

Don Ryan Center for Innovation Board of Directors Meeting

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

April 10, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

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The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT

Director Jim Biggs

Director Bernie Traywick

Director Kevin Ryan

Director Latoya Salters

Director Larry Toomer

Ex-Officio Chris Trott

Ex-Officio Natalie Majorkiewicz

Ex-Officio Bridgette Frazier

Ex-Officio Kelli Brunson for John O'Toole

Ex-Officio Lisa Sulka

Ex-Officio Houssam Aboukhater

Ex-Officio Tom Henz

ABSENT

Chair Berl Davis

Director Josh Gruber

Vice Chair Matt Green

Secretary Walter Nester

Ex-Officio Rod Casavant

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mayor Toomer and seconded by Traywick to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2024 Board Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

1. August 8, 2024

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were submitted or presented at this meeting.

V. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE BOARD

Board members expressed support and enthusiasm for ongoing economic initiatives and the visibility of the Don Ryan Center's outreach efforts in the region. There was talk about the importance of attendance for all DRCI Board Meetings.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT

Financials

The financial report for the fiscal year to date was presented, noting that revenues continue to exceed expenditures. A motion was made to approve the report, and it passed unanimously.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Proposed 2025 Meeting Schedule

Building 100 Update

Program Company Pricing Discussion

DRCI Staffing Update

FY-26 Proposed Budget

Proposed 2025 Meeting Schedule

The Board reviewed the proposed 2025 Board Meeting Schedule. A motion was made to approve the proposed new rates, and it passed unanimously.

Building 100 Update

Updates were provided on construction and planning for the second location, which will include landing pad, a childcare facility, and offices for partners and businesses.

Program Company Pricing Discussion

The Board also reviewed the proposed new program rates for the upcoming fiscal year. A motion was made to approve the proposed new rates, and it passed unanimously.

DRCI Staffing Update

The Board was informed of staffing developments for FY26. DRCI is exploring the possibility of adding a part-time role as Nelems transitioned to a part-time role and Arvantides being recommended as the CEO. These updates reflect DRCI's commitment to scaling its impact alongside program growth.

FY-26 Proposed Budget

The Board approved the FY26 budget recommendation to be forwarded to the Town of Bluffton Town Council. The recommendation reflects strategic investments in programming, staffing, and infrastructure to support continued growth and innovation.

VIII. STAFF REPORT

Innovation Center Update

Economic Development Program

Staff shared the following highlights:

- Success and continued participation in the AI for Business series

- Ongoing partnership with the Hispanic Business Association of the Lowcountry and SBAC
- Recent speaking engagements and outreach
- Launch of an Economic Impact Survey
- New strategic marketing efforts underway to better position DRCI locally and regionally

IX. DISCUSSION

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 PM.

XI. NEXT MEETING DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2025 AT 5:00PM