



Hillsborough  
County Florida



## Hillsborough / Pinellas Workforce Development Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: May 2, 2024 at 3:00 PM EST

Location (Hybrid): CareerSource Tampa Bay Conference Room / ZOOM

### Committee Members Attendance

#### Present:

Members: Sean Butler, Barclay Harless, Scott Thomas, Gary Hartfield

### Others In attendance

- Hillsborough County Government: Commissioner Joshua Wostal, Ron Barton, Katherine Benson (remote)
- Pinellas County Government: Commissioner Rene Flowers, Dr. Cynthia Johnson
- Newland Associates: Michelle Epstein
- CareerSource Tampa Bay: Tammy Stahlgren

#### I. Call to Order, Welcome, Roll Call and Remarks

Scott Thomas, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. There was a quorum present.

#### II. Public Comments

Michael Jalazo, CS Pinellas Board Member, voiced his concern spoke about being invited to participate on the CEO Selection Committee and no one informed him that he was informed that he would not be on that committee after reaching out several times. He is willing to continue to serve on this committee. He's attended every committee meeting and think selecting the CEO is incredibly important.

Esther Matthews, CS Pinellas Board Member, spoke about concern for transparency and due diligence in the CEO selection process.

Scott Thomas, Chair asked for legal opinion regarding if a current board member of the new LWDB can speak at today's Advisory Committee Meeting. Katherine Benson responded that only the advisory committee members may speak during the meeting. Others may only speak during public comments or presentations.

Dr. Rebecca Sarlo, CS Pinellas Board Member, spoke about the importance of the CEO selection process being transparent and sharing of information with both (CS Pinellas & CS Tampa Bay) board members. She added concern that public statements could bring doubt to the fairness of the process as well as the community watching the process and cited a recent Hillsborough County Commission meeting as an example.

Barclay Harless mentioned his support for the current process and idea for a Selection Committee of 16 but realized that was too large and supported a smaller sized selection committee. He does not agree that the process was not transparent. He has been completely transparent and hoped to assure CS Pinellas Board members why the change transpired.

Jay Burkey, CS Pinellas, asked that Commissioner Wostal excuse himself from the CEO Search Committee because of comments he made at the recent Hillsborough County Commission meeting that he would not support the internal candidate.

### III. Action/Discussion Items

- A. Approval of Minutes - April 22, 2024, Hillsborough / Pinellas Workforce Development Advisory Committee Meeting

**Motion:**

To approve the minutes of April 22, 2024, Hillsborough / Pinellas Workforce Development Advisory Committee Meeting.

Motion moved by Barclay Harless and motion seconded by Sean Butler. Motion carried.

- B. Approval of CEO Selection Process Next Steps

- 1. Discuss Candidate Interviews

There was a comprehensive discussion among the participants regarding the candidate's leadership roles in the new organization.

Chair Scott Thomas stated that the previously approved process was to recommend a candidate to the new regional LWDB for approval, then to the Consortium for final approval. He asked if members wanted to continue with or change this process. He noted the Consortium asked the Advisory Committee to organize the recruitment efforts and come back with a candidate.

Dr. Cynthia Johnson said she feels the interview process has been transparent but feels that the overall process has not been transparent and she has not received a response to her suggestion that the Consortium be advised of the process and have an opportunity to weigh in on the process. She added that a comment made in a public meeting regarding one of the candidates at a Hillsborough County Commission meeting warranted discussion in order to be fair to the candidate and the process.

Commissioner Flowers asked for a legal opinion of the Public Comment that a member of the search committee be excused from that

committee. Katherine Benson responded that she was unable to provide a speculative advisory opinion.

There was discussion about the consolidation update provided to and comments made at the recent Hillsborough County Commission meeting.

Commissioner Wostal asked Ms. Benson to address concerns voiced and Katherine Benson didn't have an opinion that could be speculative.

Commissioner Flowers expressed concern about the selection process, her commitment to the selection process because of its importance, and the lack of communication and transparency during this process. She presented the order of her ranking of the interviewed candidates (1. Kyla, 2. Jinny, 3. Steve) and then excused herself from the remainder of the meeting.

Dr. Cynthia Johnson stated that she does not agree with advancing only one candidate to the new Board for approval and recommends presenting all three candidates to the new Board to give them a choice instead of only one candidate. She mentioned that she sought legal counsel from GrayRobinson for clarity about the process and they agreed with moving forward all three candidates to the Board.

Chair Scott Thomas mentioned that the transparent plan was for the Advisory Committee to send a recommendation to the new Board and that the recommendation could be two recommended candidates if the Advisory Committee chooses. He added that he takes offense that this body was not transparent. On the same day of the meeting when changes to the Selection Committee were made, the Pinellas County representative was changed. Every one of these meetings have been public, every interview has been public, and anyone could have joined and watched any of these meetings because they were posted.

**Motion:**

Sean Butler motioned to advance a primary and a backup candidate, two candidates, to the new Board for approval. If the Board rejects both candidates, then Newland Associates (Recruiter) must go back to the drawing board and proceed with the recruiting process. Motion was seconded by Barclay Harless. Motion carried.

**Amendment to Motion:**

Barclay Harless made a friendly amendment to the motion to include rankings of the candidates from all selection committee members. Motion was seconded by Sean Butler. Motion carried.

2. Provide Candidate Ranking

Each selection committee member shared their observations and considerations of each candidate, highlighting each candidate's strengths and areas of concern.

Selection committee members presented their rankings of the interviewed candidates as follows:

- Ron Barton: 1) Jinny, 2) Kyla, 3) Steve
- Dr. Cynthia Johnson: 1) Jinny, 2) Kyla, 3) Steve
- Commissioner Joshua Wostal: 1) Jinny, 2) Steve, 3) Kyla
- Barclay Harless: 1) Jinny, 2) Kyla, 3) Steve
- Gary Hartfield: 1) Jinny, 2) Kyla, 3) Steve
- Scott Thomas: 1) Steve, 2) Jinny, 3) Kyla
- Sean Butler: 1) Jinny, 2) Kyla, 3) Steve
- Commissioner Flowers (previously presented): 1) Kyla, 2) Jinny, 3) Steve

Michelle Epstein tabulated and reported the overall order of candidate ranking: 1) Jinny, 2) Kyla, 3) Steve.

3. Approval of Top Candidate

Jinny Rietmann was identified as the top candidate and Kyla Guyette was identified as the back up candidate.

4. Both Chairs to Negotiate Contract with Selected Candidate

Sean Butler expressed concern about how he and Scott Thomas (as Chairs of the CS Pinellas and CS Tampa Bay Boards) can negotiate the candidate's contract and be compliant with Sunshine Law.

Michelle Epstein stated that she will handle all communications with the candidate regarding salary and contract negotiations.

**Motion:**

Barclay Harless proposed that the Advisory Committee Chair begin working with Newland Associates to start salary negotiations with the first candidate. Motion seconded by Sean Butler. Motion carried.

IV. Information/Discussion Items

A. Next Steps

V. Future Action / Discussion Items

A. Approval of the CEO at the Newly Formed LWDB Board Meeting (May 30, 2024)

B. Approval of the CEO at the Consortium meeting (June 4, 2024)

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.  
Minutes prepared by Tammy Stahlgren, CareerSource Tampa Bay, Executive  
Administrative Assistant.