

**Meeting Minutes
Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.
Escambia County Commission Chambers
Ernie Lee Magaha Building, First Floor
221 Palafox Place
Pensacola, Florida 32504
June 12, 2018
10:30 a.m. CT**

Members Present:

Allan Bense
Stan Connally, Jr.
Don Gaetz, Chair
Ben Lee
Stephen Riggs, IV
Jason Shoaf

Members Excused:

Pam Dana, Ph. D

Chair Don Gaetz called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. CT and thanked the Escambia County Commission for allowing Triumph Gulf Coast to use the Commission Chambers for the meeting. He recognized Commissioner Grover Robinson for brief remarks. Commissioner Robinson welcomed the board and thanked Triumph Gulf Coast for the work that is being done to transform Northwest Florida. Chair Gaetz thanked the Escambia County Commission, along with the State of Florida and the City of Pensacola, for the work that is being done to bring success to the commercial hangar project at the Pensacola Airport. He noted that some of the funds for that project came from the initial oil spill recovery act, as well. Commissioner Robinson said that the most positive thing that has come about as a result of the oil spill has been the level of teamwork that has developed across all eight affected counties to bring true change to the region.

Executive Director Susan Skelton called the roll and announced that all members were present except Dr. Pam Dana, who was excused.

The meeting minutes of the April 27, 2018 Board Meeting were reviewed and approved on a motion by Mr. Bense, seconded by Mr. Shoaf. The motion was approved unanimously (6-0).

Chair Gaetz recognized Mr. Allan Bense to introduce Ms. Becca Hardin, President of the Bay County Economic Development Alliance. Mr. Bense spoke about Ms. Hardin's successes in bringing in big businesses to Bay County. Chair Gaetz noted that Ms. Hardin served as the Vice President of the Greater Columbus, Georgia Chamber of Commerce for many years prior to coming to Bay County and was part of the team that assisted in locating the \$1.6 Billion KIA Automotive factory in that area. Mr. Stan

Connally shared a map from the Florida Chamber showing the levels of industrial diversification across Florida and noted that the Northwest Florida region continues to lag behind the state in such diversification. He said this would put some of the comments made by Ms. Hardin in context relative to the importance of improvement to diversification. Chair Gaetz then recognized Ms. Hardin for remarks.

Presentation on Multi-County Benefits and Impacts of Large Scale Economic Development Projects - Ms. Becca Hardin, President, Bay Economic Development Alliance (Presentation available at www.myfloridatriumph.com, Past Meetings, June 12, 2018 Meeting Materials)

Mr. Connally thanked Ms. Hardin for her presentation and asked her to speak to the “cycle time” on some of the projects she discussed, the endurance needed to bring a big project on board, and then whether it is easier and faster to grow that company, or to go back into the market to bring in other companies. Ms. Hardin said that every project differs, and said that, for example, the first meeting with GKN at the Paris Air Show was two years prior to being able to announce the project, all the while competing with other locations throughout the United States. She said that economic development requires patience and tenacity. Once GKN decided to come, they had production deadlines for their customers that required an accelerated schedule for getting the facility up and operational. She noted that the customer deadline never changed. She said there were major risks that Bay County, and its partners such as the St. Joe Company, were willing to take to assure that the project could ultimately be successful.

Chair Gaetz asked about job retention in the context of workforce development and availability in Northwest Florida, and the relationship to the military complex in retaining and developing both jobs and available workforce for new endeavors. Ms. Hardin said that while Bay County is always looking for manufacturing jobs in order to diversify, it is critical to take care of the jobs and companies that are already there, because other locations are constantly trying to lure them away. Chair Gaetz noted that such pressures are always present in the military arena, as well.

Chair Gaetz then asked about what role the Economic Development professionals in Northwest Florida believe that Triumph Gulf Coast should play, noting that to date Triumph has not taken an aggressive role in recruiting large projects to the region. Ms. Hardin said that Triumph needs to be aggressive in the marketplace because every community in the country is working towards economic development and Northwest Florida is in competition with everyone to get projects. She said to be successful, one must be creative and be willing to take risks. She indicated that she hoped Triumph Gulf Coast would be bold in its approach to economic development, and how funds can be used to be competitive in recruitment of private industry to bring transformational projects to the region.

Mr. Stephen Riggs asked what Ms. Hardin would recommend for the Board to do to “be bold”, and how can the board work with the local economic development professionals to bring companies to the area. Ms. Hardin said that it would be good to know that those

professionals could include Triumph funds in pitches to companies as part of an overall package of incentives. She said that the current process involving governments and working through the definitions of eligibility make it difficult to include Triumph Gulf Coast funds with any level of certainty in the marketplace, and that knowing that such funds could be part of the toolkit would be great. Mr. Bense said that such use of funds would be beneficial, but we have to be careful not to shirk the Board's responsibilities to be good stewards of the funds. He said that staff would be able to work with the economic development officers from each county to review potential projects and get them through the Triumph Gulf Coast process, and that since this organization is not the government, that expedited process should be possible. He told everyone that if there are questions about the eligibility of a proposal to get in touch with the staff. Chair Gaetz agreed and asked that Triumph Gulf Coast be considered a resource for economic development professionals going forward. He said that the Board needs the assistance of professional economic development leaders to make the best use of the funds to assure economic transformation.

Ms. Skelton reported that the initial contact from Auditor General to Chair Gaetz regarding the statutorily required annual operational audit has been made and staff is beginning to share information with the Office of the Auditor General. Members and staff may be contacted as that review progresses. She reported that an annual license for Economic Modeling Software (EMSI) for Triumph Gulf Coast had been purchased to assist Dr. Harper in his review process pursuant to his letter of engagement and the operating budget allowance for such expenditure.

Mr. Riggs reviewed the monthly financial statements for April and May. He noted that the reports were unremarkable and that very similar related to monthly expenditures. He said that the monthly "burn rate" was approximately \$50,000, which is in accordance with the operating budget.

Mr. Riggs made a motion to approve the April and May 2018 Financial Statements. The motion was seconded by Mr. Connally. Mr. Bense asked if the current burn rate was within the statutory confines of allowable expenditures. Ms. Skelton responded that was the case. **The motion passed unanimously (6-0).**

Mr. Riggs asked Ms. Skelton to explain the current situation with the interest paid each month to the Department of Economic Opportunity Triumph Gulf Coast Trust Funds pursuant to the Florida Statutes. Ms. Skelton explained that those interest payments continue to be made each month but that the 2018 Legislative Appropriations Act allows for the interest balance as of June 30, 2018 to be reverted to Triumph Gulf Coast from the State of Florida. Those funds will be transferred to Triumph Gulf Coast by the Department of Economic Opportunity in early July in the course of normal operations by the department in order to comply with the Appropriations Act and Triumph Gulf Coast does not have to make a request for such funds to be transferred. In the future, the same process will need to occur unless a change is made to the statutes to delete the requirement for the interest to be paid to the department each month. Mr. Bense asked what that interest transfer amount will be. Mr. Riggs indicated that it is roughly \$4

million. Chair Gaetz noted that was \$4 million that would be going toward economic development in Northwest Florida and not sitting in the state treasury.

Mr. Riggs made a motion that Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc., enter into an Insured Cash Sweep Deposit Placement Agreement with First National Bank Northwest Florida for the placement of funds into insured money market savings accounts with receiving depository institutions in order to maintain appropriate pledging & security for public funds and that Triumph Gulf Coast Inc enter into a Wire Transfer Agreement with First National Bank Northwest Florida governing the origination and receipt of wire transfers on behalf of Triumph Gulf Coast Inc. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bense. Chair Gaetz asked if the financial institution was the same as the one used for other banking transactions by Triumph Gulf Coast. Mr. Riggs and Mr. Bense indicated that was correct. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Mr. Riggs said that while Triumph Gulf Coast is operating within its Operating Budget parameters, the travel budget line items need to be adjusted to reflect the actual expenditures that are occurring. He noted that the initial projected costs were not known at the time of the original budget discussion, and the reality is that there is more travel expense than originally expected as staff works with interested parties, pre-applicants and applicants to assist them with the process. **He made a motion to move \$4000 from the "Member Travel" line to the "Staff Travel" line and add an additional \$4000 to the "Staff Travel" line in the Operating Budget. Mr. Jason Shoaf seconded the motion.** Chair Gaetz asked about why staff travel expenses have been high. Ms. Skelton said that the reason was because the Board had asked staff to be very accessible to those wishing to engage with Triumph Gulf Coast in going through the application process. She said that she did not expect the high rate of travel to continue, as staff had met with most applicants at this point, and that much of the future interaction can be done telephonically or by email but that the buffer in the travel budget will allow for continued staff availability as needed for applicants going forward. She noted that some travel budget will be needed to bring in subject matter experts as needed. **The motion passed unanimously (6-0).**

Mr. Bense reiterated that it would be appropriate for staff and members to reach out in the economic development community and asked for members and staff to think about whether additional staff or expenditures might be needed to bring in new business. He asked for the issue to be included at the July 2018 Board Meeting.

Legal Counsel Scott Remington reported that contract negotiations with the Port of Panama City have been successful. He noted that a detailed term sheet was approved by the Board at the April 27, 2018, and that based on that term sheet Dr. Pam Dana and staff negotiated the Grant Award Agreement that is before the Board for action at this meeting. Pursuant to s. 288.8016, F.S., a public notice of consideration of the Grant Award was posted on the Triumph Gulf Coast website on May 25, 2018, meeting the 14-day notice requirement. (Attach copy of public notice). He noted one correction to the circulated version, on page 5, in the last sentence of paragraph 4.2, the letter "t"

appeared and it should have been the word “it.” Chair Gaetz asked if there were any material differences between the terms in the term sheet and the terms of the contract. Mr. Remington replied that there were none.

Chair Gaetz asked if there was any public comment on the Grant Award Contract. No member of the public spoke. Chair Gaetz recognized Mr. Wayne Stubbs, CEO and Director of the Port of Panama City, for comment. Mr. Stubbs indicated that the port was ready to proceed with the contract. He thanked the Board members for participating in the application process, and for the professional actions of the staff. He said he believes the agreement was workable. He said his board had approved the terms in the term sheet and would take up the contract at their meeting on Thursday, June 14, 2018, for approval. He said it was the goal of the port to meet all three performance metrics. Chair Gaetz asked about the timeframe for completion of the construction phase of the project. Mr. Stubbs noted that there were several components to the construction project, but that the portion funded by Triumph Gulf Coast should be completed in the next 12 to 16 months, with the entire project to be completed within 18 to 24 months. He said there was strong support from the Mobile District and the South Atlantic Division of the Corps of Engineers for the dredging project at the port.

Mr. Connally asked Mr. Stubbs and Ms. Hardin how having this major port expansion would help in recruiting new business to the region. Ms. Hardin said that this is exactly the type of transformational project that sets Bay County apart from competition, with new property that can be used to bring larger tenants on to the port.

Mr. Connally made a motion to accept the contract as presented by legal counsel and to authorize the officers of the board to execute the contract. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ben Lee. On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (6-0 with Dr. Dana absent and not voting.)

Mr. Remington reported that staff had been working with the Escambia County School District for partial funding of a workforce development expansion project, in conjunction with Pensacola State College. He gave a brief description of the proposal (#5) and asked Dr. Rick Harper and Dr. Frank Fuller to review the proposal in more detail (comments available at 1:07 of meeting audio found at www.myfloridatriumph.com under “Past Meetings”, June 12, 2018.) Dr. Harper noted that this is a very high value proposals that will provide 210 STEM K-5 certificates, 70 middle school Information Technology certificates, 20 high school aircraft assembly, 20 high school manufacturing, 100 high school cybersecurity, 50 post-secondary airframe and powerplant, 30 post-secondary cybersecurity and 25 post-secondary commercial driver license certificates as part of the training by the 2021-2022 school year. He said that the cost of the training appears to be relatively modest and would not require expensive infrastructure. He said staff was in agreement with the Escambia County School District about the performance metrics as described in the proposed term sheet. Staff is continuing to discuss the clawback provisions which are required by statute. The School District has expressed concerns about its ability to meet the proposed clawback provisions. He said the District does not believe it is appropriate to put its Full Time Equivalent (FTE) appropriated

funding at risk. The Triumph Gulf Coast staff has asked the District to consider using the non-base, or bonus funding that comes with the additional certification programs, to fulfill any clawback requirements. He said that while there is a possibility that agreement cannot be reached, staff believes that the issue can be resolved with further discussion and negotiation. He said that timing is a concern in order to be able to implement the proposal for the 2019-2020 school year, but the issues must be worked out. Dr. Fuller indicated that the proposal is so significant that it is worth pushing forward.

Chair Gaetz asked about whether matching funds are addressed in the term sheet agreement. Dr. Harper said that the Triumph Gulf Coast portion of the funding would be 38% of the total cost of the project. Mr. Shoaf thanked staff for the work done on the workforce education proposals, and noted that building a workforce pipeline, particularly in the rural counties is critical to the future of the region.

Mr. Bense made a motion to approve the term sheet and direct legal counsel and professional staff to develop a contract for presentation to the board. Mr. Connally seconded the motion.

Chair Gaetz if there was any public comment on the proposal. No one came forward to speak.

The motion passed on a roll call vote (6-0 with Dr. Dana absent and not voting.)

Dr. Harper described the Wakulla County School Board Career and Technical Education Center (#20.) He said that the original application requested \$3.75 million which represents 91% of the total project cost. It will provide 300 K-5 digital tool certifications, 50 middle school digital tool certificates, 30 HVAC graduates and 30 Automotive graduates as one of three performance metrics. The other metrics require that at least 50% of graduates attain the average entry wage for the certificate industry in the geographic region, and that at least 70% of students attain completion in the certificate programs. Mr. Remington noted that due to the higher percentage dollar match, there is a requirement that the District show evidence that they have made reasonable efforts to obtain funds from industry partners prior to receiving Triumph Gulf Coast funds. Chair Gaetz said that Triumph Gulf Coast recognizes that rural districts have less resources available, but that it needs to be emphasized that industry and community match should be part of the requirement.

Mr. Lee asked if the award amount had been adjusted, and Dr. Fuller indicated that the District had added \$120,000 for additional equipment in an addendum. The adjustment was discussed at the Board meeting prior to the approval of term sheet discussions. Mr. Remington said that the specific adjusted request is for \$3,926,867. Mr. Connally told staff to be sure that if there are changes from the original application through the process, it is important for staff to point out these changes to the Board. Mr. Bense said that it is important to make it clear that the Board is investing higher percentages on projects in small counties due to the local governments' inability to participate at a higher match level, but that match is still important and will always be a consideration.

Mr. Shoaf made a motion to approve the term sheet and direct legal counsel and professional staff to develop a contract for presentation to the board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Connally.

Chair Gaetz asked for public comment. No one spoke.

The motion passed on a roll call vote (6-0 with Dr. Dana absent and not voting.)

Mr. Remington then explained the Okaloosa County Highway 90 East Water and Sewer Main Extensions (#43). He reminded the members that the proposal was for \$1.5 million to extend those lines to the Shoal River site. Dr. Harper said the request was for 36% of the total project cost. He said the term sheet requires the project to be bid prior to beginning work. He said the performance metrics required at least one of the following: 250 jobs in targeted industries paying better than the average county wage in three years from infrastructure improvement construction completion, 500 jobs in targeted industries paying better than the average county wage within five years of construction completion, at least 150 jobs in three years paying at least 150% of the average county wage in targeted industries, or \$25 million in capital investment at the site by a targeted industry. He noted that the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners had already tentatively agreed to the terms and said that clawback provisions are included in the negotiated language.

Chair Gaetz asked how one would know which target is being met. Dr. Harper said that there are four metrics, three with jobs requirements, that are designed to be easily measurable as the mega-site is developed. Any one of the metrics would satisfy the requirements at the point of meeting the goal. He said all metrics begin measurement at the completion of the water infrastructure project, so any one of the metrics may be met within the specified periods. Mr. Lee said he thought the clawbacks would encourage the Okaloosa County team to go out and recruit many different types of industries to the site. He said he was pleased with the level of commitment from the county.

Mr. Lee made a motion to approve the term sheet as described and direct legal counsel and professional staff to develop a contract for presentation to the board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Riggs.

Chair Gaetz asked for public comment. Okaloosa County Commission Chair Graham Fountain thanked the Board for considering the project and thanked the staff for the professional negotiation process. Mr. Nathan Sparks, Economic Development Council of Okaloosa County, said that collaboration and teamwork are important and thanked the Triumph Gulf Coast team for the work done thus far. He said the metrics in the term sheet are “stretch goals” as they should be to drive the success of the project. He said that the time goals are fair and doable.

The motion passed on a roll call vote (6-0, with Dr. Dana absent and not voting.)

Mr. Remington shared a draft report to the Governor and Legislature and said that the semi-annual statutory report is due to the presiding officers by June 30. He said that the final report will come from the Chair and asked for a motion to allow the Chair to make any additions or corrections to the draft and then execute and send the report as required by statute. **Mr. Connally made the motion to authorize the Chair to prepare, execute and submit the semi-annual report to the designated parties. Mr. Lee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6-0.)**

Ms. Cori Henderson, Program Administrator, reported that staff has had many opportunities to meet with interested parties all across Northwest Florida and that there is a lot of excitement about the possibilities being made available through potential Triumph Gulf Coast funding. She said that Dr. Harper, Dr. Fuller and she have spent a significant portion of every week meeting with applicants, while working to move applications through the review process. She said that many applicants are listening closely to the comments coming from members at Board Meetings and are asking to amend or re-write their original applications to meet the concerns and goals to make their proposals more transformational. For this reason, some proposals that staff thought were ready to be considered are now being redrafted and resubmitted. She said that there are almost 150 pre-applications totaling over \$1.3 billion currently logged in to our system. She said that the number of pre-applications coming in over the last two months has slowed significantly and that most recent pre-applications have been trending towards requests that do not qualify for the Triumph Gulf Coast awards categories. The report contains a list of those pre-applications. She said that over \$435 million has been requested in the full application process as of this date.

Ms. Henderson said that in attending the Florida Economic Development Council Annual Meeting, she had an opportunity to interact with many of the Economic Development professionals from our region and across the state, along with several utility partners and workforce development partners. She said the discussion was about how can these partners communicate the Triumph Gulf Coast message in their work with site consultants and interested industries. She said she had the opportunity to speak directly with several site consultants to hear what their impressions of our organization are at this point. She said that it is important to lay groundwork in this area to be sure that the proper message is being distributed in the marketplace. She said that Board member and/or participation in site consultant visits (or familiarization tours), or out of state visits by Team Florida or other organizations would provide the opportunity to begin to build the dialogue with potential customers for the region. Chair Gaetz asked if Board members would be interested in participating in these types of activities. All members indicated that they would be willing to do such meetings. Mr. Riggs asked staff to prepare a list of those types of opportunities.

Mr. Riggs made a motion to accept the Program Administrator's Report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bense. The motion passed unanimously (6-0.)

Dr. Fuller presented the Bay School District Haney Vocational-Technical School HVAC Training proposal (#143) for consideration by the Board. He said that the total proposal

cost is \$672,000. The match from the School District is \$58,400. The request for Triumph Gulf Coast funding is for \$614,000 or 91% of the total project cost. The Haney facility is approximately 40 years old that has had very little renovation or refitting work done on it. He said the proposal is for a standard training model, with between 45 and 60 students meeting five days a week for a period of approximately 18 months to complete the training and certification requirements. He said that the smaller number of students in this model causes the cost per student to appear higher. The proposal will update equipment and training facilities, will allow training for additional students, and will add additional advanced certification levels and types to the class offerings. On-site, on-demand training components, including use of video training modules, will be built into the new programs to allow real time on the job training as well as classroom and lab capabilities. The improvements are designed to support the fifty or so regional HVAC support services providers in assuring that a skilled workforce is always ready to be employed. The proposal will provide retraining, and/or refreshment training by Haney at the request of an employer to deal with specific shortfalls, or new technologies or techniques that become available. This innovative component will be a three-year pilot project at Haney that could be expanded to other vocations, and to other schools, if it is successful. Dr. Fuller recommended that the proposal be moved forward to the term sheet negotiation phase of the application process.

Mr. Bense declared that he was going to refrain from debate and voting on this proposal, as he is in the HVAC installation business in the region. Mr. Lee declared that he would refrain from debate and voting, as well, due to the fact that he serves on the Haney Vo-Tech Foundation Board.

Mr. Connally asked that a stipulation to require that the applicant seek additional in-kind contributions to the program be part of the term sheet negotiation. He said it would be consistent with what had been done in the earlier Wakulla County proposal and would indicate Triumph Gulf Coast interest in higher match ratios from the applicants going forward.

Ms. Alex Murphy from Haney Vocational Technical Center thanked the Board for consideration of the proposal and said that the school is very committed to increasing workforce candidate pools in the region. She said the need is there, and the school is working to meet that need. Chair Gaetz asked if there was a way to assure that this project would change the perception that trainees may not be ready for the workforce. Ms. Murphy indicated that the school has made changes and worked to assure that such problems are no longer occurring. She said that moving forward with this proposal will work towards that goal as well. Chair Gaetz asked if this proposal would allow Haney to offer employers a guarantee that if a graduate of the Haney program is not trained to the needed level, that the school would do retraining at no cost to the employer. Ms. Murphy stated that was in fact what the proposal would allow the school to do. Chair Gaetz said that he believes that this proposal would be the first time in Florida Public Education history where educators will be guaranteeing results. He said that the school is to be commended for this proposal.

Mr. Connally made a motion to direct legal counsel and professional staff to move into term sheet negotiations with the Bay County School District on Proposal #143. Mr. Shoaf seconded the motion.

Chair Gaetz asked if any member of the public wanted to comment on the proposal. No one chose to comment.

On a roll call vote, the motion passed on a 4-0 vote with Mr. Bense and Mr. Lee abstaining and Dr. Dana absent and not voting.

Chair Gaetz said that professional staff asked to have some feedback from the Board on several issues going forward.

Dr. Harper noted that there were at least five proposals in the pre-application and application phases related to the oyster industry. He said that the proposals come from across the region and relate to research, workforce training and production. He said staff would like to recommend that experts in fisheries, research and industry be invited to discuss issues with some or all of the Board to assist in allowing the Board to determine best practices going forward. Chair Gaetz said that rather than taking the applications one at a time, it might be better to determine if there are ways to bring proposals together. Mr. Bense said he would prefer to have subgroups of the Board to look into both the Oyster Industry and the Sports Tourism issues. Mr. Lee said that the precedent to not duplicate proposals had already been set with the work being done by Dr. Fuller on workforce education. Chair Gaetz said that such subgroups could be appointed and would have properly noticed meetings within the regions to assure that the public could easily participate. He then asked for volunteers for the subgroups.

Mr. Shoaf and Mr. Riggs volunteered to serve on the Oyster Industry subgroup. Mr. Lee and Mr. Bense volunteered to serve on the Sports Tourism subgroup.

Dr. Harper indicated that there are at least three sports tourism proposals to export such activities, along with other proposals to increase capacity at current tourism and recreational facilities. He said that there is potential for growth in the segment, and that there may be different assets created that are not part of the normal jobs growth modeling that would clearly show the transformational quality of such projects. Mr. Riggs asked about the fact that going into the discussion about sports tourism, if we already know that the cost benefit analysis does not support such proposals, why Triumph Gulf Coast should entertain such proposals. Mr. Lee said that he thought that the Board should at least do the work to determine if such proposals had merit to their communities. Mr. Bense agreed and said the Board should at least hear from the experts on the issues.

Mr. Bense asked that Chair Gaetz be named to each of the subgroups so that he can be kept up to date on the work of the subgroups. Chair Gaetz said staff would ask Dr. Dana if she wants to serve, as well.

Dr. Harper gave an update on the Pensacola Commercial Aircraft Maintenance Proposal. He said that staff has had the opportunity to participate in extensive discussions with the applicants about the proposal which represents a significant improvement to the City of Pensacola Airport Strategic Plan at a total cost of approximately \$320 million. The project includes substantial investments in facilities to perform maintenance, repair and overhaul on aircraft from major airline and air freight companies. He said that this industry sector is important because air travel is a measure of economic health and growth. The sector is experiencing rapid growth across the world, and such growth will create thousands of maintenance jobs in the future. He said the first long term lease contract signed at the current facility promises excellent wages relative to the community average, and a good earnings multiplier associated with potential spin off jobs in the area in the supply chain. Reasonable projections for the overall proposal indicate the possibility of over 4000 new well-paying jobs for the region. Escambia County would expect to see new residents, as could Santa Rosa and other surrounding counties with the attendant increase in the tax base for those counties. The result of a successful project could increase the Gross Regional Product as much as 3% over the coming years. He said substantial challenges remain in providing clear pathways to close the funding gaps that need to be addressed by state and local governments to complete the proposal. Those discussions are ongoing.

Dr. Harper noted the importance of integrating the training being proposed by the Escambia County School District to assist in providing the sustainable workforce stream to this major project.

Chair Gaetz said that this proposal is very important to the future of Northwest Florida, but that staff is working to evaluate the needs of the project in moving towards bringing it before the Board. Mr. Connally asked what timeline might be in play to bring the proposal to the Board. Dr. Harper said that significant work is already being done to move the proposal forward, but that discussions relative to closing the remaining funding gaps are ongoing and could move quickly compared to any other large projects. He said it could be more like several months than several years to moving forward. Mr. Connally and Mr. Riggs both said that it is important to move this proposal forward as quickly as possible. Chair Gaetz said he would be reaching out to state and local government leadership to work to close the gap. Mr. Connally said he would do the same.

Mayor Mike Thomas, Panama City Beach, said that ball tournaments, and sports, are indicators of positive tourism in a community. He said that the ball tournaments remain even when weather or other issues cause problems with beach tourism. He said the sports tourism sector has transformed the Panama City Beach economy and should be considered for grants awards from Triumph Gulf Coast.

Mr. Dan Rowe, Bay County Tourism Development Council, thanked the Board and staff for listening to the concerns in generating sports tourism and small businesses, and for creating the subgroups to discuss both sports tourism and the oyster industry.

Teresa Blackwell, of Beulah, said that the airport project sounds great, and training is wonderful, but please consider the types of industry that may be brought in to the OLF8 industrial park in Escambia County to protect the residents.

Mayor Ashton Heyward, City of Pensacola, thanked the Board for being in Pensacola, and for staying focused on transformation, particularly on the Aviation Corridor in Northwest Florida, to bring economic growth to the region.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:07 p.m. CT.