Check which is a 15-question survey that assesses a business health through a scoring key. At the end of the survey a score is given and they are offered the option to setup

a call with Paul about the health of their business. The program was launched yesterday and there have been 6 phone calls booked.

HARDEEVILLE UPDATE

Hardeeville partnership is going well. We are working with Wheeler Trucking and Capital Chiropractic with a power washing company in the pipeline. DRCl will be holding a Business 301 in April. The contract is up for renewal in June.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Arvantides gave an update on the program companies at the DRCl with ESA being close to getting a training contract overseas, Crossflight re-focusing their attention to drone education, MXM changing their strategy and interviewing marketing companies. HHI Coffee Roasters just opened their new roasting facility on HHI and several new companies in the pipeline. Roache gave an update on Wheeler Trucking. They are growing and hiring drivers. Capital Chiropractic had their kickoff meeting today.

xi. OPEN DISCUSSION

Nester spoke about a company that was giving a touching presentation about Veterans and it turns out that they are working with DRCl and he was very impressed.

xii. ADJOURNMENT

Davis made a motion to adjourn the Don Ryan Center for Innovation Board of Directors meeting. Nester seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.