

**TOWN OF BLUFFTON DON RYAN CENTER FOR INNOVATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

via Zoom Facebook Live

June 25, 2020 Board Meeting

Board Members Present: Berl Davis, Chair – Director; Matt Green, Vice Chair – Director; Michael Mathews, Secretary - Director; Lisa Sulka, Town of Bluffton Mayor – Director; Bernie Traywick, Director; Kevin Ryan, Director; Matthew Raehn, Director; Walter Nester, Director

Board Members Absent: Edward Taylor, Director

Ex-Officio Present: Ariana Pernice, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; Mark Polites, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; John O’Toole, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; Rod Casavant, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member

Ex-Officio Absent: Louise Hodges, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; Ryan Clark, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member; Larry Toomer, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member

Town Staff Present: Marc Orlando, Town Manager; Mike Levine, CEO DRCI; David Nelems, DRCI Vice President of Innovation; Natalie Majorkiewicz, Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member, Treasurer; Jessica Sferlazzo, DRCI Marketing and Operations Manager; Meredith Johnson, DRCI Intern

Town Council Present: Lisa Sulka, Town of Bluffton Mayor – Director

Public Present
via Facebook Live: N/A

I. CALL TO ORDER

Davis called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

II. Notice regarding posting of meeting per South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

III. ROLL CALL

Sferlazzo confirmed that a quorum was present.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Nester made a motion to approve the Town of Bluffton Don Ryan Center for Innovation (DRCI) Board of Directors Meeting Agenda as presented. Ryan seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – May 14, 2020

Davis asked if there were any changes to be made to the May 14, 2020 minutes. Nester made a motion to approve the May 14, 2020 minutes. Mathews seconded the motion. All were in favor and the May 14, 2020 minutes were approved.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS via FACEBOOK LIVE

Every member of the public who is recognized to speak shall address the Chairman and in speaking, avoid disrespect to the Board, Town Staff, and other members of the meeting. State your name and address when speaking for the record. **COMMENTS ARE LIMITED TO THREE (3) MINUTES.**

There were no Public Comments via Facebook Live.

VII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Davis congratulated Ryan, Nester, and Taylor for their reappointments to DRCI Board by Town Council. He reiterated from last meeting congratulations for the appointments of Ex-Officio members O'Toole and Casavant.

Davis spoke a few words about Larry Hughes' untimely passing. Recognized Hughes' contributions to both the Bluffton Community and the DRCI Board.

Levine opened discussion about Larry Hughes to the Board. He started by reflecting upon the tremendous help Larry gave him when he was first coming into his position as the CEO of DRCI. Reiterated what a terrible loss it is to the community.

Mayor Sulka gave credit to Larry Hughes for being an integral part of starting the DRCI and spoke about the respect Larry held in the Bluffton and Clemson communities.

Green reflected upon his close friendship with Larry Hughes, his huge heart, and wisdom and advice. He spoke of Hughes' entrepreneurial spirit.

Ryan spoke about Hughes' dedication to starting the DRCI and dedication to the Bluffton community through his humble service and running the farmer's market at Lowcountry Oyster Trail. Ryan proposed one part of the HUB being dedicated to Hughes. Green seconded the motion. Nester seconded the motion as well. Davis asked Levine to take the motion into consideration and to bring new ideas to the next Board Meeting.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORMS AND MEMBERSHIP

Levine asked Toomer to fill out 2020 Conflict of Interest Form. Asked all Board Members to join membership at DRCI which is free for 12 months.

IX. TREASURER'S REPORT

Review of M10 and YTD Revenues

Two columns were added to budget spreadsheet to accommodate the canceled fundraisers as well as the COVID-19 impact and the DRCI support of the Small Business Resiliency Plan adopted by the Town Council.

Levine stated the most important aspects of the P&L revenues were the adjustments made per Town Council adjusting rental income and membership revenues in M10, which normalizes the budget for the YTD as well as for the actual month.

Review of M10 and YTD Expenses

Majorkiewicz stated for the P&L Expenses, the same adjustments were made per Town Council. Expenses removed for the Golf Tournament and other fundraisers. Expenses are expected to go up with HUB activity increasing.

Levine stated the most important aspect to take away is that for the month (M10) we are 92% Revenue and 91% Expenses, which is the goal when revenue is low. If we exceed revenue, it will just increase profit. DRCI will continue to try and keep expenses low. Revenue and Expenses are running pretty much equal for the month and virtually equal for the YTD.

X. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) REPORT

MAY KPI UPDATE

Levine asks before he updates on the KPI's for the board to think of this as a journey to build membership/KPI's. Says Board will see a more detailed update next month, and he wants to see memberships before and after the Resiliency Plan as well as the impact of free memberships. In May, 40 new members were added with a 31% growth, and 169 members YTD. April memberships were paid, and May memberships were no charge. Mayor Sulka asked how long the free memberships last, and Levine answered they last for 12 months.

WEBSITE

Levine explained that the new website launched recently, and everything has been automated in the member portal called Proximity. We get notifications every time someone signs up. The new automations have helped extremely with productivity and efficiency. DRCI manages the HUB reservation system and membership signups through Proximity.

PROGRAMS

Nelems described the Lead Management Process, with two categories of leads: Resiliency and Program. Resiliency leads are businesses who have contacted us for help/advice and are not interested/a good fit for one of our programs. Program leads are people interested in one of our core paid-for offerings: STARTUP, GROWTH or PRE-START. Nelems explained the Lead Sales Cycle, or the process for becoming

part of one of the programs. The Lead Sales Cycle is No fit, Follow, Consult, Propose, Enroll. Everyone who is somewhere in the lead sales cycle is tracked in Hubspot through all their movements.

Levine explained Nelems added 5 customers to the programs in the past 3 months. Levine thanked Nelems for his hard work the past few months.

Mayor Sulka and Davis thanked the team for the hard work they have been doing for the past few months.

Green asked Nelems what his ceiling for customers would be. Historically, the DRCI had 11-12 companies in the center years ago with Nelems handling it single-handedly. With the new processes and staff, Nelems expects to handle a good bit more in accompaniment with the mentor teams.

KPI REPORTING YTD

Nelems displayed two pie charts of the lead classifications created by Hubspot, the Lead Classification by Sales Cycle and Lead Classification by Program Type. The majority of the lead tracking is in the follow stage which makes up 40.91% of all lead tracking. The majority of the program interest is in the Resiliency Program making up 45.45% of all program interest.

Ryan asked how much capacity the HUB holds and at what consistency people would be entering. Nelems responded that the vision is for businesses to be in the HUB very often, but we need to take it step-by-step due to COVID-19 restrictions. Levine follows up that 220 people are members which all have access to the HUB as part of their membership, but we can control how many people come in with the reservation system and closing off certain areas to maintain social distancing. The capacity is around 50 seats total. If keep up the pace with adding members we are currently, the seats would maybe fill up fast, but it will be managed.

Nelems showed bar graph chart of different Program Stage Funnels. We have enrolled 6/9 businesses that we contacted with a 66.67% close rate.

BLUFFTON RESILIENCY PLAN UPDATE

Levine updated that phase 2 of the BCEDC/DRCI Survey is completed. The MOU's to our key partners have been sent, with discussions pending. The Lowcountry Resource Guide is completed, and we will update as necessary. The Referral and Advertisement Program is always underway. Complementary DRCI Resources have been completed. The Development of the GROWTH Program is completed and underway with two new customers added. Levine says the Resiliency plan has been a great help to the DRCI and more importantly the businesses and customers in the region.

Mayor Sulka asks for the Resiliency Plan to be pushed more in our marketing to the public. Since the Town has pushed the Resiliency Plan, it needs to be more marketed more, and Mayor Sulka suggested a press release. Levine says he will work on it.

Mathews asked for a list of the partners to be distributed to the Board. Levine says he will send that out as well as the MOU's to the Board.

XI. OPEN DISCUSSION

Mayor Sulka gave an update on the two Chambers present and thanked the Greater Bluffton Chamber Interim who has helped us tremendously with the Zoom to the Room. Mayor Sulka wants to connect everyone and hopefully see a resulting increase of memberships.

Levine thanks Mayor Sulka and Town Council for all of their help. DRCI has started the working groups with the Board. Levine thinks we are getting back on pre COVID-19 track, where we thought we were going to be a few months ago. Believes we will be able to over-deliver.

Davis asks if DRCI is open for business to the public. Levine responds we are not open to the public right now. Town has DRCI as sort of a pilot program along with the police station. A few have come in by appointment following all health procedures. We keep the door locked and the public out. Levine and Nelems are on an alternating shift working in the HUB.

Ryan proposes a video competition where people in the Bluffton community would build their own Rube-Goldberg machine, or something of the sort, in order to raise more awareness about the DRCI.

Mayor Sulka suggests we get the younger population of college-aged students engaged more because they most likely will not be returning to school in the fall, and we can increase our student membership.

O’Toole suggests we contact the Ford Foundation to help us create a pilot invention competition with prize money or another incentive. Levine brings up the Clemson Feeding Innovation Program which awarded \$20,000 to the winner of their competition last month. Mayor Sulka and Levine decide to make a press release for the Clemson Feeding Innovation Program. Mayor Sulka suggests the competition in some way be dedicated to Larry Hughes.

Davis thanks the Board for the opportunity to lead the organization. He thanks the staff of the DRCI and Mayor Sulka for the work they have done for the DRCI.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mathews made a motion to adjourn the Don Ryan Center for Innovation Board of Directors meeting. Mayor Sulka seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Certified: _____

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Certified: Michael Mathews 8/17/20