

Education & Workforce Branch – Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM | JUNE 15, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET,
SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 11:00 AM on June 15, 2023, Dr. Mike Martin, Branch Lead, convened the Education & Workforce Branch meeting. The following members were present:

- Dr. Mike Martin, Lead
- Mike Wukitsch
- T. Sharon Woodberry
- John Roth
- Dr. Guido Minaya
- Katy Errington
- Laura Siebenmorgen

Facilitator and Branch Support:

- Jon Romine, Collaboratory
- Robbie Heere, Hagerty Consulting
- Jaesa Rogers, Hagerty Consulting

Introductions

Jon Romine, facilitator of the Education & Workforce Branch, provided a review of the work of the Recovery Task Force (RTF) and its Branches. Mr. Romine reviewed the timeline for the RTF, emphasizing the move from Phase One to Phase Two of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (the Plan).

He noted the purpose of the meeting:

- Review workshop sessions and key outcomes;
- Review and validate potential Initiatives; and
- Discuss what Initiatives require a Technical Brief.

Recovery Task Force (RTF) Updates

Mr. Romine reviewed the work of the Recovery Task Force at the last meeting, including discussions around Neighborhood Master Plans, Community Engagement, and the Project Intake Form.

Workshop Feedback

Mr. Romine provided an overview of the Workshops and Initiatives that were identified in the sessions. He summarized the key solutions identified in the Workshops, specific to education, workforce, and community resilience.

Mr. Wukitsch asked if people outside of this process understand the importance of having spaces for individuals to connect and express themselves and how to get people talking about them. Mr. Romine summarized the Cultural Resources Branch and their efforts to address that need.

Initiatives Feedback

Mr. Romine provided an example of an Initiative, the Projects that support it, and the method to understand the documents prepared by the Branch.

Mr. Roth asked if the data supports the Initiatives that are being promoted. Mr. Romine explained the development of Technical Briefs that could inform additional Initiatives as needed.

Mr. Wukitsch brought up the Children's Services Council (CSC) and the need to expand services to include families and to support parents. Dr. Minaya described how CSCs, both independent or dependent, distribute funding for programs to support children and families. The solution to support children and families in the counties with programs and services is more than just establishing a CSC. The members agreed that there would be two Initiatives that support each other.

Dr. Kenneth Savage was recognized to describe the need to expand technical college programs in the eastern portion of Lee County by building a new location. Mr. Roth supported the project and recognized the need.

Dr. Martin stated that these programs are typically delivered in a brick-and-mortar location. He suggested a shift to alternative ways to create skill sets. The solution could be multifaceted in a way to increase access. Mr. Romine summarized the Initiative to increase

access to career and technical training. The project to expand the technical college would be listed under this Initiative.

Ms. Calloway stated that programs do compete and that all contractors are looking for pre-apprenticeship-trained graduates, but the concern of the students is transportation and access. Mr. Romine connected this to the sector strategy on construction.

Dr. Minaya brought up the small business education portal for development training as an Initiative that was identified during the Workshop series.

Dr. Martin discussed the need to address labor shortages by discussing immigration. He suggested the need to set up a method to improve the system of immigration visas that includes other support services. He stated that the labor does not support the needs.

Dr. Martin stated that the area university is trying to attract an osteopathic program to campus.

Mr. Roth suggested that family literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) adult programs be increased. He asked if there were opportunities to increase family literacy as a program. Ms. Woodberry suggested that technology be embedded in the K-12 educational system for career opportunities. She suggested a Project related to increasing technology components in K-12 academies.

Branch Technical Briefs

Mr. Romine explained the development of Technical Briefs, Branch Action Plans, and Initiatives in the development of the Plan.

Questions and Next Steps

The next Branch meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2023, from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM.

Public Comment

Betsy Haesemeyer shared that Costa Rica has a free technical college system followed by serving for five years in a rural community. She suggested a financial incentive for those who stay for a certain number of years in the region. She underlined the importance of technical expertise and education.

Alex Breault agreed with the construction pipeline and mentioned a green and energy-efficient construction to be sustainable as a community.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mr. Romine thanked the members for attending and then adjourned the meeting at 12:23 PM.