

**CareerSource Southwest Florida  
Business & Economic Development Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
December 14, 2023  
3:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

John Talmage, Chair-In-Person  
Dave Gammon-Virtual  
Adrian Kerr-Virtual  
Sloan Nagy-Virtual

Rosemary Flori-Virtual  
Sarah Harrington-in Person  
Adrian Llanes-Virtual  
Michael Wukitsch-Virtual

**Members Absent:**

Keitha Daniels

**Guests Present:**

Jim Chen, Director of Product Engineering,  
Kingland-In-Person  
Dr. Piyush Shah, Assistant Professor of  
Supply Chain Management, AI Task  
Force, Florida Gulf Coast University  
(FGCU)

Juan Mejia, Application Support  
Specialist, School District of Lee  
County-Virtual  
Carl Stringer, Vice President of IT &  
Employee Benefits, US Sugar-Virtual

**Staff Present:**

Peg Elmore  
Lyntoria Thomas

Edward Fritz  
Bill Welch

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair John Talmage at 3:01 p.m. Quorum was confirmed. Welcomes and introductions were made.

**II. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 12, 2023, COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

Michael Wukitsch made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2023, meeting minutes; Adrian Kerr seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**IV. GEN AI & IT IN THE EDUCATIONAL AND PRIVATE SECTORS**

John Talmage informed everyone that there are currently 8,700 information technology (IT) jobs in Southwest Florida and is projected to increase by 18.9% by 2030. John asked Juan Mejia, Application Support Specialist with School District of Lee County his thoughts about artificial intelligence (AI) and IT being used in the classroom. Juan explained that as of right now AI was not integrated in the classroom and only staff members & teachers were able to use AI. Juan explained that the teachers using AI are using it as an improving tool and to help them save time to help balance out their work and home life. Juan explained that data sources are being introduced to middle schoolers and

working their way into high schools. Juan said that after speaking with the curriculum board, they see AI as a foreign language and is right now prohibited from being installed inside of the classroom.

Jim Chen, the managing Director of Product Engineering with Kingland explained that Kingland is an Iowa based financial engineering company that is new to Southwest Florida. Jim explained that although educational learning is needed and necessary, education may not be relevant after its learned framework. He explained AI & IT are forever changing and what was learned today may be irrelevant tomorrow or irrelevant the same day. Peg Elmore, President CEO of CareerSource Southwest Florida asked Jim if he feels current jobs being held by humans were going to become antiquated. Jim said he didn't believe so because although you may not need as many you still would need persons to oversee what is implemented by AI. Jim says AI is a productive accelerant, but a human checker or oversight is needed. Jim explained AI as a feedback loop that continues to improve itself.

Dr. Piyush Shah, Assistant Professor of Supply Chain Management & AI Task Force with Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), explained businesses need to adopt AI and educate themselves. Businesses need to know that AI is a driving force, but a great amount of data is needed but not normally stored by most businesses. Dr. Piyush says he urges the professors to use personal learning more effectively, muddle through and keep trying different things until something works. He feels AI is a driving force with ethics, data, and privacy and banning AI is not the answer.

Carl Stringer, Vice President of IT and Employee Benefits with US Sugar, explained AI as a large language learning engine manual. Carl agreed with Jim Chen that AI may antique automated services call centers and customer service representatives, but jobs will always need humans.

## **V. WORKFORCE COMMON CONCERNS**

Adrian Llanes with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 349 explained that the more common workforce concerns are not the employee having the education or experience it is the employee not having the necessary required soft skills. Adrain says employees lack conflict management, communicating, interpersonal, proper phone etiquette, coming to work on time, showing up to work every day, and not understanding not to be on your phone while at work. Adrian feels that employers need to have a mission statement that is posted and taught but more importantly practiced by the employer and employee alike. All those in attendance agreed with Adrian.

Jim Chen, from Kingland, agreed with Adrian Llanes stating that a lot of applicants cannot verbally communicate what they are thinking or able to express their ideas during an interview.

## **VI. OPEN FORM**

Finding a way to teach soft skills.

## **VII. ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 4:01pm