Business Development Committee Meeting - Meeting Minutes – Aug. 1, 2024

Council Members Present: Dr. Jessica Greene, Kelli Lane, Scott Batts, Lauren Balough, Cheryl Diebold, Michelle Griffin, Andrew Finch, Kim Fowler, Jenny Halstead, Michael McGraw, Heather Pui, Gabby Smychynsky, Kate Soltoian, Stephanie Warren, Kristy Yelle.

Staff Present: Cindy Gettig, Amanda Bailey, BJ Beaver.

Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Dr. Jessica Greene.

eMYRge Update — Jenny Halstead

Jenny shared her background of where she started and how she ended up in Myrtle Beach. She is originally from Minneapolis and started in a small tech company, she was the first woman hired and was on a team with three other developers. The developers needed someone to translate tech into regular English for others to understand. The company had grown to fifty employees by the time she left. In this job she learned how to be agile in a fast-paced environment. She went on to start several of her own businesses. Jenny built many fitness centers and coworking spaces; to support these businesses she received Angel investment funding. The creation of these businesses, specifically health fitness grew a love of developing people and coaching people in their businesses. eMYRge's mission aligns closely with the mission of the Business Development Committee. The goal and purpose of eMYRge is to foster communication and make connections across all networks. Jenny encourages individuals that are in the beginning phases of wanting to start their own businesses and helps connect them with others who can help grow their business. The tech field is a market that is quickly growing and easily accessible. The chamber and PGS are great connectors to individuals who are wanting to start up their own business. eMYRge allows for a safe space to talk through your business ideas. Community, partnerships and growth are very important to eMYRge and supporting the tech and business community. Education is eMYRge's charitable purpose and financial partners are needed to support the nonprofit organization. Support of the nonprofit eMYRge allows for development of classes and education opportunities. The HTC Aspire Hub houses coworking space and has over one hundred businesses and individuals who are members of the space. This membership also includes being part of an ESO (Entrepreneur Support Organization). There are many of these groups within the state of South Carolina. One of Jenny's roles is to learn from other ESO's to be able to bring the information back to Myrtle Beach to grow her current and future members. The last part of eMYRge is incubation and that is yet to be built in Myrtle Beach. The goal is to support the local tech businesses so they can grow and be successful and stay in Myrtle Beach. Tech has a low barrier to entry; you do not need higher education to be a part of the tech industry. Nikki Kitz is working on a tech project called Ask Myrtle. The software will provide feedback to businesses on

how they can improve their operations. Ask Myrtle will be going live soon. Another business that went through the incubator space just received venture funding for $3 million dollars. eMYRge is expanding into the 5000 sq. ft. space next door. This will allow for more offices and classroom spaces to be offered. The goal is to have this complete in less than a year. The HTC Aspire Hub is named after HTC because of the funding they provided to build the office and classroom space, eMYRge is the nonprofit housed within the space. A variety of passes and memberships are offered to individuals and businesses. Day passes are available.

Chamber Update — Cindy Gettig

The Ignite Women's Conference is happening on Oct. 4, registration is open, vendor space is $350 and includes two tickets. The keynote speaker is Amelia Rose Earhart, she is a pilot that flew the route that Amelia Earhart did not finish. This will be a great fun packed day! August 29 is the Headshots & Happy Hour event for women that will take place at the chamber.

Partnership Grand Strand Update — BJ Beaver

BJ is now the Business Development and Retention Manager. He will continue to support the workforce initiatives but will now be taking over Mark Shaaber's responsibilities with small business support. PGS hired a new Business Retention & Development Coordinator. The main responsibility of her role will be to learn the pain points of small businesses and will be assisting BJ with going into the community to learn more about the needs of the workforce. BJ asked ambassadors to share feedback that they may receive from businesses that join the chamber to help PGS better support them. PGS is partnering with the Build Something Amazing program, which is similar to Pathways to Possibilities, the focus will be on construction related careers. Students will be able to interact with the construction businesses and learn hands on experience. Five hundred students are expected to attend the event on November 20. This is in partnership with Horry County schools. The event will be held at the Horry Georgetown Technical College's conference center and will be a tented outside event. Students will be bussed from their high school to the event. Volunteers will be needed. There is also a healthcare program similar to the Build Something Amazing program. There is a huge need for healthcare workers and PGS's goal is to grow the workforce in Horry County. Our healthcare numbers compared to Charleston are extremely low. SCORE and PGS are holding a business mixer for the community. It will be a non-affiliated networking event that will be on Oct. 9 at General Robert H. Reed Recreation Center.

Other Discussion Items — All

Adjourn — Dr. Jessica Greene

Meeting adjourned at 9:59 a.m. by Dr. Jessica Greene.