

**CareerSource Southwest Florida
Business & Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2024
3:00 p.m.**

Members Present:

Keitha Daniels	Rosemary Flori-Virtual
Dave Gammon-Virtual	Sarah Harrington
Adrian Llanes-Virtual	Sloan Nagy-Virtual
Michael Wukitsch-Virtual	

Members Absent:

Adrian Kerr	John Talmage-Chair
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Guests Present:

John Nimmo-Veterans Business Council Advisory Board Southwest Florida Inc- Chairman	Mark Odell-Florida Apex Accelerator in Partnership with Florida Gulf Coast University-Government Contracting Consultant
Stormie Pruskauer-Florida Gulf Coast University-Veteran's Entrepreneurship Program-Coordinator	

Staff Present:

Kennyetta Brooks	Edward Fritz
Vernon Pearsey Jr.	Lyntoria Thomas
William (Bill) Welch-Staff Liaison	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Keitha Daniels at 3:02 p.m. Quorum was confirmed. Welcomes and introductions were made.

II. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 14, 2023, COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Dave Gammon made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 14, 2023, meeting minutes; Michael Wukitsch seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

IV. HIRING OF VETERANS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Stormie Pruskauer, Coordinator for Florida Veteran's Entrepreneurship Program at Florida Gulf Coast University presented an informative power point presentation about the tuition-free military veteran entrepreneurship training program to help launch or start veteran-owned businesses. Stormie explained that since they began operating in 2016, they have had 279 participants with 183 of those launching their own businesses. Stormie explained the two programs that are offered, The Startup Program and the Growth Program, she shared the differences between the two programs, how they both are beneficial to a person who is just starting their business or someone who business has already been established. Stormie explained that the Startup Program is a 10-week educational

program offered twice a year in the spring and again in the fall. The Startup Program is open to anyone to join and is designed for those businesses that are just starting out or who are in the early development stage. The Growth program is a once a year 6-week program and is designed for those who have an existing business with revenue and ready to scale their business to the next level.

John Nimmo, Chairman of The Veterans Business Council (VBC) explained that they are a 5013c in their second year of operating. John explained the VBC provides access to local organizations that implement unique programs, grants, and assistance to help grow veteran-owned businesses. John gave an overview of their board that is comprised of himself, 4 other veterans, and 2 civilians. John explained that if anyone wants to learn more about them to please go to **swfl.com** to find more information and find their calendar of upcoming events.

Mark Odell, Government Contracting Consultant of Florida Apex Accelerator presented an informative power point presentation explaining how Florida Apex helps businesses compete and succeed in the government marketplace. Mark explained that all services are at no cost and are funded by federal, state, and local grants and contracts.

V. OPEN FORMUM

Stormie announced that Veteran's Entrepreneurship Program was awarded the National Model Award.

VI. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 3:51 p.m.