

**FINAL MINUTES**  
**CAREERSOURCE PALM BEACH COUNTY, INC.**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING**  
**Thursday, October 23, 2025**

**I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER, WELCOME**

The meeting was video, and audio recorded with a written transcript. Dave Markarian welcomed attendees and called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL & INTRODUCTIONS**

Roll call was conducted. A quorum was present with the following board members attending, Dave Markarian, Alyssa Freeman, David Gobeo, David Talley, Timothy Dougher, Carla Leaty, Vivian Demille, Ricky Wade, Deana Pizzo, Matthew Rocco, Libby Webb, Elizabeth Rochaine, George Elmore, Jeff Bailey, and Zac Cassidy. Board members absent, Christopher Cothran, Mike Burke, Commissioner Marci Woodward, and Alex Dobin. Staff members present, Julia Dattolo, Steven Gustafson, Michael Corbit, Charles Duval, Sue Craig, Frank Mieses, Jesse Mejia, Angelika Goldstein, Camile Williams, Melanie Magill, Melanie Rebottini, Ernesto Passarini, Najum Uddin, Cody Melton, Gerard Melville, and Mary Mullen-Butler. Guests present, Lonnie Saunders, Jessica Rosenthal, and Jules Zicaro.

**III. AGENDA APPROVAL**

a. Proposed Amendments: Dave Markarian asked if there were any amendments to the agenda.

**VII. INFORMATIONAL**

- Move d. Operations Update (Steven Gustafson) to b.
- b. Business Development Update (Michael Corbit) becomes c.
- c. Business Development Update – Glades (Charles Duval) becomes d.

b. Approval of Agenda: Dave Markarian called for a motion to approve the amended agenda.

Motion: David Talley

Second: George Elmore

The motion was approved unanimously.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**: Dave Markarian asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

**V. CONSENT AGENDA**

a. Minutes from June 26, 2025

b. Board of Directors Resignation:

i. Richard Radcliffe, Executive Director, Palm Beach County League of Cities (Resignation effective July 10, 2025)

c. New Board of Directors Submission:

i. Barbara Cipriano, Provost & Dean, Lake Worth Campus, Palm Beach State College (Replaces Dr. Tunjarnika Coleman-Ferrell)

d. Approval of Policy 5060 (Revised) One-Stop Operator Conflict of Interest

e. Approval of Targeted In-Demand Industries for ITA Funding

f. Prior Approval Request to Transfer Funds from WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

g. Approval of Pay Increase for Steven Gustafson, 1<sup>st</sup> VP and Chief Operating Officer

Dave Markarian noted that the consent agenda includes items that have been pre-reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee. As such, these matters are typically approved through collective approval. He then called for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Motion: Elizabeth Rochaine

Second: George Elmore

The motion was approved unanimously.

**VI. ITEMS FOR APPROVAL**

a. Holiday Calendar Revisions (Julia Dattolo): Because Christmas falls midweek, Julia Dattolo requested board approval to close the centers the week of Christmas to include Monday, December 22, and Tuesday, December 23, in addition to the regular Christmas holiday. This would allow staff to have the full week off with their families.

Dave Markarian asked the board if they had any questions. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve.

Motion: Alyssa Freeman

Second: Deana Pizzo

The motion was approved unanimously.

## VII. INFORMATIONAL

- a. 2026 CareerSource Palm Beach County, Inc. (CSPBC) and Palm Beach Workforce Development Consortium (PBWDC) Board and Committee Meeting Schedule (Julia Dattolo): Julia Dattolo directed the board members to pages 18 and 19 in the meeting packet noting that the proposed dates for 2026 are provided for informational purposes and subject to change.
- b. Operations Update (Steven Gustafson): Steven Gustafson delivered a detailed performance and modernization update. He announced that CareerSource Palm Beach County had achieved 14 of 15 performance indicators set by the State of Florida, with exceptional progress in employment rates and credential attainment. The Adult Employment Rate rose from 70% to 85%, and credential attainment increased from 57% to 81%, largely due to improved oversight of training providers. The only unmet indicator involved measurable skills gains in the Dislocated Worker program, a category with fewer participants due to the region's strong economy and limited layoffs. Mr. Gustafson noted that some participants exit training early when they find jobs, but the team is analyzing data to strengthen completion outcomes.

Mr. Gustafson then described two major initiatives: (1) the launch of a redesigned website and (2) the Functional Service Delivery model. The new website, developed with Digital Silk, aims to replace jargon-heavy navigation with clear, user-friendly language and features such as online scholarship applications, digital appointment scheduling via Calendly, and interactive service pathways. The site will remove confusing acronyms like WIOA and TANF, focusing instead on customer goals, education, training, and employment. Launch was anticipated for November 2025.

The Functional Service Delivery model represents a structural transformation of the organization's workforce system. Built collaboratively by staff and leadership over two years, the model replaces siloed, program-specific teams (e.g., TANF, SNAP, WIOA) with integrated service teams aligned around client needs. Staff are now grouped by skillset rather than funding sources placing detail-oriented staff in administrative roles and people-focused staff in case management. This approach is designed to create a "one team, one mission" environment where clients receive holistic support regardless of funding stream. Implementation involves a four-phase rollout from fall 2025 through January 2026, beginning with culture-building and training, followed by sandbox practice, skill mastery, and ongoing continuous improvement.

To support staff during this transition, Mr. Gustafson introduced Whale, an AI-assisted knowledge management platform used to store standard operating procedures, create automated training materials, and answer internal policy questions. Whale can generate procedural guides directly from screen recordings and provide staff with instant access to organizational policies, reducing administrative workload. The system allows staff to ask natural-language questions such as "What is an IEP?" and receive answers sourced only from internal policy documents, ensuring compliance and accuracy. This tool is expected to significantly improve efficiency and consistency in service delivery.

- c. Business Development Update (Michael Corbit): Michael Corbit presented the Business Development report, highlighting the county's robust economic progress and successful partnerships with the Business Development Board (BDB) and other stakeholders. Palm Beach County now holds the highest average annual salary in Florida at nearly \$75,000. During the past fiscal year, 21 projects were completed, producing 2,500 jobs and \$230 million in capital investments. The ServiceNow expansion was highlighted as a transformative development, bringing 850 high-wage jobs averaging \$175,000 per year, with expectations of attracting additional tech firms and generating an estimated 10,000 to 12,000 high-paying jobs in the coming years. Burke also recapped the Tech Hub's Golden Palm Awards, STEM education partnerships, career fairs in aviation and hospitality, and local job fairs in collaboration with major hospitality employers. Events such as the Elite Trades job fair, the Cradle-to-Career campaign in Delray Beach, and collaborations with Palm Beach Atlantic University and FAU showcased the organization's active role in connecting youth, employers, and education institutions.

- d. Business Development Update - Glades (Charles Duval): Charles Duval gave an update on apprenticeship development and skills gap initiatives. He emphasized the growing importance of apprenticeships for youth, veterans, and career changers, citing a new plumbing apprenticeship launched by Palm Beach State College. He described hands-on learning experiences at the Elite Trades Championship Series, which allowed students to explore skilled trades such as electrical and mechanical work. The Education and Industry Consortium recently focused on agriculture in Belle Glade, uniting farmers, educators, and business leaders to identify workforce needs like CDL drivers and trade technicians. West Tech's responsiveness was praised, it now offers both Class A and B CDL training, low-voltage technician programs, and has been certified as its own CDL testing site, reducing travel burdens for students. Mr. Duval also discussed the One-Stop Partner Program, which is strengthening referral coordination among partner agencies such as Take Stock in Children and the Farmworker Career Development Program, and creating shared digital resources to facilitate seamless client service.
- e. President & CEO Update (Julia Dattolo): Julia Dattolo delivered a comprehensive economic and organizational report. She noted that the unemployment rate rose slightly to 4.4%. She emphasized that Palm Beach County's labor force continues to grow due to immigration and workforce re-entry. The largest job gains occurred in education, healthcare, and government sectors. Manufacturing and construction also showed steady growth, while professional services exhibited slower expansion due to automation and AI integration and businesses tightening their belts. Ms. Dattolo discussed the dual impact of AI, describing its efficiency benefits and its risks for entry-level and clerical jobs. She stressed the importance of reskilling and upskilling initiatives to ensure that workers can adapt to AI-augmented workplaces.

To address the digital divide, CareerSource Palm Beach County partnered with Comcast to launch digital literacy workshops in English, Spanish, and Creole, aimed at residents who lack basic computer skills. Participants learn to create email accounts, search for jobs, and submit online applications, with the goal of applying for at least one job by the end of the course. The program has already filled its initial classes, demonstrating high community demand. Ms. Dattolo also introduced InternPalmBeach.com, an internship portal jointly funded by Palm Beach County and the BDB, consolidating local internship opportunities for students. The portal has received over 6,000 hits in its first three months and is being expanded to reach universities nationwide to attract high-demand skill sets like quantum engineering.

Financially, CareerSource Palm Beach County remains strong. Through conservative spending and successful grant acquisition such as Ticket to Work, Non-Custodial Parent Employment, Veterans Incentive, and Rural Workforce Grants the organization maintained stable funding and was able to provide staff at least a 3% up to 4% merit raise. It also generated additional revenue by leasing unused office space to community partners including Families First, Senator Berman's office, and Excel Mentoring Network. The finance department underwent a structural reorganization following the pending retirement of CFO Erica Scarpati. Two staff members were promoted to Controller roles, an Accounts Payable position was added, and a Director of Finance was underway. Board members were invited to participate in final-round interviews for the position should they wish.

CareerSource's communications and outreach metrics reflected major growth in public engagement. Email open rates increased by 163%, link click rates by 602%, and social media interaction metrics rose across all platforms. These improvements were attributed to stronger content targeting and event-based campaigns. Ms. Dattolo credited the communications team's strategic focus on relevant, engaging messages for driving higher reach and visibility.

During the statewide Workforce Professional Development Summit in Orlando, CareerSource Palm Beach County staff received several major honors. Melanie Magill won the Barbara Griffin Workforce Excellence Award, Ernesto Passarini earned the Workforce Chairs Alliance Lighthouse Award, and Camille Williams was named Employee Champion of the Year. The Business Development Board (BDB), led by Kelly Smallridge, received the Workforce Partner Award. Additionally, the organization's Veterans Team, under Supervisor Frank Mieses, received the Florida Veterans Incentive Award for the fourth consecutive year. Mr. Mieses shared a poignant success story about a 24-year-old homeless veteran who was assisted through emergency partnerships with ReloShare Safe Stays and Lyft, ultimately securing temporary housing,

permanent placement through the VA, and employment. Ms. Dattolo emphasized that this case exemplifies the organization's mission to create life-changing opportunities for local residents.

**VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS (Active)**

a. Executive Committee – October 10, 2025

Alyssa Freeman confirmed that all agenda items were approved.

b. Financial Planning Committee – October 10, 2025

In Erica Scarpati's absence, Julia Dattolo, shared that compared to the prior year, total expenses decreased by \$1.5 million (12.3%), largely driven by a \$972,000 reduction in staffing cost (11.5%). She explained that this decrease was intentional and aligned with the organization's restructuring plan. Staff vacancies were strategically managed when employees left, positions were reassessed or consolidated, and duties were redistributed. Other planned decreases included reductions in monitoring costs (reduced from three to two monitoring's a year) and childcare subsidies, due to refined eligibility evaluation process.

c. Youth and Young Adult Outreach Committee – September 18, 2025

Alyssa Freeman said we welcomed new members and discussed future collaboration opportunities.

d. Palm Beach Workforce Development Consortium – Current

**IX. ADJOURNMENT:** In closing, Dave Markarian praised the staff's dedication, highlighting the transformative impact of their work and their ability to blend innovation with community services. He adjourned the meeting with a phrase from board member Mr. Wade, "if you're not networking, you're not working". The meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m. The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 26, 2026, at noon.