

**CareerSource Southwest Florida  
Business & Economic Development Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 11, 2024  
3:00 p.m.**

**Members Present**

John Talmage-Chair  
Rosemary Fllori-Virtual  
Sarah Harrington-Virtual  
Michael Wukitsch

Keitha Daniels  
Dave Gammon-Virtual  
Adrian Llanes-Virtual

**Members Absent**

Adrian Kerr

Sloan Nagy

**Guests Present**

Carmen Henry-CareerSource Southwest  
Florida, Disability Navigator  
Kelly McQueen-Center for Independent  
Living Gulf Coast, Employment Specialist  
Leah Watson-Agency for Persons with  
Disabilities, Senior Human Services  
Counselor Supervisor

Adam Long-The Division of Blind  
Services, Assistant District Administrator  
Stephen Pensoneau-Division of  
Vocational Rehabilitation, Senior  
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (for  
Anthony Oakes)

**Staff Present:**

William (Bill) Welch-Staff Liaison  
Lyntoria Thomas

Edward Fritz

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

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

Michael Wukitsch made a motion to approve the February 8, 2024 meeting minutes; Dave Gammon seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**IV. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Carmen Henry, Disability Navigator for CareerSource Southwest Florida gave an overview of the services CSSWFL provides. Carmen explained that CSSWFL's focus is on ways to improve the local workforce by utilizing staff at the state and local levels, employment and educational grant programs, accessible websites, assistive technology, access to a vast array or network of community resources, and one-on-one assistant through the Disability Navigator Program. Carmen explained those who have a disability are looking for work with a much different perspective than other job seekers and CSSWFL focuses on the person's abilities and not a person's disabilities.

Kelly McQueen, Employment Specialist for Center for Independent Living Gulf Coast explained the resources and training provided by CFILGC to improve employability skills, resume writing, career exploration, and interviewing skills for persons with disabilities and the senior citizen population in our five-county area. Kelly explained they also assist with finding individuals housing, rental assistance, and with the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program.

Stephen Pensoneau, Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation gave an overview of the services VR provides. Stephen explained VR provides guidance and counseling related to employment and disability, helps customers identify career goals and services, and connects customers to job exploration opportunities and placements. Stephen explained individuals can refer themselves to the program and there are no income qualifications.

Adam Long, Assistant District Administrator for The Division of Blind Services gave an overview of the services DBS provides to the blind and visually impaired. Adam explained their services cover all ages from babies to senior citizens, with 65 and over being their largest population. Adam explained DBS's purpose is to help their clients achieve their goals and live productive and independent lives.

Leah Watson, Senior Human Services Counselor Supervisor for Agency for Persons with Disabilities gave an overview of the services ADP provides to persons living with developmental disabilities. Leah explained there is a long waiting list for the services that ADP provides, all services may not be awarded, but the Supported Employment service is always awarded. Supported Employment allows individuals to learn new skills, increase self-esteem and confidence, expand the employee's work experiences, provide financial independence, and empowers the employee. Leah explained that state and federal tax dollars fund the services provided so there is no charge or co-payment.

## **V. OPEN FORMUM**

None

## **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.