

**CareerSource Pinellas  
Special Board of Directors Minutes**

**Date:** Friday, February 11, 2022

**Location:** 13805 58th St. N. Room 2-304, Clearwater, FL 33760 & Zoom

**Call to Order**

Board of Directors Chair, Barclay Harless, called the meeting to order at 8:00 am. There was a quorum present with the following board members.

**Board Members in Attendance**

Barclay Harless, Belinthia Berry, Candida Duff, David Fetkener, Dr. Rebecca Sarlo, Glenn Willocks, Ivonne Alvarez, Jack Geller, Jody Armstrong, John Howell, Kenneth Williams, Kevin Knutson, Mark Hund, Michael Jalazo, Michael Logal, Michele Mathews, Patricia Sawyer, Scott Thomas, Zachary White, Elizabeth Siplin

**Board Members Not in Attendance**

Andrea Cianek, Celeste Fernandez, Chris Owens, Commissioner Rene Flowers, Debbie Passerini, Lisa Cane

**Board Counsel**

Stephanie Marchman

**Staff in Attendance**

Jennifer Brackney, Steven Meier, Kristopher Lucas, Amy Leuschke

**Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**Action Item 1 – Approval of the Minutes – 11.17.21 Board of Directors**

The minutes of the January 19, 2022, Board of Directors meeting were presented for approval.

**Discussion:** None

Motion:	Jack Geller
Second:	Michael Jalazo

*The minutes were approved as presented. This motion carried unanimously. There was no further discussion.*

**Action Item 2 – CEO Voluntary Resignation, Severance Agreement, and Appointment of Acting CEO**

Chair Harless has called this special meeting of the Board pursuant to Article VII, Section 1.F. of the CareerSource Pinellas By-Laws. CEO Jennifer Brackney seeks to voluntarily resign from her employment with CareerSource Pinellas in accordance with the terms set forth in the Severance Agreement included in the Board packet.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Board accept Ms. Brackney's voluntarily resignation and approve the Severance Agreement. The Board appoint an acting CEO of CareerSource Pinellas, subject to approval of the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, and direct staff to develop a proposed recruiting and hiring process for the next CEO of CareerSource of Pinellas for the Board's consideration at its next regular meeting.

**Discussion**

Ms. Stephanie Marchman offered an overview of CEO Brackney’s Severance Agreement and Employment Agreement and associated amendments. A guest identified as Jon Marshall asked if CEO Brackney’s resignation was voluntary, which was affirmed by CEO Brackney.

Motion:

A motion was made to accept CEO Brackney’s voluntary resignation and the severance terms.

<b>Motion:</b>	Jack Geller
<b>Second:</b>	Scott Thomas

*The motion was approved as presented. This motion carried unanimously.*

CEO Brackney Requested her letter of resignation be submitted into the minutes, which was agreed to, and requested to say a few words. CEO Brackney stated:

“I appreciate the opportunity to work alongside the board and am proud of what we have accomplished with our employees and partners that ultimately made a difference in the lives of individuals, families, and businesses in our community. My role was one of a change agent working to address the ethical and financial challenges created under the former CEO and the still-ongoing investigation by the US Department of Labor’s Compliance review. I took to heart the board’s direction to right the ship and implement best practices.

I also accept why we are here today. These changes were part of a difficult journey of transformation, which also meant changes within our internal operations. Although the vast majority of our employees saw the benefits and wanted to be a part of the solutions, those changes were not always universally embraced by staff. I understand, that is part of transformation and change!

I am proud of my record of service and the positive performance evaluations received by the board over my tenure as CEO. I also appreciate the board’s approval of the severance agreement and value my relationships with members of this board. I wish CareerSource Pinellas, our dedicated employees, and the Board all the best in the future.

Mr. Chair, if I may, I like to read my resignation letter, or request that it be submitted as part of the minutes. I’ll also send a copy to the board.”

The attached letter was submitted as a matter of record into the minutes.

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February 11, 2022

Dear Chair Harless and Members of CareerSource Pinellas Board of Directors:

Following seven years of dedicated service to CareerSource Pinellas, I am submitting my resignation as Chief Executive Officer. This decision is in the best interest of our organization and will allow the Board to proceed with the discussion on realignment and merger in response to the collaboration called for in new Florida legislation approved in July of 2021. Thank you for your leadership in ensuring strong services and programs for job seekers and local businesses in our community. It has been my pleasure to work for and with you.

I joined CareerSource Pinellas as a director on February 11, 2015, and was elevated to the interim Executive Director on February 1, 2018, and CEO on November 1, 2018. As CEO, my role was one of a change agent, working to address the myriad of ethical and financial challenges created under the leadership of the former CEO and the subsequent and still ongoing investigation by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Compliance Review. I clearly understood the direction of the Board to take steps to “right the ship” and implement best practices while focusing on providing the best services possible to job seekers and local businesses.

I am incredibly proud of the dedicated team of CareerSource Pinellas employees who have worked with me in that regard. Examples of that dedication are reflected in outcomes for this program year, including providing career services to 7,725 individuals and providing services to more than 900 employers in our service area.

At the leadership level over the past few years, we engaged the Board in a robust process to chart our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan to provide a dynamic blueprint for sustainability and growth of the region’s talent pipeline. We also developed a comprehensive four-year Local Workforce Development Plan with an inclusive approach to stakeholder feedback and input. Our team has also weathered the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and continuously provided services to customers who desperately needed our assistance during challenging times.

My commitment as the CEO to best practices is evidenced by the fact that we met or exceeded 15 US Department of Labor performance indicators for the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act (WIOA) for the last program year. As the change agent, I led our team in diligently tackling the USDOL’s 17 findings and three areas of concern from earlier leadership to align our programs and services with best practices that comply with local, state, and federal guidelines. These changes were part of a difficult journey of transformation, which also meant changes within our internal operations. Although the vast majority of our employees saw the benefits and wanted to be a part of the solutions, those changes were not always universally embraced by staff. I understand that is part of transformation and change and believe the additional employee engagement opportunities presented to the Compensation Review Committee last week can further enhance our team focus while elevating customer service.

Change and positive transformation will undoubtedly remain as CareerSource Pinellas holds true to its mission of elevating talent and constantly enhancing services to customers. I am proud of the fact that my last formal recommendation, unanimously approved by the Compensation Committee, is to continue that commitment by having an open and transparent discussion on the benefits of realigning or merging our services with an area local workforce board in response to the REACH Act, signed into law by Governor DeSantis on July 1, 2021. This is an opportunity to:

- Provide significant cost savings with increased efficiencies and outcomes by leveraging regional resources.
- Enhance opportunities to expand and elevate services; customers in this region will have access to more services.
- Elevate outcomes with increased collaboration with education, business, and economic development partners.

As the state's economy continues to rebound with employers demanding more workers and more individuals seeking to return to work, now more than ever, regional job seekers, workers, and employers will benefit from this enhanced regional collaboration. This merge would support the CareerSource Florida-led integrated network and advance the customer-centered goals of the REACH Act. I value the Board's support for elevating this discussion.

I have always had a passion for workforce development and am proud of how we have positively helped so many individuals and their families, and local businesses, as we remained dedicated to the critical mission of CareerSource Pinellas. I appreciate the opportunity to serve our community and value the meaningful relationships developed with our partner organizations and customers. I wish CareerSource Pinellas and the Board all the best in the future.

Most Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Brackney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing "J" and "B".

Jennifer Brackney  
Chief Executive Officer



**Action Item 2.5 – Board Appointment of an Acting CEO of CareerSource Pinellas**

Discussion and highlight of immediate appointment of acting CEO CareerSource Pinellas. Ms. Marchman stated that the Board was required to appoint an Acting CEO for CareerSource Pinellas.

Mr. Michael Logal presented a motion to appoint Kristopher Lucas, Chief Operating Officer as Acting CEO. Discussion ensued. The Board discussed other options for appointment of Acting CEO. An amended motion was made to appoint Steven Meier, Chief Financial Officer, as Acting CEO.

**Recommendation:** The Board appoint Steven Meier as acting CEO of CareerSource Pinellas, with a salary increase of 7.5%, subject to approval of the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, and direct staff to develop a proposed recruiting and hiring process for the next CEO of CareerSource of Pinellas for the Board’s consideration at its next regular meeting.

Motion:	Jack Geller
Second:	Mike Jalazo

*The motion passed unanimously. There was no further discussion.*

**Action Item 3 – Whistle-Blower Investigation Report**

Barclay Harless, Board Chair, received a whistle-blower complaint on December 21, 2021 (“Complaint”). In accordance with this Policy, Chair Harless asked for the assistance of an outside investigator to investigate the Complaint. Specifically, Patrick Hagen in the Tallahassee office of GrayRobinson was engaged under the existing legal services agreement with GrayRobinson. Mr. Hagen investigated the Complaint and issued a report substantiating the allegations in the Complaint.

**Recommendation of the Chair:**

The Board adopt the findings and conclusion in the Investigative Report.

Motion Presented to accept Whistle Blower report findings.

Motion:	Scott Thomas
Second:	Michael Jalazo

*The motion was approved as presented. This motion carried unanimously.*

No additional comments or discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 AM.