

**First Coast Workforce Development, Inc. (dba CareerSource Northeast Florida)**  
**Full Board Zoom Meeting**  
**July 22, 2021**

Chair Elaine Johnson called the CareerSource Northeast Florida Full Board Zoom Meeting to order on Thursday, July 22, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. Roll call taken and a quorum established.

Board members in attendance:

- Baker: Darryl Register
  
- Clay: None
  
- Duval: Elaine Johnson  
Jake Schickel  
Michael Templeton  
Amy Rice  
Diane Williams
  
- Nassau: None
  
- Putnam: L. Wayne McClain
  
- St. Johns: Eda Edgerton
  
- Regional: Tim Hinson  
Kirk Barras  
Lucia Valdivia-Sanchez  
Beth Payne  
Angie White  
Kevin Doyle

Excused/Absent: Clay Lyons, Paul Cummins, Dr. Joe Pickens, Kimberly Cobb-Ray

Staff: Bruce Ferguson, Rebecca Livingston, Cheryl Taylor, Jay Loy, Steven Dionisio, Melissa

Terbrueggen, Ivette Berrios, Renee Williams, and Brandy Buckingham

Others: Larry Fairman (Fairman Consulting), Julia Burns, Darrin Finley, Amy Jones, Tina Wirth and others.

**Public Comment:** None Received.

The Chair acknowledged that Diane Nevison is not with us today and is engaging in a health journey and to keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

**\*Action Items**

**\*Approval of April 22, 2021 CSNEFL Full Board Minutes**

**Motion made by Wayne McClain and seconded by Darryl Register to move approval the April 22, 2021, Full Board meeting minutes as written; motion carried unanimously.**

**Election of Officers – 2021-2023**

The Nominating Committee met July 15, 2021, and offer the following slate of officers (2021-2023).

Chair	- Wayne McClain
Vice Chair	- Kevin Doyle
Treasurer	- Clay Lyons

There was no more discussion or nominations from the floor. **Motion made by Jake Schickel on behalf of the Nominating committee to move approval the slate of officers as presented; seconded by Lucia Valdivia-Sanchez; motion unanimously carried.**

Chair Elaine Johnson thanked the Board for having the honor of serving as Board Chair the past couple years and handed the gavel to new Board Chair, L. Wayne McClain. Chair McClain thanked past Chair Johnson for her service to the Board, guidance through the strategic plan, meetings during these COVID times, and her dedication is very much appreciated.

**Related Party Contracts**

Per Florida Statute, contracts with a board member or related party conflict must be approved by a two-thirds majority of a quorum. There are 3 annual renewal contracts with county Chambers/EDC's, and a customized training contract with Miller Electric Company with board conflicts. All conflict-of-interest forms have been completed and are on file in the corporate office and those members will abstain from the vote. The Chamber/EDC contracts are business

intelligence; company visits are done giving CSNEFL insight to companies' unemployment numbers, companies training needs and understanding the labor market going forward.

**Baker County Chamber of Commerce:** FCWD, Inc. board members with conflicts are Darryl Register, Executive Director of the Baker County Chamber of Commerce and Clay Lyons, board member of the Baker County Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Lyons was not present but abstains from the vote through his conflict-of-interest form filed in the corporate office. **Motion made by Elaine Johnson and seconded by Amy Rice to move approval the Baker County Chamber of Commerce Contract; Darryl Register and Clay Lyons abstained from the vote; motion unanimously carried.**

**Clay County Economic Development Corporation:** FCWD, Inc. board member with a conflict is Dr. Joe H. Pickens, board member, Clay County Economic Development Corporation. Dr. Pickens is not present but abstains from the vote through his conflict-of-interest form filed in the corporate office. **Motion made by Elaine Johnson and seconded by Darryl Register to move approval the Clay County Economic Development Corporation Contract; Dr. Joe H. Pickens abstained from the vote; motion unanimously carried.**

**Putnam County Chamber of Commerce:** The Chair relinquished his seat during this vote to the Vice Chair, Kevin Doyle. FCWD, Inc. board members with conflicts are Dr. Joe H. Pickens who is not present but abstains from the vote through his conflict-of-interest form filed in the corporate office and L. Wayne McClain, board members of the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce. **Motion made by Amy Rice and seconded by Elaine Johnson to move approval the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce Contract; Dr. Joe H. Pickens and L. Wayne McClain abstained from the vote; motion carried.** The Vice Chair relinquished the gavel back to the Chair.

**Miller Electric Company/Customized Training:** FCWD, Inc. board members with conflicts are Tim Hinson, Training Director, Miller Electric, and Kirk Barras, President, Jacksonville General Apprentice Association. **Motion made by Elaine Johnson and seconded by Kevin Doyle to move approval the Miller Electric Company Customized Training Contract; Tim Hinson and Kirk Barras abstained from the vote; motion unanimously carried.**

The threshold for submission to the state for approval prior to execution is now \$10,000. Therefore, all 4 contracts will be presented to the state approval before signing and execution.

### **Program**

#### **Operations Update – Bruce Ferguson**

There is continued improvement in our labor force which causes unemployment numbers to increase. Regional unemployment for June 2021 was 5.1% versus 4.3% in May. More people are coming off the sidelines and looking for work which hopefully will fill some job vacancies. Regional unemployment is lower than the state 5.7% and U.S. 6.1%.

June Employment stats indicate 36,000 new jobs from June 2020 to June 2021. Leisure and hospitality is the bulk of that and is rebounding nicely with 9,500 new jobs a 13.4% increase.

There is strong job growth across all categories in particular our targeted industries, except manufacturing (only 300 new jobs added over the year).

Florida's major metro regional unemployment rates have Jacksonville at 5.1% followed by Tampa 5.2%, Fort Lauderdale 5.7%, Orlando/Kissimmee 6.0%, and Miami 6.9%. This is a nice bounce back statewide and hopefully the COVID Delta variance will not hinder those numbers.

Center Visitor Comparisons show more people are coming into the centers. Career center visits in May were 2,600 and 4,200 in June (a 60% increase). July's numbers are currently lower (but there was a holiday and Hurricane Elsa) so we will see where we land. **Question – Amy Rice:** The Southside Career Center shows a large jump in center visits from May to June, why is that? **Reply:** It is interesting because if you go back to January 2020, you see those same numbers. Gateway also had a significant jump in center visits, and we are not exactly sure why but it could be a combination of things, i.e., the extra \$300 per week in unemployment benefits that stopped at the end of June, and high school and college graduations which also increases the labor force. With new COVID cases we are looking at these numbers and our operations to see if we need to go back to a 2/2 staff rotation (half work remotely and the other half are in the centers and then rotate that group every 2 weeks.) We are also mindful with the increase in center traffic we also need to have enough staff coverage.

Job Order Trends by month continue to be strong and diverse in the 3,000-3,200 range and hope it continues. A graph chart also shows number comparisons over a 3-year period.

Job orders by month (January 2016 to Present). You can see where the pandemic hit in March 2020 and there was a huge drop, but have recovered significantly, which is good to see.

Job Order Trends - Targeted Industries (highlighted in green) indicate increases across the board with a slight drop in health care and social assistance.

**Strategic Visioning Update – Larry Fairman, Fairman Consulting**  
**The Crossroads “Envisioning the Successful Workforce Board of the Future”**

We will talk about the process and the output from the work shortly. The report was labeled “Crossroads”...if half of the people are going to quit if they have to go back to full time in

person office hours and half the employers are going to fire employees for not returning. We did not build a plan or report on where we are because we do not know where we are going, therefore, we offer a vision of where we might go. It was an intentional process shift. Our working premises was if you are a good regional workforce board now, in the (unclear) future, moving forward what should your workforce board do, not what you did before or how you got measured, therefore you will see it is as aspirational rather than specific (which is what a typical strategic plan is, it sets priorities and goals for the next 3-5 years). This vision process considers possible future directions (not specific, no constraints, no timeline) and sets aspirational directions.

Project Overview: The Fairman team reviewed existing secondary national research, publications, articles, held virtual focus groups with partners, employees (2) and job seekers, conducted individual interviews with partners/employers, job seekers and thought leaders, and national peer group benchmarking conducted (13 organizations interviewed).

The Fairman team consists of Amy Jones, Executive Director of Workforce Southern Georgia, Tina Wirth, previous VP of WFD for Jax Chamber and Jax USA for many years and now back in Jax from South Carolina, and Darrin Finley and Julia Burns.

Summary of Findings – Julia Burns: The Summary of Findings were discussed in detail with the CSNEFL Executive Committee. We were looking for where we might expect change, what might stay the same, and one big observations from what is being written is this significant disruption. A lot is just conjecture, studies are just being started, nothing is definitive, there is a lot of uncertainty and there was a lot of conflicting expert opinions. Going through all that listed are our key findings.

1. We are at a moment of significant market disruption and continued changes should be expected. It will take a while to sort out what the new normal will become and it could be a bumpy road.
2. Power is shifting to job seekers and away from employers especially as demographics change.
3. The current worker shortage is likely to continue and get worse especially in high-demand, low-wage positions.
4. The composition of the workforce is changing, i.e., shrinking, aging, and shifting to

majority non-white.

5. Increasing attention to access and address systemic causes of workforce and access and disparities. Systemic barriers have been a significant focus in the past 18 months. Increased interest and demand to seek and provide solutions that are more equitably available to the most challenged job seekers.
6. Workers want flexibility (hours, remote work) and may value it more than pay. COVID has employees working remotely and many want to see that stay in place. Surveys indicate people are not going to go back to the job the way it was, and will take a pay cut to keep flexibility. They have also seen the ability to care for family members, younger and older, without paying costly care services and eliminate the time and cost of their commute.
7. Gig work, though flexible, is seen as a sideline rather than primary job.
8. Technology is a growing divide between have and have-not jobs seekers, and expect have-nots to increase their access over time. This also includes employers. Those who do not have the ability to reach out to new workers in a technological savvy way are not going to be as competitive. We expect the technology increase to increase with everyone over time. For job seekers, smart phones are going to be your lowest common denominator. Everything we do will need to be smart phone compliant.
9. Where remote work is possible, talent is no longer purely local. This will be the biggest disruptor in the long term of what the workforce will look like and could have significant implications on recruiting, training and development may be quite different. Therefore, a shift towards those who are held back by the digital divide and those employers that must operate in person will likely be critical.
10. Partner providers may no longer need to be local. Virtual and synchronous options are likely to become more common.
11. Market understanding of CareerSource services and what we do is unclear and/or confusing across all segments.
12. Most people perceive we serve the lowest paid segment of the market.
13. Employers are already showing different ways of attracting and retaining talent and these are likely to remain and grow in importance.

Recommendations - Darrin Finley: The state of disruption is going to be on-going. Our challenge is to take these findings and directionally suggest a future for what a great

workforce board will be. The future will be slightly differently from our traditionally focused strategic plan. We see the Northeast Florida mission as achieving long-term local prosperity with a workforce development system that connects with foundational employers and job seekers. Our long-term vision is how do we create this foundational system using local employers and job seekers as our real focus.

Question – Elaine Johnson: As we set our vision and achieve long-term, should it be local or regional? We are a regional workforce board and regional workforce development system therefore my question is was there any intent in using the word local versus regional?

Reply: Great question and point well taken. Regional would probably sum it up slightly better. What we were trying to convey is we can't change the world we can only change our sphere of influence. However, we define that we wanted to make it as specific to our local region if possible. So duly noted.

In thinking about this foundational economy, and the pandemic has really brought this to light, we need to focus on those organizations and employers that are essential for everyday services. One of the biggest disruptions has been jobs that require front line, front loaded personnel and these include infrastructure stability. When you think of the disruption that has occurred that is important to our region in the hospitality industry and retail distribution we are looking at this foundational economy in our area as it relates to those essential goods and services for everyday life. We are looking at these front-line level types of jobs, where without them we cannot essentially pursue those higher end jobs. We need to strongly consider for the future explicitly committing to a two-prong customer. Traditionally and historically, we have counted the employer as the customer and rightly, so, however there is this ascendancy of the job seeker. The job seeker has a little more influence, more control, and more power than in the past. And that is evidenced like things such as I do not want to go back to work, yes I really do need more benefits, and no these things are more important to me than wages, stability, etc. Therefore, we have to balance that out more in the future than we have in the past. It is definitely a two-prong approach in our future. The workforce is shrinking which creates a supply and demand dynamic that gives both parties a little pause in how we do business in the future.

Shift strategic commitment to focusing on foundational employers and employees. As we think about this ambiguous future, our focus needs to continue on those first and better jobs.

However the pandemic has caused the disruption that we continue to go through and if we do not secure those first and better jobs at the foundational level it becomes extremely difficult to do the bigger and better things that we aspire to from a workforce and economic standpoint.

We have always focused on employability skills (soft skills) but the intensity will have to increase as we move forward. Workforce boards can have a huge impact and should provide access to skills developmental opportunities for the workforce. We can teach people to show up for work, to be professional in the workplace, etc., and leave the more technical skills to the employer. Employers struggle to find workers with these basic skills. We need a culture shift to focus on those employability skills which in turn will force the needs of employers in high demand industries as well.

More aggressively target in school youth who are not tracking towards post-secondary education. As disruption continues, there has been a large increase in people not heading towards the traditional 2-to-4-year college pathways. Research indicates we have a much greater ability to identify those youth earlier than before and should aggressively target those to determine career pathways, which will lead us to focus more on apprenticeships. These are not new concepts but research suggests there needs to be a shift that is seen as critical for our future growth.

Strive to increase accessibility with different center hours, service levels, and better, bold technology. This was talked about earlier and accessibility is huge with remote being more obvious. Accessibility must be increased in terms of our availability to our constituents (job seekers or employers) in terms of hours, service levels, and better bolder technology. Connecting works to jobs must be made easier and must be 100% digitally/mobility supported. Everyone has the electronic device of choice in their pocket (not a desktop or computer in a career center). We do not have to build it, but we have to influence the outcome from those people who can build it.

Lead the advocacy effort for systemic national and local change in funding and measurement to ensure we have funds and flexibility to serve the most critical needs of employers and job seekers. Our regional board is in a position to strongly advocate for

systemic and national change to the funding stream and measurements. We want to make sure the funding stream and the measurements lead us to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people. We need to identify the right measures in order to push forward.

Continue to be the local and regional convener of partners and thought leaders on workforce development. This is one of those recommendations where we lead with content. We are uniquely positioned to be the local and regional convener. We can bring in all the right players to discuss local or regional economics or workforce development issues and should leverage that as a strategic commitment...to bringing the right players to the table to build that think tank.

Be open to finding the best resources to deliver solutions. As we think about the think tank or convener role, we are in a position to find the best resources to deliver solutions recognizing we are not building these solutions but finding the right players to build them. This amplifies our role with our partners who are already important to us because they offer superior flexibility, power of technology, and other platforms that we don't have but can leverage those of our partners and that is a critical component of the future. We need to think in terms of what can someone do for us and not what we can do. What types of technological advancements can we introduce so those experts can go out and build those platforms those tools while keeping our focus on high quality services and delivery system. We must improve those platforms on the employer and job seeker sides.

Become an employer of choice who attracts, trains, and retains talent in the new economy, and be a resource for employers to learn to do the same. Develop and market a brand identity to communicate the new focus. As the leader in workforce development, CareerSource Northeast Florida should be seen as an employer of choice. To become a resource for employers we must use our internal passion around our work to attract and attain that caliber of talent. We can position ourselves to be viewed by our partner and customer employers as a source of talent development. We can teach our employers how to become employers of choice. This will become more critical in our new world in our new post disruptive economy because job seekers will have more choices than ever before, and employers of choice will win. Our future also consists of redeveloping our brand identity. There is a lot of ambiguity around what exactly does a regional CareerSource Board do.

Our new brand identify should communicate these new focuses and things we are currently talking about. In developing our brand identify we need to target specific benefits that we bring to the market and then tell that story loudly, clearly, and as often as possible.

Those recommendations are directional, aspirational in nature, and purposeful. Our project discussed this a lot and recognized that true visioning removes boundaries, constraints, and any of the we can't do this because so that we can be visionary.

How do we get there and what should it look like? We took all the recommendations, bounced them off the findings and laid out the following that says:

A successful workforce board will....

Long Term - Today:

- Expand customer tool kit
- Increase accessibility
- Expand awareness of services
- Increase in-school youth focus

Long Term – Aspirational:

- Influence implementation of the REACH Act, especially technology integration and improvement of state systems
- Advocate for funding changes
- Increase technology access
- Change the measures of success

Short Term Today:

- Shift to a two-customer focus
- Prioritize local/local
- Shift to a more foundation employer focus
- Emphasize first/better jobs
- Increase hours/shift
- Add internal measures of success

Short Term – Aspirational

- Expand reach to small/local employers in rural areas
- Make CSNEFL an employer of choice

- Increase technology access

The important takeaway from this graphic is that they were laid out in the short term today and aspirational and the same for long term. Some are easy and some harder. Some things can be done now and the more challenging long term ones require a true strategic commitment such as advocating for funding change or increasing technological aspects. It is the right thing for a successful workforce board to pursue from a visionary standpoint.

Any questions before turning it over to Larry to talk about next steps of the process?

Question – Michael Templeton: As a point of clarification is it obvious or assumed that in this whole process, we continue to keep our four targeted industries as a focus point or is there some suggestion that those may change as part of this visioning process? Reply: The short answer is yes. The four targeted industries are the right things to focus on with a slightly different focus that the jobs got to be there and within those industries the first and better jobs. We felt the workforce board would be much more influential at that level and there is some evidence that supports that but nothing that supported that the sectors were the wrong sectors.

Next steps. Develop an iterative planning process by:

- Create a diverse team/operating committee consisting of staff and partners and develop a scope, plan and timeline, including reporting and team meetings.
- July 30 – Final report of publication/distribution
- August 2 – Begin implementation process
- October 1-on – Updates and review with bi-monthly reporting

We are going to build a team, it will publish July 30<sup>th</sup>, and then implementation will begin (and we are not sure what that means because of the uncertain future), the process (August 2<sup>nd</sup>), and review and revise (October 1-on) and trim the sails and keep going.

Additional findings are in your packet and the full report that includes all our work, the tendencies, and the verbatim from the benchmarking, interviews, focus groups, etc. If you would like a copy, contact Rebecca Livingston and her team.

The Chair thanked Fairman and his team for all the hard work they have done in putting this together. Are there any additional questions?

Question – Jake Schickel: Some comments by your team was to communicate better to the community and job seekers about what we do and services we provide and to reach out a model to them as to what to do, in particular in soft skills, etc. Does your deeper planning include how to do that, i.e., through a speaker's bureau or television ads? Reply: No, the scope of this work does not include the how, i.e., hire people, fire people, build a new structure, do a new committee, etc. It includes directional recommendations, which was intentional.

Suggestion – Jake Schickel: Board members need took at your materials and final report and start thinking how we are going to do all of this. Your presentation was great but for best practices we have known for a long time that nationally other workforce boards look at us to see what our best practices are. Therefore, how we do this and how we reach out should be done internally with staff because I am unsure of how much outreach we do, and staff meets regularly with employers and talks to job seekers. Maybe our next step in your vision to implement is running public television announcements, reaching out to a speaker's bureau, rotaries, service clubs, and bigger organizations like SHRM or FCMA, groups that our industries are in. Reply Larry Fairman: On what's next, If we think this is the right direction, what do we do and how do we do it, and that is things like finance, budget, staffing, all those things they are not included intentionally. Comment Elaine Johnson: Everything that Jake Schickel said is spot on, but the implementation process that begins in August is where we begin to flush this out. Comment – Julia Burns: Another thought on implementation. Implementation right now is going to look different then how implementation use to look which is partly why there is the impetuous around visioning instead of a 3-year plan. Three year plans always have a lot of crystal balls and crystal balls are useless right now. Adaptive planning is maybe more what you see or shorter term more iterative planning, therefore you should expect implementation to feel different and be more changeable over time.

The Chair stated these are very good points and he agrees with Jake that the board and staff need to figure out a way to better tell our story to the community.

Comment – Kevin Doyle: During the process, we need to look at that as well as some of the roadblocks. Many workforce system rules were done pre-COVID and we may need to plead our case to the state and Feds as well as our legislators and congressmen to tweak some of those rules to lift those roadblocks. Kevin said he would be happy to be helpful to do outreach on that front during his travels to Tallahassee and Washington over the coming months. The Chair thanked Kevin stating that would be very beneficial.

Bruce stated the operational team looks forward to working with the Executive Committee and Full Board through the implementation process and prioritize what we can do now and what we can do later with the understanding we may have to pivot and flex at any given point in time as we did with today's board meeting. We are disappointed we could not meet in person but hopefully we can in October and bring robust recommendations to the board.

**Next Meeting Date**

**Full Board Meeting:** October 28, 2021, (Thursday), 9:30 a.m.– 11:00 a.m., UNF (University Center), 12000 Alumni Drive, Room 1058-1, Jacksonville.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.