

## Agenda

1. **Call to Order** David Bear
2. **Public Notice** (*June 16, 2025*) Tabitha Lee
3. **Roll Call** Tabitha Lee
4. **Public Comment** David Bear
5. **Approval of Agenda \*** David Bear
6. **Office Items**
  - a. Approval of May 2025 Financials \* Olevia McNally/Ryan Campbell
  - b. Approval of May 20, 2025, FWEDA Board Minutes \* David Bear
  - c. Review of June 5, 2025 Executive Committee Minutes David Bear
7. **Project & Staff Updates:**
  - a. Community Information Chris Platé
  - b. Economic Development Reports
    - Product Development Chris Platé
    - Recruitment and Retention Activities Danita Andrews / Chris Platé
  - c. CO:LAB Report Patrick Rooney
  - d. Marketing Activities Jeff Rogers
8. **Other Business** David Bear
  - a. Committees
9. **Adjourn** David Bear

\* Action Items

### Fiscal Year 24-25 Meeting Schedule

**Board Meeting: 4th Tuesday of each month from October 2024 to September 2025:**

- **July 22, 2025:** FYE 25/26 Budget Due to the PEDC approval per interlocal agreement  
Nominating committee meet

- **August 26, 2025:** Board officer nominations/Joint Meeting

- **September 23, 2025:** Board Elections

**Executive Committee Meetings: 2nd Friday of each month from October 2024 to September 2025:**

- June 13, 2025
- July 8, 2025

- August 8, 2025

## Minutes

### 1. Call to Order:

Vice President Ryan Tilley called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. President Bear joined the meeting shortly thereafter.

### 2. Public Notice:

Staff confirmed that public notice was published on May 12, 2025.

### 3. Roll Call:

President David Bear:	Present
Vice President Ryan Tilley:	Present
Secretary Dr. Charletha Powell:	Absent
Treasurer Olevia McNally:	Absent
City of Pensacola Appointee Donnie McMahon:	Absent
City of Pensacola Appointee Matt Davis:	Absent
Don Palmer:	Absent
Jim Waite:	Absent
Rick Byars	Present
Chris Plaeger:	Present
KC Gartman:	Present
Kelvin Enfinger:	Present
Justin Beck:	Present
Charlie Sherrill:	Present
Mike Morette:	Absent
Mark Roy:	Absent
Dr. Meadows:	Absent
Dr. Marcus McBride:	Absent

#### Staff and support:

Chris Platé, Danita Andrews Tabitha Lee, Patrick Rooney, Jeff Rogers, Jessica Scholl, Annie Rose

### 4. Public Comment:

Vice President Tilley requested public comment.

Director of Workforce Development for CareerSource ESCAROSA, Carolyn Fries, invited all board members to attend the upcoming Workforce Wednesday Lunch and Learn at

the Chamber at 11am, which will focus on the theme of Connecting to Tomorrow's Workforce Through Zello.

Business Roundtable Leader, Bruce Vredenburg, provided comment regarding the availability of Triumph Gulf Coast funds and requested a commitment from the board on to facilitate pursuit of these funds for the benefit of Escambia County.

**5. Approval of Agenda:**

Beck moved to approve the agenda. Byars seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**6. Approval of Financials.**

Ryan Campbell of Anglin presented the financials, including gross revenue, investor contributions, and expenses.

Beck moved to accept the April financials as presented, and President Bear seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**7. Approval of Minutes:**

Enfinger moved to approve the April 22, 2025, meeting minutes as presented; Byars seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**8. Economic Development Updates:**

Platé provided an informational update regarding PEDC's corporate structure, and the evaluation conducted by PEDC counsel in response to the Clerk's inquiry for payee confirmation.

Staff assisted PEDC in applying for a Defense Grant for SCIF study, and has awarded the feasibility study work to Baskerville-Donovan.

**a. Community Data:**

Escambia County is currently at 3.8% unemployment, as of April 29, 2025. The Florida unemployment rate is 3.6%.

The Labor Department announced that some of the job numbers were inflated and misreported during the prior federal administration, which may provide gaps in recently reported employment data.

**b. Product and Business Development:**

Tech Park

Platé provided an update on Tech Park. ECS has completed a geotechnical study and anticipates the ground should handle a four-story structure, dependent upon construction style and anticipated wind loads. A draft report will be issued soon.

### Central Commerce Park

Platé provided an update on Central Commerce Park. Staff is working to create a masterplan of Phase 2 of the Park, which will accommodate 30,000 to 100,000 square foot buildings currently in demand. This will include a functional plan, including conceptual planning, grade, and sewer.

Two potential clients have expressed interest.

Commissioner Barry confirmed staff's receipt of appraisals.

### The Bluffs

Platé provided an update on the Bluffs. The recent Chapter 11 filing by Ascend is not anticipated to impact progress, and the project is moving forward with PEDC counsel working with Ascend to finalize a contract.

### OLF8

President Bear reported that Escambia County issued correspondence to Triumph, releasing the grant funds. The private developers seeking to purchase the property have coordinated meetings to pursue qualification for grant funds in pursuit of job creation.

FloridaWest staff are working 24 projects in the current active pipeline, with a goal of 48 for the year. These 24 projects in the pipeline collectively encompass a \$500m investment, with a potential for 1,108 new jobs. There have been three announced projects for the year.

Ms. Danita Andrews reported that staff has undertaken an evaluation of foreign trade zones and is actively engaging in communications with prospects on FTZ applicability.

#### **c. CO:LAB:**

CO:LAB reported budgetary highlights, occupancy rates, and evaluation of alternative revenue generation models. CO:LAB has purchased equipment for a podcast room, which it anticipates utilizing for revenue generation, as well as for internal and marketing use.

The FloridaWest Board will soon appoint its new board appointee to the CO:LAB policy board, and the FWEDA board members need to express any interest in serving.

Staff is emphasizing efforts to facilitate and optimize collaboration between CO:LAB and FloridaWest.

#### **d. Marketing & PR.**

Platé provided a marketing activity update, including increased followers on Instagram and LinkedIn for CO:LAB and FloridaWest. CyberCoast views on LinkedIn

are down. Staff will begin participating in sponsored advertisements on LinkedIn for CyberCoast. Platé requested all Board Members actively participate in commenting and sharing posts.

Staff recently received proposals to update the CO:LAB, FloridaWest, and CyberCoast websites.

Rogers provided an update on the upcoming newsletter.

A grand opening will be held for Jupiter Bach on July 31 at noon.

**9. Other Business:**

None.

**10. Adjournment:**

President Bear adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

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Dr. Charletha Powell, Secretary  
FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance

## Minutes

**1. Call to Order:**

President David Bear called meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

**2. Administrative Items:**

**a. Public Notice**

Ms. Tabitha Lee confirmed public notice was made on May 23, 2025.

**b. Roll Call**

President David Bear	Present
Vice President Ryan Tilley	Present
Secretary Dr. Charletha Powell	Absent
Treasurer Olevia McNally	Present
Past President Rick Byars	Present

Staff and Support:

Chris Platé, Tabitha Lee, Patrick Rooney, Danita Andrews, Ryan Campbell and Jeff Rogers

Public Present: None

**c. Public Comment**

President Bear requested public comment, and no comment given.

**d. Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda for the meeting was reviewed. No comments or corrections were made. Mr. Ryan Tilley made a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Ms. Olevia McNally. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. Financial Report and Minutes:**

**a. Review of May 2025 Financial Statements**

Ms. Olevia McNally presented the financial report for the period ending May 31, 2025. She noted that the organization remains in a strong financial position. Payroll expenses came in lower than budgeted, helping to offset other areas where revenues are meeting projections, but not the inflated budget. Overall, expenses were well-managed and remained under budget.

**b. Approval of Executive Committee Minutes – April 11, 2025**

The minutes from the April 11, 2025 Executive Committee meeting were reviewed. Ms. McNally made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Rick Byars. The motion passed unanimously.

**4. Office Reports:**

**a. Community Data**

Mr. Chris Platé provided an update on regional economic conditions, noting that Escambia County, Florida reported an unemployment rate of 3.8% as of April 2025. He also highlighted a steady upward trend in the civil labor force, which reached 149,540 between January 2023 and April 2025. The board acknowledged these trends as valuable context for evaluating workforce and business development strategies.

**b. Product Development**

Mr. Platé reported ongoing activity across several business parks and strong prospect engagement. Tech Park remains the highest priority, with cost estimates being sought for property appraisal. ECS has completed the geotechnical survey, with the report expected this week, and a project has requested a draft Letter of Intent (LOI). At Central Commerce Park, staff are preparing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the working master plan and intend to pursue Triumph funding for build-out. At The Bluffs, a meeting is scheduled with Ascend to finalize and sign project documentation.

**c. Business Development**

In terms of prospect activity, there are currently 25 active projects under consideration, representing 1,208 potential new jobs and \$518 million in investment. There was no change with the announced projects - three projects, bringing 165 new jobs and \$77.6 million in capital investment to the County.

**d. CO:LAB**

Mr. Platé provided an overview of financial performance, reporting FY2024 income of \$115,245. As of the current fiscal year (FY2025), year-to-date income totals \$87,360, which represents 73% of the previous year's revenue with 66% of the year elapsed. He also presented a map of the facility that outlined revenue-generating areas, non-usable space, potential revenue opportunities, and sections currently occupied by CO:LAB. He noted that certain updates to the layout may be necessary to optimize usage.

**e. Marketing:**

Mr. Platé provided an update on the upcoming Paris Airshow meetings, outlining the scheduled appointments and key objectives. He shared a flyer he created for the event, which offers an overview and highlights of Pensacola and Escambia County, emphasizing why the area is an attractive location for business and investment. Additionally, Mr. Platé reviewed the recent test of a LinkedIn boosted post for CyberCoast. This social account is the weakest and gave the staff a good indication of what the boosts could do. He noted plans to run the campaign again, focusing more on organic engagement on the LinkedIn page rather than boosting the post.

## **5. Other Business:**

Mr. Platé proposed the establishment of potential ad hoc committees, specifically focusing on Triumph and Marketing initiatives. The committee expressed unanimous support for the idea. President David Bear appointed Mr. Bruce Vrendenburg to serve as Chair of the Triumph Committee.

Mr. Byars provided an update on the public hearings currently being conducted by the Florida Public Service Commission concerning the proposed rate increases by Florida Power & Light (FPL). He expressed appreciation for the support and extended thanks to Mr. Platé for his support of FPL.

Mr. Platé also provided an update on Project Lyft, noting that the ongoing conversations have been highly productive and indicate forward momentum.

## **6. Adjournment:**

President Bear adjourned the meeting at 9:27 a.m.

## **Fiscal Year Meeting Schedule**

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Respectfully Submitted By:

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Dr. Charletha Powell, Secretary  
FloridaWest Economic Development Alliance