

You Thrive Florida
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2026

MEETING LOCATION: Hernando County Chamber of Commerce
15588 Aviation Loop Drive
Brooksville, FL 34604

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jennene Norman-Vacha, Board Chair; James Morris, Vice Chair; Michelle Alford, Donna Maas, and Thomas Valdez

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Mat Kline, CEO; Kris Bates, CFO; Lisa Becker, CAO; Steve Homan, COO; Michael Aloian, VP of Finance; Cristy Labadie, Controller; Richard Sanvenero, House to Home Director; Jeff Cottrell, Paratransit Director; Karen Schulz, Community Assistance Director; Melanie Harrison, Senior Services Director; Chad Johnston, IT Director; Janine Kell, Children's Advocacy Program Director; Tanya Stone, Director of Early Learning Programs; Jamie Young, Principal BEST Academy; Vanessa Qualina, Human Resources Director; Kacee Graulich, Program Services Manager; and Melissa Mace, Executive Administrative Coordinator.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Steve Champion and Aaron Lyon

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Tracy Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer; Evone Jackson, and Angelys Vega

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Norman-Vacha, Board Chair, called the April 8, 2026 meeting of the You Thrive Florida ("YTF") Governing Board to order at 9:02 am. Ms. Norman-Vacha noted that a quorum was met as evidenced by the number of Board Members present in-person, and via teleconference Ms. Norman-Vacha led in the pledge of allegiance and a group prayer.

Ms. Norman-Vacha asked if the board had time to review the board packet that included minutes of the January 14, 2026 meeting and consent agenda items 1-7. Ms. Norman-Vacha asked if there were any questions regarding the items in the board report or if any consent agenda items need to be pulled for further discussion. No questions were presented by board members.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 14, 2026 MINUTES: Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2026 meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Morris moved to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2026 meeting. Mr. Valdez seconded the motion. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 1-7: Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to approve the consent agenda items 1-7.

MOTION: Ms. Maas moved to approve the consent agenda items 1-7. Ms. Alford seconded the motion. The motion carried.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: Ms. Norman-Vacha opened the floor for citizen comments; however, no additional comments were offered.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Mr. Kline congratulated Ms. Becker and Ms. Young for their dedication and hard work on the two charter applications submitted to the Hernando County School Board (HCSB). The review committee approved both applications to move forward to the next steps, including an HCSB

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workshop scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, followed by a final vote for approval at the HCSB meeting on May 12.

Mr. Kline reported that the agency has purchased a building on Pinehurst Drive in Spring Hill with the original intent to open a charter school at that location. Due to several challenges, it has been difficult to establish the school there. The current plan is to relocate the administrative offices and all programs currently based at the Kennedy Park location to the Spring Hill site.

He noted that this decision is difficult, as the administrative offices have been at Kennedy Park for more than 30 years. However, the new location will provide better visibility in the community and will allow all staff to be housed under one roof, which is expected to enhance staff morale and connectivity. The new administrative offices will also feature a conference room for quarterly board meetings. While not all staff may be moved to the new site by July, Mr. Kline hopes to conduct the July Governing Board meeting at the new offices. The Executive Team is still developing plans for the Kennedy Park offices and will share updates as decisions are made.

Mr. Kline requested that Board Members share the 2024–2025 Annual Report, which is included in the board packet and provides an overview of the agency as a whole. He also reminded Board Members that the agency is currently seeking sponsors and selling tickets for the House to Home Casino Night on May 1.

Mr. Kline introduced a new member of the Executive Team, Michael Aloian, VP of Finance. He highlighted Mr. Aloian's extensive experience with both for-profit and non-profit organizations and expressed enthusiasm about the skills, values, and positivity he brings to the team. The long-term plan is for Mr. Aloian to assume Mr. Bates's role when Mr. Bates retires early next year.

FINANCE: Mr. Bates referred to the board packet, which included the financial statements and credit card statements for the first quarter of 2026. He noted that there was nothing unusual in the report and that it reflects a strong bottom line. Mr. Bates then asked if there were any questions regarding the financial information provided.

He stated that he would be seeking board approval for the budget found on the last page of the financial reports. Mr. Bates explained that this budget is about half of what the final budget will be by the end of the year, depending on grant funding. Many grants are typically received in January, while others may not arrive until July.

Mr. Morris inquired about the anticipated total annual budget. Mr. Bates responded that once grant funding is included, he expects it to be very close to the annual budget from the previous year, approximately \$52 million. He then opened the floor for additional questions before requesting board approval for the first-quarter budget in the amount of \$27,211,373.10.

With no further questions, Mr. Bates requested approval of the first-quarter budget in the amount of \$27,211,373.10.

APPROVAL OF BUDGET: Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to approve the first quarter budget, amounting to \$27,211,373.10.

MOTION: Ms. Alford moved to approve the first quarter budget in the amount of

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\$27,211,373.10. Mr. Valdez seconded the motion. The motion carried.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT: Mr. Keith Hundley of Carr, Riggs & Ingram presented the Independent Audit Report for FY2025. He thanked the group for the effort that went into completing the audit. Referring to the report, he stated that the auditors issued an unmodified opinion, indicating that the financial statements are materially correct as of September 30, 2025, which is the highest opinion that can be received.

On page 4 of the audit report, Mr. Hundley highlighted the Statements of Financial Position, which report total assets of \$12,929,137 and total liabilities of \$4,776,131, resulting in net assets of \$8,153,006.

Mr. Hundley addressed the understated accounts payable amount of \$393,252. Management identified this discrepancy as a result of the software transition in 2022. To resolve the issue, he restated the beginning balance as of October 1, 2023; the revised number is reflected there.

On page 35 of the audit, Mr. Hundley noted that no findings or issues related to financial reporting or non-compliance with agreements and contracts were reported.

Mr. Hundley referred to page 37, which details the testing of federal awards conducted for the Head Start and LIHEAP programs. For state projects, testing focused on the Alzheimer's Respite Services and the Community Care for the Elderly programs.

He also reported that IRS Form 990 has been issued and filed with the IRS. The Form 990 serves as an informational return and provides detailed information on governance, management, compensation, and programs.

Mr. Hundley opened the floor for questions regarding the audit report and Form 990. Mr. Morris inquired about the process for non-profits compared to businesses when dealing with the IRS. Mr. Hundley explained that a separate division of the IRS oversees exempt organizations and emphasized that substantial fines can be imposed for failure to file. He also noted that non-profits may be subject to taxes on unrelated business income, such as revenue from rental properties.

With no further questions, Mr. Hundley reminded the Board that he is available to assist with any future inquiries.

CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER: Mr. Homan reported that the prior year's annual report has been completed and distributed, and he thanked the directors for their contributions, noting that the report reflects the organization's diligence and community impact.

He stated that the organization is approximately halfway through the current three-year strategic plan and is performing well. He expressed interest in beginning discussions for the next planning cycle, which may allow a fresh approach now that prior organizational standards are no longer a constraint.

Mr. Homan noted that the organization's charter has been approved, demonstrating continued expansion, and highlighted increased community presence through participation in the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce and the local Home Builders Association.

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He reported that the lead agency for Pasco and Pinellas counties has contacted the organization about a potential Senior Services opportunity, based on a referral from the lead agency for Hernando, Sumter, and Lake counties, similar to how the organization previously entered Polk County through word-of-mouth recommendations.

Staff will review this Senior Services opportunity in April as a possible expansion of the organization's footprint in Pasco County. Mr. Homan emphasized that growth will continue to be pursued deliberately and strategically. He commended Melanie and the Senior Services team for generating these opportunities and thanked all directors for their ongoing efforts.

Mr. Homan invited questions or comments from Board Members regarding the annual report or the strategic plan; there were no questions.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Ms. Becker referenced the board packet, specifically consent agenda item 3, and noted that the approved Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest policies will require annual signatures from each Board Member.

She emphasized that the organization is adopting a growth-oriented approach and is actively exploring opportunities to expand both the Early Learning Program and the Charter School Program. She also noted that the Kennedy Park location is being evaluated, subject to further collaboration with the county.

Ms. Becker reported that during an audit meeting with the Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), she and Mr. Cottrell, Paratransit Director, learned that Pasco County is contemplating ceasing its management of transportation services for disadvantaged individuals. This situation may present a viable expansion opportunity for the organization, given its established presence in Pasco County. She encouraged Board Members to share any leads or connections with entities that may be seeking partnerships or exploring service expansion opportunities.

Ms. Maas shared her recent experience hearing the You Thrive Early Learning Program's radio advertisements. She expressed pride in being associated with the organization and commended the advertisement for effectively representing the agency's positive impact on the community.

BEST ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL: Ms. Young recognized staff for their extensive work on the approximately 344-page charter applications and reported that, after a four-hour review on March 2, the review committee recommended approval of both charters on March 25, with all categories fully approved and in compliance.

She stated that program planning is underway for Spring Hill and Brooksville, including finalizing branding and collaborating closely with Ms. Stone on program design for the upcoming year. She noted that property needs have been refined in consultation with engineers and that the goal is to develop a precise, replicable campus model that can be duplicated in other counties, with Early Learning and K-8 programs operating on the same campus to ensure continuity of instruction.

Ms. Young emphasized the organization's intent to track student data from Early Learning through K-8 to demonstrate the effectiveness of a consistent, aligned educational pathway. She reported that leadership teams, including Ms. Young and Ms. Stone, are coordinating to maintain this consistency across all levels. She noted early enrollment interest, including an existing kindergarten waitlist and

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prospective fifth-grade students, and shared that approximately 3,000 postcards will be mailed following formal charter approval to promote enrollment.

Ms. Young further reported that she and Ms. Stone implemented SchoolMint in January to support the enrollment process and enhance outreach through social media and advertising, which has already generated multiple leads and new student sign-ups. She stated that initial results indicate that this investment is helping the organization move toward its desired enrollment targets.

She also provided an update on the team's first participation in All Teams Day, describing it as a valuable opportunity to collaborate with staff from other programs and counties, exchange ideas in breakout sessions, and gather feedback that will strengthen the organization's birth-through-eighth-grade model. She thanked those involved in planning the event, emphasized that recent accomplishments reflect a strong team effort, and invited questions from Board Members.

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE: Ms. Schulz reported that all relevant information was included in the board report and asked whether there were any questions regarding her team's ongoing work. Receiving none, she noted that the report contained fewer client comments than usual because funding for authorizations had been unavailable for approximately six months, which reduced the number of client interactions typically captured in that section.

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER: Ms. Kell provided an update on the building project, which is progressing through the land and permitting process and is currently in the impact-fee phase. After this, the building permit will be obtained and groundbreaking will be scheduled, and she would like to invite Board Members to attend the groundbreaking. Tampa General Hospital (TGH) has committed \$20,000 to name the conference room, and Board Members are encouraged to share the sponsorship brochure with potential businesses.

Ms. Kell also announced that Victim Services Coordinator Jessica Scalise and Clinical Director Kaitlyn Berleth were recognized by Congressman Gus Bilirakis and received professional heroism awards for their impactful work with children and families, reflecting the organization's mission and values.

She reported that the organization's five-year reaccreditation site visit occurred recently, involving a review of approximately 600 pages of materials by the visiting team. Ms. Kell was pleased to report that the team recommended full reaccreditation. Board Members Mr. Morris and Ms. Norman-Vacha reported that the review team was exceptionally impressed with Ms. Kell's application and interview, praising its thoroughness, succession planning, and clear policies and procedures. They noted that the feedback highlighted the overall strength of the Children's Advocacy Center and emphasized that, while the recognition focused on Ms. Kell and the CAC, it reflected the work of the entire staff, including leadership and finance.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM: Ms. Stone reported that, as the Head Start and Early Head Start Combination Grant period concludes, the program is projected to have an unexpended balance of \$2,061,000. She stated that a carryover application has been prepared to allow these funds to be used in the upcoming program year for critical program priorities, primarily related to staffing and vacancies.

Ms. Stone noted that a prior carryover award of approximately \$1.8 million was successfully expended and helped sustain program quality amid rising costs. She outlined proposed uses for the current surplus, including completing playground surfacing, shading, and upgrades; bringing all owned

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properties up to quality standards; and extending the new Brooksville four-year-old VPK curriculum model, which has produced strong outcomes, to all four-year-old classrooms in the coming year.

Ms. Stone emphasized the intent to fully utilize the available funds to support and enhance program quality and requested approval to submit the \$2,061,000 carryover application.

APPROVAL OF ELP CARRYOVER APPLICATION: Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to approve the carryover application for the Early Learning Program.

MOTION: Mr. Morris moved to approve the carryover application. Mr. Valdez seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Ms. Stone provided a brief update on the disaster grant and reported that Grant 04D00069, designated for playground remodels and drainage and surfacing improvements, is scheduled to end at the end of May. She requested Board approval to submit an extension request for this grant if needed, noting that this would ensure all funds are fully utilized and the projects completed.

APPROVAL OF ELP DISASTER GRANT EXTENSION: Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to approve the extension for Disaster Grant 04D00069.

MOTION: Mr. Morris moved to approve the extension for Disaster Grant 04D00069. Ms. Maas seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Ms. Stone recognized Ms. Gibbons, a teacher at the Sumter County Bushnell location, who is approaching 20 years of service with the program. She noted that Ms. Gibbons has consistently received high classroom assessment scores and this year achieved the highest possible rating from the Early Learning Coalition, despite working with a small class of 15 students with significant behavioral challenges. Ms. Stone commended Ms. Gibbons's dedication and daily consistency and reported that the program will be submitting her for Head Start Teacher of the Year.

Ms. Stone also recognized Ms. Martha Maner at the Brooksville location for her extraordinary dedication and compassion in serving the community. She noted that Ms. Manner has recently been formally recognized by Congressman Gus Bilirakis for her contributions and will be retiring this summer. The organization plans to hold a recognition event in June to honor Ms. Manner's years of service.

ERSEA BOARD TRAINING: Ms. Stone provided the required annual ERSEA (Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance) training for the Governing Board, as mandated by Head Start standards. She explained that the ERSEA system determines which children are served, how families are prioritized, and how equitable access to services is maintained across all program sites, noting that strong ERSEA practices are directly tied to program quality, compliance, and funding.

She emphasized the Board's governance role in ERSEA, including approving eligibility and selection criteria, monitoring policies and procedures, reviewing performance data (particularly enrollment and attendance), and ensuring that practices are applied consistently and with integrity. Ms. Stone reviewed each component of ERSEA: eligibility (income- and criteria-based, including homelessness, foster care, public assistance, and disability status); recruitment (outreach, partnerships, and community presence, including recent efforts with SchoolMint and local partners); selection (use of a point-based system and waitlist rather than first-come, first-served); enrollment (maintaining funded enrollment

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levels and addressing slot reductions when needed); and attendance (ensuring children consistently receive services and using attendance data to address barriers).

Ms. Stone reiterated that the Board's ongoing engagement—through review of reports, policies, and trends, and by asking thoughtful questions and serving as informed ambassadors in the community—strengthens ERSEA implementation and supports the program's mission to serve the highest-need families with equitable access to services.

Upon completion of the ERSEA training materials, Ms. Stone invited questions regarding the Early Learning Program. Mr. Morris requested a status update on open enrollment slots at the Deltona and Bushnell sites. Ms. Stone explained that the former Chisholm site in New Smyrna was closed due to the cost of required upgrades and that Deltona was selected as the replacement site based on longstanding demand. Renovations are complete, licensing is pending, Early Head Start is expected to begin in the summer, and the four-year-old classroom is planned to open in August.

For the Bushnell site, Ms. Stone reported that two classrooms are available but only one is operating because of staffing challenges and the distance many children travel from surrounding communities. She noted that a location closer to those neighborhoods could improve access and asked Board Members to share any potential site leads in growing areas of Sumter County. A community assessment focusing on Sumter County and Spring Hill is underway, and the education team is exploring partnerships with local churches and community organizations as potential locations for future classroom expansion.

HOUSE TO HOME: Mr. Sanvenero noted that strong community relationships have resulted in significant in-kind support, including discounts and donations from partners such as Cemex, WREC, construction contractors, and engineering firms. He stated that these partnerships help keep construction costs down and support the continued affordability of You Thrive Florida homes, and that community awareness of the organization continues to grow.

Mr. Sanvenero reported that he will be meeting with Ms. Alford later in the month to explore potential expansion opportunities in Citrus County. He also noted that WREC has again invited the organization to its annual meeting, one of a limited number of outside organizations given the opportunity to showcase their work, which often results in additional financial support.

He provided an update on the upcoming casino night fundraiser scheduled for May 1. The event will be an Austin-Powers-themed 1960s night, and he stated that he plans to bring back the Men's Bake next year.

PARATRANSIT: Mr. Cottrell referred the Board to the MPO quarterly report included in the board packet and invited questions on its contents. He noted that the annual evaluation from the MPO had recently been completed and that the results were positive. He further reported that he plans to continue to monitor and pursue potential subcontracting opportunities with Pasco County for paratransit services.

He also reported that several new vehicles have been added to the fleet, wrapped similarly to existing vehicles, and that both drivers and clients have responded positively. He shared that two long-tenured drivers, Louis (22 years of service) and Judy Lewis (27 years of service), have recently retired and were recognized for their significant impact on clients and the community, noting that their relationships with riders extended beyond transportation to meaningful community connections.

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SENIOR SERVICES: Ms. Harrison reported that the Senior Services program has been nominated for the Hernando Sun Readers' Choice awards and will be included on the newspaper's online voting page. She stated that a link to the voting site will be shared with the Board and noted that voting closes on April 17. She further noted that the top three winners in each category will be featured in the newspaper, receive a certificate, and gain merchandise branding opportunities. Board Members and attendees were encouraged to vote once per day through April 17. Ms. Harrison invited any questions regarding Senior Services.

OTHER BUSINESS: Ms. Stone reported that the program is collecting backpacks and school supplies for children transitioning from Head Start to kindergarten, with donations accepted at the Brooksville office and Spring Hill campus, and staff available to pick up items if needed. Monetary contributions will be used to ensure every child receives a backpack and basic supplies before leaving the program.

Mr. Kline noted that, in addition to the Senior Services program nomination, the organization and its programs have been nominated in nine additional categories for the Hernando Sun Readers' Choice awards. Nominations include: Nonprofit Organization; Janine Kell (Children's Advocacy Center) for Community Leader of the Year; Board Member Tracy Ramirez for Business Leader; House to Home for Home Builder; Children's Advocacy Center for Children and Family Services; Early Learning Program and BEST Academy for Educational Services; Youth Thrive for Service Organization; Early Learning for Early Learning Center; and BEST Academy for Public School. Mr. Kline encouraged Board Members and stakeholders to share the voting link and to vote daily.

There being no further business, Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Morris moved to adjourn and Mr. Valdez seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennene Norman-Vacha, Board Chair

Date

Tracy Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer

Date

Prepared by:
Melissa Mace, Executive Administrative Coordinator

Date