

## Business Development Committee Meeting - Meeting Minutes – Feb. 6, 2024

**Council Members Present:** Dr. Jessica Greene, Kelli Lane, Scott Batts, Cheryl Diebold, Michelle Griffin, Andrew Finch, Kim Fowler, Samantha Huff, Mike Jones, Michael McGraw, Heather Pui, Michael Sokolik Jr., Gabby Smychynsky, Sven Springwald, Jason Toy, Stephanie Warren, Kristy Yelle.

**Staff Present:** Cindy Gettig, Amanda Bailey, Mark Shaaber.

**Meeting called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Dr. Jessica Greene.**

### Business Development Division Overview

Cindy Gettig

The council reviewed their packets which included information about the chamber, the business development division, Business Development Committee mission, council contacts, the Board of Directors list and Robert's Rules of Order. Cindy informed the council the chamber is a membership organization supported by around 2,400 businesses and nonprofit organizations. The mission of the chamber is to promote, protect and improve the business community and work to make the community a better place to work and play. The area's economic success and quality of life is directly impacted by the work the chamber performs. Seventy-five percent of the Grand Strand is made up of small businesses, which is defined as 100 or less employees and most are less than 50 employees.

### Chamber Update

Cindy Gettig

The Legislative Reception will be held in Columbia on Feb. 27. There will be a bus provided for anyone who would like to ride up the day of. The next signature event will be held on April 25 and that's our Annual Meeting. Nominations are now open. Volunteer of the year will be on May 16 at the Myrtle Beach Train Depot. Ignite Women's Council met last Friday, and we are currently in the planning phase and working with the convention center to secure a date. Three additional women's events will happen throughout the year.

### Partnership Grand Strand Update

Mark Shaaber

Mark provided a background of PGS and their mission. It's a foundation under the chamber of commerce. Peggy Masterson is the Director of PGS and worked with BJ Beaver, Workforce Manager to shape a strategic plan for the foundation. Mark focuses on small business retention and expansion. Mark's goal is to learn what small businesses need and communicate that to the community. PGS is the middleman between businesses and the community, and their goal is to learn from businesses and

educate others. Mark reviewed his notes from a webinar he recently attended with the US Chamber of Commerce, which reviewed the status of the economy. The next job fair will be at the Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort on Feb. 29, and another job fair at Myrtle Beach High School on April 20. Cindy asked Mark what he is hearing from small businesses. He's hearing a lot of perception items and how the economy is good and growing, but there is concern on how many rules and regulations there are to being a small business. 2022 had a large increase in business creation. Heather asked about the massive labor shortages and if Mark had heard anything about that. He said the shortages have not leveled off and the need is still great, it's not just a county or state issue but a country issue. According to the US Chamber of Commerce data, for every one-hundred jobs there are seventy job seekers. Some of the shortages have to do with individuals deciding to retire. The biggest struggle is making sure that the inflation rates are managed, and wages are raised to keep individuals here to work. There will be a focus group held on March 21 to review items of frustration that the community has and discuss resolutions for these issues. Mark encouraged anyone who could attend to attend and reach out to him to RSVP. The feedback from these focus groups will be shared with our legislators through James Toy, PGS's legislative liaison. The technology workforce is growing in the county and Myrtle Beach Downtown Alliance is working to address the housing issues through providing homes in the downtown area. We are working on attainable housing for the workforce currently and hope to achieve this through partnership with our local and state officials and the city.

#### 2024 Programs & Services Discussion

All

Cindy asked the committee to discuss any services or programs that would be beneficial to them and their industry. A lot of interest is in AI and a class will be created to explain it and how it can assist the workforce. Michael mentioned that one of the speakers did a chamber academy and did not have a great attendance and wanted to know if there was another way to get people interested in attending the classes. Cindy mentioned we are strictly reviewing the content that we are providing because we believe less is more. And our goal is to provide quality courses over having a large amount of education classes. Kim mentioned that after COVID the attendance went down and could potentially have been affected by Facebook lives we were doing. Many people like the flexibility to watch online, but it hindered the amount of people that attended physically. Heather mentioned since small businesses are so busy, we may want to rethink how we are marketing to them to gain their interest. Cindy mentioned that Coastal Carolina University is a great resource for providing interns to businesses that are in need. PGS is also working on an intern program to help bridge the gap between businesses and interns. The Wall Fellows Program is another good resource to acquiring interns for your business. Some of the classes that were mentioned was social media trends and techniques, how to start your own nonprofit, branding 101, AI 101 and AI classes that build upon one another, as well as creating classes around a certain time of year, like the QuickBooks series.

Adjourn

Cindy Gettig

**Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m. by Dr. Jessica Greene.**