

**CareerSource Heartland Joint Board of Directors Meeting  
Wednesday, January 28, 2026**

**MINUTES**

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David Royal led the members in the invocation and The Pledge of Allegiance.

**I. Call to order**

- A. The meeting was jointly called to order at 1:42 p.m. by David Royal (Chair of the Board of Directors) and Commissioner Jerod Gross (Executive Board Chair-Elect).
- B. Chair Royal inquired if any 'Request for Public Comment' had been made and was advised that none had.

**II. Introductions**

Chair Royal introduced himself and then called for introductions by Board members and others, including those participating virtually. Quorum was established. See end of minutes for all attendees.

**III. Set/Amend Agenda**

An amendment to add 3 related-party Action Items under section V. B. 1. was proposed. Chair Royal called for a motion to accept/approve the amended meeting agenda.

- A motion was made Board member, Stephanie Etter, to approve the agenda with the amendment as proposed.
- Motion seconded by Board member, Efran Schraeder.
- Motion carried.
- LEO approved.

**IV. Consent Items**

Chair Royal inquired if there were any questions/corrections to any of the consent items presented. No corrections were noted. He called for a motion to accept the minutes from the: January 20, 2026 Finance & Operations Committee; January 21, 2026 Business Enhancement Committee; January 26, 2026 Youth Council Committee; and the October 22, 2025 - Joint Board Meeting Minutes; Action- Request to Apply to Continue as a Direct Service Provider (F&O); Action- Request to Transfer PY 25-26 DWG to Adult (F&O); Action- Request to Revise Employee Handbook (F&O); and Action- Review & Discussion - Education & Industry Consortium Meeting. It was noted that the Action Items included in the Consent agenda were vetted by the Board Committees identified in the agenda.

- A motion was made by Board member, Jessy Irizarry, to approve the presented minutes.
- Motion seconded by Board member, Gary Ritter.
- Motion carried.
- LEO approved.

**V. Executive Board/ Board of Directors Chair Actions**

**A. Executive Board: Commissioner Jerod Gross, Executive Board Chair Elects**

**1. Action Item(s): Affirmation of Mandatory Board Membership Representative Change**

Referring to the Action Item, Commissioner Gross explained that the Chief Local Elected Officials CLEOs must select members according to criteria established by the Governor and the State,

which ensures a majority of its members represent business and meet the required Board composition. CareerSource Heartland requested affirmation of Sharon Wright's appointment to the CareerSource Heartland (CSH) Board of Directors. Ms. Wright has been appointed as the Area Director for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, nominated to serve in place of Wayne Olson who retired in October. Commissioner Gross read her bio into the record, welcomed her and asked for a motion to be approved by the board.

- A motion was made by Executive Board member, Commissioner Sumner, to affirm the mandatory Board membership of Ms. Sharon Wright.
- Motion seconded by Executive Board member, Commissioner Miller.
- Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Board of Directors: David Royal, Chair**

**1. Action Item(s): Requires Board and LEO Approval**

**a. Action- Workforce Services Contract – Hardee County Property Appraiser**

The Hardee County Property Appraiser has requested training funds in the amount not to exceed \$5,000 to provide work-based training opportunities to meet their workforce needs. The initial training request is for multiple employees to attend office skills, AI, and 5G Power Skills (foundational skills) training. These classes are being made available through CSH's State Rural Initiatives Grant. Staff requests approval of a Workforce Services Contract for this purpose, with a completion date of June 30, 2026.

As this is a related-party contract, Commissioner Kenny Miller, CSH Executive Board member and Commissioner on the Hardee County Board of County Commissioners, abstained from voting on this action and signed a conflict-of-interest form.

Following brief discussion, Chair Royal called for a motion.

- A motion was made by Board Member, Glenn West, to approve a Workforce Services Contract with the Hardee County Property Appraiser in an amount not to exceed \$5,000, with a completion date of June 30, 2026.
- Motion seconded by Board Member, Jessy Irizarry.
- Motion carried unanimously.
- LEO approved.

**b. Action- Workforce Services Contract – Hardee County Sheriff's Office**

The Hardee County Sheriff's Office has requested training funds in the amount not to exceed \$1,080 to provide work-based training opportunities to meet their workforce needs. The initial training request is for Microsoft classes for 6 employees. These classes are being made available through CareerSource Heartland's State Rural Initiatives Grant.

Staff requests approval of a Workforce Services Contract for this purpose, with a completion date of June 30, 2026.

As this is a related-party contract, Commissioner Kenny Miller, CSH Executive Board member and Commissioner on the Hardee County Board of County Commissioners, abstained from voting on this action and signed a conflict-of-interest form.

Following brief discussion, Chair Royal called for a motion.

- A motion was made by Board Member, Stephanie Etter, to approve a Workforce Services Contract with the Hardee County Sheriff's Office in the amount not to exceed \$1,080, with a completion date of June 30, 2026.
- Motion was seconded by Board Member, Efran Schraeder.
- Motion carried unanimously.

- LEO approved.

c. **Action- Workforce Services Contract – Highlands County Board of County Commissioners**

The Highlands County Board of County Commissioners has requested training funds in the amount not to exceed \$10,800 to provide work-based training opportunities to meet their workforce needs. The initial training request is for Customer Services training for forty (40) employees. These classes, a component of the 5G Power Skills curriculum, are being made available through CSH’s State Rural Initiatives Grant. Staff requests approval of a Workforce Services Contract for this purpose, with a completion date of June 30, 2026.

As this is a related-party contract, Commissioner Kevin Roberts, CSH Executive Board member and Commissioner on the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners, must abstain from voting on this action and must sign a conflict-of-interest form.

Following brief discussion, Chair Royal called for a motion.

- A motion was made by Board Member, Glenn West, to approve a Workforce Services Contract with the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners in the amount not to exceed \$10,800, with a completion date of June 30, 2026.
- Motion seconded by Board Member, Jessy Irizarry.
- Motion carried unanimously.
- LEO approved.

**VI. Presentations**

**A. Corinne LaRoche, CPA - James Moore Certified Public Accountants & Consultants**

**Presentation of Audit Results**

Ms. LaRoche of James Moore Certified Public Accountants & Consultants greeted the Boards and turned the meeting over to Spencer Machuga. Mr. Machuga presented the Audit. He stated no issues were identified, nor difficulties encountered, in performing the audit and credited the CSH staff for providing exemplary and detailed evaluation. Chair David Royal expressed his thanks to James Moore and Company and offered acknowledgement to Ms. Doubleday and staff for doing such a good job. Ms. Doubleday complimented James Moore staff for doing a thorough, professional and well-presented job.

**B. Video- Comcast Presentation**

The short video documented Scott Bugda from the Okeechobee Branch of CSH receiving a \$5,000 donation check from Comcast in support of the digital skills training provided through CSH.

**VII. Committee Reports/Actions**

**A. Business Enhancement Committee: David Royal, Chair/Donna Doubleday/President/ CEO**

Ms. Doubleday reported that the Business Enhancement Committee met on 1/21/2026. They reviewed the quarterly report for the December 3, 2025, CSH Education and Industry Consortium Meeting. A copy of the report was included in the Board’s packet in the Consent section. She briefly reviewed the report, adding that the Committee had no recommendations to bring before the Board. Board members expressed no concerns with the information presented and made no recommendations for further action.

**B. Youth Council: Gary Ritter, Chair/ Donna Doubleday, CSH President/ CEO**

Mr. Ritter reported that the Youth Council met on 1/26/2026. Mr. Ritter praised Youth Program Coordinator Eddie Cuencas’ presentation, adding that his passion for serving youth was apparent and commendable. The meeting consisted of Mr. Cuencas’ presentation on the Youth Program at CSH.

A copy of the presentation was included in the Board's packet. Ms. Doubleday elaborated on the data from the presentation noting that even with the budget cuts and decrease in staff, for the Youth, the transition from South Florida State College Panther Youth Partners Program to CareerSource Heartland's Youth Program was seamless. The youth themselves never felt unattended. She also shared some of the challenges to youth education and employment and how the program offers mentorship and support to those facing such challenges.

**C. Finance & Operations Committee: William Allbritton, Committee Chair**

Mrs. Doubleday presented the written report submitted by the Finance & Operations for the Committee Chair, William Allbritton. The Committee met on 1/20/2026. A quorum was present at this meeting. There were two new community members introduced, Lucy Castillo and Bill Stephenson. The Committee reviewed the Financial Reports covering 7/1/2025 through 11/30/2025, included in the Board packet beginning on page 120. No concerns were expressed regarding the reports. She mentioned the three action items that were vetted at the meeting, voted on and unanimously recommended for Board approval and brought forth to the Board's Consent Agenda: Request to Apply to Continue as a Direct Service Provider, Request for Transfer of Dislocated Worker Funding to Adult Funding, and Request to Revise Employee Handbook- Leave Use and Payout. A final action item was presented to the board that required 2/3 vote from the board as it is a related party item.

**1. Action- Request to Increase Contract - Sunshine Staffing EOR for CSH (F&O)**

As presented during the January 20, 2026, F & O Committee meeting and with a unanimous vote to approve by the committee, CSH staff requests an increase to Sunshine Staffing's contract to serve as employer of record for CSH temporary employees from \$7,500 to \$23,000, through June 30, 2026. This is an increase of \$15,500. This would allow CSH to continue to meet emergency needs while searching for the talent needed to properly fulfill open positions.

As this is a related-party contract, Jessy Irizarry, CSH Board member and employee of Sunshine Staffing abstained from voting on this action and signed a conflict-of-interest form.

Following brief discussion, Chair Royal called for a motion.

- A motion was made by Board Member, Stephanie Etter, to approve increasing Sunshine Staffing's contract to serve as employer of record for CSH temporary employees from \$7,500 to \$23,000, through June 30, 2026.
- Motion seconded by Board Member, Efran Schraeder.
- Motion carried unanimously.
- LEO approved.

**2. Information Items**

- a. PY 2025-26 THMP Financial and Programmatic Monitoring Report
- b. Financial Statements/Audit
- c. CEO Travel and Credit Card Charges

The Financial and Programmatic Monitoring and Financial Statements/Audit reports were included in the Board's packet. Committee members expressed no concerns regarding the information presented and praised staff for doing a great job.

The Committee reviewed the President/CEO's credit card charges and travel expenses. Since the last meeting Mrs. Doubleday had \$2481.50 in credit card charges for licensing and books needed for the entrepreneurial workshops funded by the State Rural Initiative Grant. Her travel expenses totaled \$145.90, for local travel and workforce-related meetings.

**VIII. Executive Reports**

**A. President/CEO Report: Donna Doubleday**

The report was as presented in the packet with specific mention made to the items updated after the report was submitted below.

- **Board vacancies/changes**  
Congratulations were offered to Sharon Wright being appointed to the Board. She will be filling two seats, both as Government Representative- Vocational Rehabilitation, and Workforce-Community Organization representing individuals with disabilities.
- **Committee Community Members**  
During Florida Commerce monitoring it was learned that each active standing committee must include at least one community member who is a voting member of the Committee but not a member of the Board. Christina Martin (DVR) has been serving as an active community member of CSH's Youth Council. To ensure compliance, three community members have been added to Committee membership as follows:  
Andrew Bennett, Deputy Director for Sebring Airport – Business Enhancement  
Bill Stephenson, Executive Director of Samaritan's Touch Care Center – Finance & Operations  
Lucy Castillo, Farmworker Program Director for Florida Non-Profit Housing – Finance & Operations.
- **Rural Initiatives**  
CSH recently added career readiness and job retention workshops for incarcerated individuals and is working out details with Hardee and Okeechobee County Sheriff's Offices to provide these in the jails.

**B. Programs Report:**

As presented in the packet with no items of note and no concerns voiced.

**C. Finance Report:**

Financial reports for FY 2025-26 YTD November 30, 2025, and financial reports for FY 2025-26 through November 30, 2025, were as presented as explained by Mrs. Doubleday's written report on the activities of the F&O Committee.

**IX. Time for Board Members/Other**

**A. Updates by Economic Development Representatives and/or their respective Commissioners**

Commissioner Jerod Gross provided updates for Desoto County. Commissioner Kenny Miller gave updates for Hardee County. Yarima Cuencas gave updates for Highlands County. Commissioner Michael Sumner and Alex Tijerina reported updates for Okeechobee County.

**B. Center Manager Reports**

CSH Center Branch Coordinator Mary Smith presented updates for Okeechobee and Donna Doubleday gave the updates for the Desoto, Hardee, and Highlands One-Stop Centers, respectively.

**C. Other**

Mr. Ritter gave accolades to Ms. Smith for her community involvement and presence which has helped promote CSH in the county.

Ms. Doubleday thanked Indian River and South Florida State Colleges for their collaboration flexibility, and support with the special grants programs.

Commissioner Gross again commended Ms. Doubleday and her team for doing such a great job on the audit.

**C. Next Board Meeting**

Chair Royal announced the next board meeting will be held on April 15, 2026 at the CSH office in Sebring.

#### **D. Adjourn**

As there were no other matters brought before the Board of Directors and/or the Executive Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:5 p.m.

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**Board members present/participating:** David Royal – Chair, Andrea Broomfield, Bille Jo Decker, Stephanie Etter, Sondra Guffey, Skylar Harrison, Dawn Hoover, Yessenia Irizarry, Gary Ritter, Emily Roesner, Raymond Royce, Efran Schraeder, Alex Tijerina, Glenn West, Amanda Wilson, and \*Sharon Wright- \*membership approved during the meeting

**Board members absent:** William Allbritton, Leigh Ann Bellamy, Sonja Bennett, Joshua Exendine, Senator Denise Grimsley, Fred Hawkins, Rick Herndon, Christen Johnson, Debbi Mancini, and Katherine McAuley

**Executive Board members present/participating:** Commissioner Jerod Gross- Chair-Elect, Commissioner Kenny Miller, Commissioner Michael Sumner

**Executive Board members absent:** Commissioner Kevin Roberts – Executive Chair

**CareerSource Heartland staff present/participating:** Michele Arena, Donna Doubleday, Nica Morgan, Mary Smith

**Public attendance:** Yarima Cuencas- Highlands EDC, Corinne LaRoche and Spencer Machuga-James Moore