

You Thrive Florida
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
July 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; Angelys Saez; and Thomas Valdez

BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE: Tracy Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer; and Steve Champion

BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Donna Maas; Michelle Alford; Evonne Jackson; and Aaron Lyons

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Mat Kline, CEO; Kris Bates, CFO; Lisa Becker, CAO; Steve Homan, COO; Michael Aloian, VP of Finance; Vanessa Qualiana, Human Resources Director; Janine Kell, Children's Advocacy Program Director; Karen Schulz, Community Assistance Director; Tanya Stone, Early Learning Programs Director; Jamie Young, Site Administrator; Richard Sanvenero, House to Home Director; Chad Johnston, IT Director; Jeff Cottrell, Transportation Director; and Melissa Mace, Executive Administrative Coordinator.

STAFF MEMBER NOT PRESENT: Melanie Harrison, Senior Services Director

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Norman-Vacha, Board Chair, called the July 8, 2026 meeting of the You Thrive Florida ("YTF") Governing Board to order at 9:09 am. Ms. Norman-Vacha noted that a quorum was met as evidenced by the number of Board Members present in-person, and via conference call. Ms. Norman-Vacha led in the pledge of allegiance and group prayer. Ms. Norman-Vacha asked if the board had time to review the board packet including the consent agenda items; in which all board members agreed. Ms. Norman-Vacha asked if there were any questions regarding the items in the board packet. There were no questions presented by board members.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 8, 2026 MINUTES: Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2026 minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Morris moved to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2026 meeting. Mr. Valdez seconded the motion. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 1-13: Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to approve the consent agenda items.

MOTION: Mr. Valdez moved to approve the consent agenda items. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The motion carried.

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

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: At the last meeting, Mr. Kline was hoping to host the July Governing Board Meeting at the new Administrative Offices located in Spring Hill. The renovations are still on-going and the conference room just was not ready in time. He hopes to host the October Governing Board Meeting in the new office. He provided updates on the new building that included renovations to the interior, AC maintenance, interior paint, flooring, delivery of furniture.

You Thrive Florida
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2026

Mr. Kline also reminded the board that July is the time for the annual CEO evaluation. He has been in the role for five years. The CEO performance evaluation team will include three executive board members along with two other members selected randomly. Those chosen will be notified by email that includes a Survey Monkey link to complete. Mr. Kline requested that those selected provide honest feedback regarding his performance.

Lastly, Mr. Kline wanted to formally acknowledge Mr. Bates for over 25 years of dedicated service to the organization, expressing deep appreciation for his contributions and noting that he will be greatly missed. Mr. Bates was invited to continue attending board meetings in October and beyond as a visitor, reflecting the organization's desire to maintain his connection as an engaged "citizen" of the agency.

FINANCE: Mr. Bates referred to Mr. Aloian, Vice President of Finance, who presented a summary of the financial statements as of April 30, 2026, as included in the board packet. Mr. Aloian reported that net assets have increased since the beginning of the fiscal year and that cash on hand is \$5.64 million as of April 30, reflecting an anticipated decrease due to the strategic investment in the new Pinehurst building. He noted that accounts receivable have improved, with many balances paid in full by the funder, strengthening the organization's cash position. Overall, the budget is on track at approximately 52% expended; while this is slightly below the 58% target for seven months, the variance is attributed to timing differences in certain expenses and revenues.

Vice-Chair, Mr. Morris, asked about the financial impact of the Pinehurst building and how the organization is expected to look financially once the project is complete. Mr. Bates responded that costs remain generally in line with estimates, with a purchase price of approximately \$1.375 million, about \$60,000 spent to date on improvements, and an additional \$100,000 anticipated for completion, primarily for paint, flooring, and baseboards. Mr. Homan added that no major structural issues were identified; inspections prior to purchase revealed only minor items, with no roof or window replacements required at this time. Mrs. Becker noted that the organization was able to negotiate a reduction in the purchase price based on the inspection findings, particularly related to the condition of the AC units. Mr. Bates further explained that the building has six HVAC units, with a few nearing the end of their useful life, and that the roof is expected to hold up but may need replacement within the next ten years. Despite these anticipated future maintenance needs, leadership emphasized that the Pinehurst property remains a strong investment, as it was appraised significantly higher than the purchase price. Mr. Aloian then asked if the board had any additional questions or concerns; there being none, he requested board approval of the consolidated budget statement as presented in the board report.

APPROVAL OF CONSOLIDATED BUDGET STATEMENT: Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to approve the consolidated budget statement.

MOTION: Mrs. Saez moved to approve the consolidated budget statement, and Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The motion carried.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER: Mr. Homan reported that the recently purchased building was previously owned by Access Health and, prior to that, operated as Gold's Gym. He noted that some flooring and interior build-outs will be replaced, and that leadership views the facility as a "blank slate" to be completed before staff relocation so it presents a professional corporate office environment.

Regarding the strategic plan, Mr. Homan did not provide a formal quarterly update, explaining that many directors were focused on monitoring and contract activities during this period, but emphasized that progress continues and the organization remains on track to meet its objectives and goals by the end of next year, when

You Thrive Florida
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2026

the current planning cycle concludes. There were no questions from the board for Mr. Homan and the meeting proceeded to the next agenda item.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Mrs. Becker reported that most of the general consent agenda items were related to charter school requirements and will now be part of an annual process. As required by the charter application and contract with the Hernando County School District, the organization must adopt certain district policies that have already been approved by the district's board, and the board was asked to adopt those same policies.

She further noted that the consent agenda included two charter contracts. After some procedural challenges at the district level, both charter applications were ultimately approved: the initial May board meeting ended with changed votes and no approvals, but the items were returned in June and approved once the error was recognized. The contracts, reviewed and approved by both the organization's attorney and the district's attorney, are now moving through the district board for final approval on July 28.

Mrs. Becker announced that You Thrive Brooksville Elementary will open in August on the School Street Early Learning Programs campus, serving kindergarten and fifth-grade students, and she expressed enthusiasm about inviting board members to the future open house. She also explained that a separate charter school policy manual has been developed to address applicable state public-school and charter regulations without burdening personnel policies for other programs, keeping charter-specific requirements in a standalone document. Board members briefly commented on the volume of material contained in the consent agenda and expressed appreciation for the work completed by Mrs. Becker and her staff; there were no further questions, and the board moved to the next speaker.

SITE ADMINISTRATOR: Mrs. Young reported that the charter team has much to celebrate, noting the extensive work required to secure charter approvals and expressing appreciation for both organizational leadership and the newly engaged charter-specialized attorney whose expertise has streamlined the process. She introduced the new charter logo, which is now being used in the community and online, and highlighted that Best Academy earned an "A" school rating for a second consecutive year, qualifying the organization as a high-performing charter and reducing the administrative fee paid to the district.

Mrs. Young explained that she assumed a new role as site administrator in May, working closely with Ms. Stone to merge Early Learning Program (ELP), elementary, and middle school operations into a unified, coordinated model beginning in August. The goal is for the Brooksville campus—ELP and both charters—to function as a single, integrated site with all staff aligned around common objectives, creating a seamless pathway from early learning through elementary and into middle school. She acknowledged the significant coordination required, including the extensive consent agenda materials and ongoing work to eventually develop the organization's own charter documents, and expressed gratitude to HR, finance, and other team members for their support with state-required trainings.

Building on Mrs. Young's remarks, Mrs. Becker reiterated that the long-term plan is to expand the early learning-to-charter model to additional locations, with Spring Hill identified as the next site. Initial hopes to open in 2027 have shifted to a projected 2028–2029 timeline, as the organization will likely need to purchase land and construct a new facility; the aim is to replicate the Brooksville model, with early learning feeding into elementary, and ultimately extend this approach to other counties. Mrs. Young concluded by emphasizing that once processes are refined at Brooksville, the team will be well-positioned to "hit the ground running" at Spring Hill; there were no further questions from the board.

You Thrive Florida
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2026

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE: Mrs. Schulz highlighted that the program updates had been included in the board report for review. She noted that program staff have been heavily inundated with processing LIHEAP applications, with approximately 1,600 applications waiting to be processed. She then opened the floor to the board members, inviting them to ask any additional questions or seek clarifications regarding the updates presented. After allowing a moment for discussion, and with no further inquiries from the members.

CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER (CAC): Ms. Kell reported that she will be intensifying efforts around room sponsorships of the new CAC building over the next month, including increased community outreach, and hopes to present an updated sponsorship list at the next board meeting so members may solicit additional room sponsors through their networks. She noted that every contribution is helpful.

Ms. Kell informed the board that two new grants were awarded this year: a \$150,000 grant from Cigna to fund three contract therapists and a \$25,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay to support an additional school-based advocate working alongside existing community advocates. She explained that hiring on these grants is temporarily on hold pending attendance at required funder meetings and clarification of documentation expectations.

She further reported that the Bridge the Gap state funding to CAC was reduced from \$4.8 million to \$2.4 million, effectively cutting the allocation in half, and expressed appreciation that the new grants will help offset this reduction and keep the program financially ahead rather than behind.

Regarding the new CAC building, Ms. Kell shared that construction is progressing rapidly since the groundbreaking ceremony: block walls are up, concrete has been poured, and trusses and framing are scheduled, though the contractor emphasized that the completion target remains for April 2027.

Finally, Ms. Kell offered personal remarks recognizing Mr. Bates, reflecting on their 18 years of working together, his willingness to problem-solve any request, and his ongoing support for events such as serving as bingo caller. She expressed deep gratitude for his positive attitude and partnership and noted how much he will be missed.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS: Ms. Stone shared several positive updates across facilities, quality, grants, and community partnerships. Regarding facilities, the Jo Sheppard project was reported as complete, with the executive team having visited the site and observed the newly finished playgrounds and shaded outdoor areas, as well as the gardens that staff and leadership recently toured. The disaster recovery grant process is progressing, with the program's application under review, no questions returned to date; a supplemental funding request has also been submitted to cover interior furnishings and exterior playgrounds, and the program specialist has indicated this application will be prioritized once funds are released.

On program quality, Ms. Stone noted that 92% of classrooms received high CLASS scores at year-end, reflecting consistent monitoring by coaches, site supervisors, and the early learning coalition. Bushnell and Spring Hill classroom 902 were specifically recognized by the coalition as top performers in their counties, and curriculum changes for the coming year will include dedicated 3-year-old Head Start rooms and 4-year-old VPK rooms, with new curriculum for the VPK classes to further strengthen kindergarten readiness.

Ms. Stone also highlighted two smaller grants: a \$5,000 Grow More Good Garden grant from National Head Start (sponsored by Miracle-Gro) to revamp the Brooksville campus garden through a collaborative project involving leadership, parents, and students, and a \$5,000 United Way grant from Volusia United Way for sensory materials and curriculum enhancements in classrooms.

You Thrive Florida
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2026

Significant community partnerships are underway. NASA has selected the program for a two-year STEM partnership, providing staff training during in-service, weekly classroom activities, and parent engagement nights across four sites this year, with four additional sites to be added next year. Local libraries at Keech Street and Hope Place are partnering to align weekly library visits with classroom curriculum, and Volusia County Schools are collaborating through pathways that prepare high school students with CDA credentials to step directly into early educator roles with the organization, supported by classroom presentations from the education manager.

These school partnerships extend to extracurricular programs, including the photography students who engage in events, mentorship, and volunteerism while providing in-kind support such as event photography for social media use. Ms. Stone emphasized pride in these increasingly creative partnerships and noted that, even as the program modestly downscales in some areas, deeper community collaboration is helping sustain and enhance services.

HOUSE TO HOME: House to Home Director Mr. Sanvenero provided an update on housing initiatives and related community partnerships. He noted that a key parcel of land on County Line Road, currently name “Pot of Gold,” is nearly under contract, with only minor wording remaining before final signatures; he expects the deal to be completed by the end of the week. Mr. Sanvenero suggested “You Thrive Loop” as a potential name for the development and invited input through a future naming process.

He reported ongoing meetings with Hernando County Commissioners regarding additional parcels that may be acquired, with the organization considered a front-runner recipient for some of these properties. The county is investing federal and state funds in targeted revitalization areas, including Kass Circle; where a large House to Home sign is on Spring Hill Drive marks a planned duplex project. Mr. Homan is pursuing CDBG funding that could benefit future homeowners and support project costs.

Mr. Sanvenero shared that he and Mr. Homan will attend a meet-the-candidates event in Citrus County for current and prospective Board of County Commissioners members, as the next strategic step is to secure land in Citrus County. Mr. Sanvenero also plans to attend the Southeast Builders Conference in July. Mr. Sanvenero closed by expressing excitement that, after nearly three years of work on the “Pot of Gold” initiative, the project is close to realization, and briefly referenced outreach efforts such as inviting board members to the upcoming golf tournament. There were no questions from the board, and the chair thanked Mr. Sanvenero for his report.

PARATRANSIT: Transportation Director Mr. Cottrell reported that paratransit operations are stable and continue to provide essential transportation services for riders. He noted that the program’s annual Transportation Disadvantaged Trip & Equipment Grant, which is part of its role as the community transportation coordinator, has been renewed and increased from approximately \$398,000 last year to \$448,152 this year.

Mr. Cottrell stated that a decision regarding the program’s 5310 grant state funding is expected this month, following confirmation from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) after the state budget was signed. He indicated that staff will proceed once the award is finalized. Additionally, he reported that the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) has recommended the agency for a new vehicle award for the next year, which will be reviewed at the CTD’s September meeting. More detailed updates will be provided at the next board meeting.

He explained that a separate grant proposal for funding a new service expansion, which had previously been recommended, was ultimately removed from the state budget. This resulted in no award this year, leading to some disappointment. However, Mr. Cottrell expressed confidence that the 5310 funding should remain

You Thrive Florida
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2026

unaffected, as those funds originate at the federal level and pass through the state with minimal issues. He anticipates receiving the 5310 award this month. There were no additional questions from the board for Mr. Cottrell.

SENIOR SERVICES: Senior Services updates were presented by Mr. Homan on behalf of Director Melanie, who was unable to attend the meeting. He noted that most information was included in the board packet but highlighted several items that warranted emphasis.

Mr. Homan reported that the funding agency, Senior Connection Center, approached the organization with an opportunity to expand services in Polk County through a pilot program in partnership with the county and another lead agency. The organization was awarded the pilot, estimated between \$700,000 and \$1 million over two years, which he described as an important step in building a strong relationship with Polk County and potentially positioning the organization to assume a larger role if the county later seeks a long-term provider.

He also explained that the lead agency for Pinellas and Pasco Counties requested assistance with homemaking services for Older Americans Act (OAA) clients in Pasco. Because the full OAA funding was open under a six-year RFP, the organization submitted a proposal for the entire package, including C1 and C2 meal programs, demonstrating interest, capacity, and readiness to assume additional responsibilities. Mr. Homan emphasized that even if the organization does not receive the full award, the proposal signals to the area agency that the organization is a viable future provider, similar to its positioning in Polk County; a decision is anticipated by the end of the month.

Mr. Homan stressed that these opportunities reflect core elements of organizational growth—reputation and responsiveness to strategic opportunities—and are examples of efforts to “move the needle forward.”

He then asked the board to approve new grant totals that were not received until after the board report was created specifically regarding consent agenda item #13 for Senior Services: Grant funding for general revenue services in Sumter, Lake, and Hernando Counties. The new grant totals \$5,357,840.03 for the period July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, awarded by Elder Options, the area agency on aging.

APPROVAL TO REVIEW THE UNSCHEDULED SENIOR SERVICES FUNDING AMOUNT: Because the grant total was not included on the formal consent agenda, board approval was requested during the meeting. Ms. Norman-Vacha made a motion to review and approve the unscheduled Senior Services funding amounts.

MOTION: Mr. Morris moved to review and approve the unscheduled Senior Services funding amounts.

APPROVAL OF SENIOR SERVICES FUNDING AMOUNT: After Mr. Homan restated the new grant totals in the amount of \$5,357,840.03 for the period July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, awarded by Elder Options; Ms. Norman-Vacha made a motion to approve the new grant totals in the amount of \$5,357,840.03 for the period July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, awarded by Elder Options.

MOTION: Mr. Morris moved to approve the Senior Services grant from Elder Options for Senior Services in Sumter, Lake, and Hernando. Ms. Ramirez seconded the motion. The motion carried.

You Thrive Florida
Governing Board Meeting Minutes
July 8, 2026

Mr. Homan indicated there were no additional Senior Services items, and the chair confirmed there were no further questions for him.

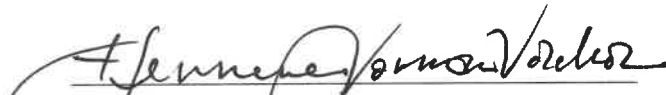
APPROVAL TO ADJOURN: The chair observed that the agenda had been completed efficiently. There being no further business, Ms. Norman-Vacha requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

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

She also reminded the group that the next meeting will be on October 14th beginning at 9:00 am, with the hope that it will take place in the new building; if the new facility is not yet ready, the meeting will be held at the Hernando County Chamber of Commerce. The chair thanked board members for their participation.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.

Respectfully submitted,


Jennene Norman-Vacha, Board Chair

14 Oct 2026
Date


Tracy Ramirez, Secretary/Treasurer

14 Oct 2026
Date


Prepared by:
Melissa Mace, Executive Administrative Coordinator

10/14/26
Date