

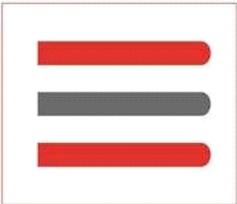
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1 CENTRAL FLORIDA TOURISM OVERSIGHT DISTRICT

2 BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

**ORIGINAL**

3 \_\_\_\_\_/

4 PUBLIC MEETING BEFORE THE CENTRAL FLORIDA TOURISM

5 OVERSIGHT DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

6 DATE: JUNE 21, 2023

7 REPORTER: LANNA GODFREY

8 PLACE: RCID ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

9 1900 HOTEL PLAZA BOULEVARD

10 LAKE BUENA VISTA, FLORIDA 32830

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1 PRESENT:

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3 Board Members:

4 Martin Garcia, Chairman;

5 Michael Sasso, Vice chairman

6 Brian Aungst, Junior

7 Ron Peri

8 Bridget Ziegler

9 Daniel Langley

10 Glen Gilzean

11 Charbel Barakat

12

13 Also Present:

14 Debbie McDonald, resident; Eddie Fernandez, safety;

15 Richard LePere, Chief of Reedy Creek Firefighters; Dr.

16 Jeff Goltz, Executive Dean Valencia; Dave Giordano,

17 Valencia; Kyra Smeller; Bruce Jones, Ian Johnson,

18 Esquire

19

20

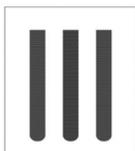
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## PROCEEDINGS

MR. GARCIA: Let's call the meeting to order.  
Good morning. Welcome to you all. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your interest in the work of this board and thank you for your interest in the district. We'll start with the invocation, and I'll turn it over to our capable leader, Mr. Gilzean.

MR. GILZEAN: Thank you. Thank you. I'd like to bring up Pastor Peter Valdie (phonetic). Testing. Ah, there we go. So I'd like to bring up -- I have a heartfelt gratitude for my friend, Pastor Peter Valdie of First Orlando. He's a cherished member of the Central Florida community since 1978. Through his career, Peter has wholeheartedly dedicated his life to the faith-based community and with over 30 years of contribution beyond his professional endeavors. He served on a number of board and acted as a vital link within our Hispanic community here. He had -- in addition to that he has his own radio show on iHeart Radio with several years on the airwaves and doing some amazing work here in Orlando, Tampa, and Jacksonville. With that said, Pastor Peter, please come on up.

MR. VALDIE: (phone rings) That was a great sound effect for me to come up. That was. First of



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1 all, I'd like to thank the board for the invitation  
2 and the opportunity to come and just do the  
3 invocation. And it's in these trying times, much  
4 necessary prayer is needed. Let us pray. Father,  
5 we thank you this morning first of all, for waking  
6 us up and allowing us to be here. In the midst of  
7 the storms outside that we physically feel, there  
8 are many storms also happening within ourselves. And  
9 I just pray that you would give this board  
10 direction, that you would lead them to make the  
11 right decisions for our community as a whole. And I  
12 pray that every word that is said be gratifying to  
13 you, and that together we will make a difference for  
14 Reedy Creek, for Central Florida, and for the State  
15 of Florida. We pray all these things in Jesu's  
16 name. Amen.

17 ALL: Amen.

18 MR. GARCIA: Pastor, thank you for those  
19 blessings. And now let's honor this great nation  
20 with the Pledge of Allegiance. Please stand.

21 ALL: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the  
22 United States of America, and to the republic for  
23 which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible  
24 with liberty and justice for all.

25 MR. GARCIA: Okay. The safety procedure,



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1 please.

2 MR. FERNANDEZ: Good morning. Thank you, Mr.  
3 Chairman, and members of the board, and to our  
4 guests and visitors, we'd like to start the meeting  
5 the way we normally do with some safety  
6 announcements for everyone. And I'd like to ask the  
7 board, please, to pardon my turning my back to you  
8 as I address everyone in the audience. So in the  
9 event of an evacuation, we ask that you exit through  
10 the doors either on your right or on your left  
11 through the front of the building where you enter.  
12 There's also an exit on the rear of the building if  
13 you follow the exit signs through this door. In the  
14 event of first aid or AED, we have both of those if  
15 those are necessary at the security desk in the  
16 front. And if you do make your way out to the  
17 parking lot, our employees will be wearing a safety  
18 vest. A couple of employees will be charged with  
19 wearing a safety vest and be at the ends of the  
20 parking lot. Please make your way to those areas so  
21 that we can account for everyone who is in the  
22 building. Thank you very much and enjoy the  
23 meeting.

24 MR. GARCIA: Thank you. And before we get to  
25 public comments, I want to welcome our new director,



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1 Charbel Barakat. I've known and worked with Charbel  
2 for many years, and what I can tell you about him is  
3 that he's smart as a whip, very capable lawyer, very  
4 successful businessman, and has an extensive  
5 background in public finance and real estate  
6 development, which will bring a very important  
7 dimension to this board and the work that we will be  
8 doing. And he will help the rest of the board in  
9 our mission when our mission is to institute new and  
10 better governance practices, to create more  
11 financial transparency, and to evaluate new urban  
12 planning strategies and opportunities for the  
13 district, and most importantly, to promote more  
14 prosperity for more people within the district and  
15 outside of the district. So Charbel, welcome. We're  
16 all looking forward to working with you, sir.

17 MR. BARAKAT: Thank you, Mr. Chair, for that --  
18 that kind of intro. I appreciate it.

19 MR. GARCIA: Yes, sir. And now, public  
20 comments. We have one from Debbie McDonald. Welcome  
21 back. And just remind us if you're here in a  
22 representative capacity, if you represent anybody.  
23 If not, if you're here individually, that's  
24 wonderful too.

25 MS. MCDONALD: Just here individually. Thank



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1 you again. Nice to see you, gentlemen, and welcome,  
2 sir. I was losing people. I'm sorry? Press the  
3 button? Okay. That's better. Thank you very much.  
4 I just returned from a trip to New York City, and  
5 interestingly enough, I did my chatter. On the  
6 plane, I talked to everyone around me and people, as  
7 I'm going through the city, and asked about 100  
8 people what they thought was going on here, what  
9 they felt about Disney, and Central Florida, and the  
10 recent changes we've had here with the district. And  
11 I guess it was quite -- I shouldn't have been  
12 surprised or shocked. But I was quite surprised.  
13 The majority of what I was hearing is as you know,  
14 we're, of course, a tourism area. This is what  
15 we're all about. We come here, people that stay  
16 here are in some way are either connected or people  
17 in this tourism industry. And what I heard from  
18 those people is they didn't want to come to Florida  
19 anymore. They didn't want to come to Central Florida  
20 particularly anymore. Miami maybe was fine or  
21 Naples, but they didn't feel welcome. This was from  
22 people of all types, people with just friends and  
23 their family, or maybe they had someone that they  
24 just didn't feel that they were welcome. That's  
25 very disturbing to me. We have a -- what I feel is



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1 a tremendous example of an inclusive, warm, well-run  
2 corporation, The Walt Disney Company. And we have a  
3 government coming in to take control, which is just  
4 what my perception is. I met with Glen because I  
5 told him some of my concerns about my area, Osceola  
6 County where I live, where our concerns are more  
7 about our education, the homeless, our -- our daily  
8 lives that we go about, and we are being affected.  
9 We are being affected. When friends aren't coming  
10 and when people I just meet complete strangers on  
11 the street, don't feel welcome to come here anymore,  
12 it's -- it's hurting the attendance numbers. I  
13 don't know what those are. They don't release them,  
14 but I'm sure you-all can find out. But I do know  
15 from our local businesspeople, our local hoteliers,  
16 hotel operators that they're already feeling the  
17 number change. So while you're going about whatever  
18 it is you're doing, in my opinion, to launch the  
19 presidential campaign of Governor DeSantis, we are  
20 being hurt. So in our effort to help the area and  
21 to bring more to the area, I'm just a mom. I'm just  
22 a family person that lives in this area. This is my  
23 home. And I plead for you again to take a deeply  
24 look at what you're doing, why you're doing it, and  
25 consider, again, diplomacy. Talking to the other



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1 party, being Disney, and Governor DeSantis, and  
2 sitting down on the table because diplomacy is hard.  
3 I know he's one that --his mottos he doesn't want  
4 to back down. But it's time to sit down at the  
5 table. Diplomacy is hard. You have to keep doing  
6 it, but eventually, it works. And I really hope that  
7 we can reach that point because whatever is going on  
8 here isn't working. Thank you.

9 MR. GARCIA: Thank you for your comments. And  
10 by the way, you're not just a mom. I mean, moms are  
11 the most important people in the world, and so  
12 congratulations for being a mom, and thank you again  
13 for your public comments. Next, the consent agenda.  
14 Is there a motion that we approve the consent  
15 agenda?

16 MR. PERI: So moved.

17 MR. GARCIA: Is there a second?

18 MR. BARAKAT: I'll second.

19 MR. GARCIA: Any discussion? All in favor,  
20 please indicate by saying aye.

21 ALL: Aye.

22 MR. GARCIA: Any opposed? Motion passes  
23 unanimously. Reports. Our capable leader, Mr.  
24 Gilzean, do you have a report, sir?

25 MR. GILZEAN: I do. I do. And thank you for



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1 passing the proclamation. I'll start off with the  
2 first slide, which is Ms. Kyra Smeller who is  
3 retiring. I'd like to announce the upcoming  
4 retirement of our valued member of our organization,  
5 Battalion Chief of Fire Prevention Ms. Kyra Smeller.  
6 After 33 exceptional years of dedicated service,  
7 Kyra has dedicated and decided to embark in a new  
8 chapter in her life. And I just want to take a  
9 moment to celebrate that awesome career of hers. Her  
10 unwavering commitment to fire safety and prevention  
11 has made a profound impact on our district and our  
12 community. Throughout her tenure, she has  
13 consistently demonstrated outstanding leadership,  
14 expertise, and excel at data analysis. As we bid  
15 farewell, we would also like to celebrate the  
16 incredible achievement she's made throughout her  
17 tenure. We'd like to express our deepest gratitude  
18 for her dedication, passion, and immense impact she  
19 has made on our organization and within our  
20 district. Please extend a warm welcome to Ms. Kyra  
21 as she get ready to start her new chapter. Ms.  
22 Kyra, where are you? Come on up. We have a nice  
23 little proclamation and award for you. Would you  
24 like to say a few words before the award is  
25 received?



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1 MS. SMELLER: Oh, I guess just that I was lucky  
2 enough to work here for all these years. I've been  
3 here through every chief except for the first one.  
4 And it's a great place to work. I mean, I wouldn't  
5 change anything about it. I've work with most --  
6 most everybody in here that is a Reedy Creek  
7 employee, and we've had great working relationships,  
8 no matter whether I was a hourly or a manager. We  
9 were well taken care of, so that's all I got to say.

10 MR. GILZEAN: Awesome. Thank you. So we -- on  
11 behalf of the board and the board chairman, again,  
12 thank you for your dedication. Thank you. Do you  
13 guys want to steal those photo, is that okay? Can I  
14 get you to do a quick photo? And we'll -- where  
15 would you like us to stand?

16 MS. SMELLER: Right there.

17 MR. GILZEAN: Right here. Okay. So Board  
18 Members, get used to this. We're going to do this.  
19 Give you your award.

20 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE 1: I can have you move  
21 over. I want to scoot over a little bit lighting.  
22 We're going to take a step that way. Get a little  
23 closer to Martin. Kind of bossy. Try to make it  
24 look good. Well, you look fabulous. Okay. Great.  
25 Can I get one of the chief too? Is that okay?



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1 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE 2: Yes, please.

2 MR. GILZEAN: Oh, yeah.

3 MR. GARCIA: Can I be with the chief, too?

4 MR. GILZEAN: Yeah.

5 MR. LEPERE: She was my supervisor when I first  
6 came to work.

7 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE 1: One, two, three. One  
8 more. All right. Great.

9 MR. GILZEAN: Thank you. All right, that's one  
10 down. Got one more to go. I would also like to  
11 announce the retirement of Bruce Jones, our esteemed  
12 director of procurement at the district. After an  
13 incredible journey spanning over 20 years in our  
14 organization, Bruce has also decided to move on to  
15 something fun and exciting in the new chapter.  
16 Bruce's unwavering dedication, exceptional  
17 leadership, and extensive experience have been an  
18 invaluable asset to our team and the company as a  
19 whole. His remarkable contribution, and growth, and  
20 success of our procurement department is  
21 immeasurable. Over the past two decades, Bruce has  
22 consistently demonstrated his expertise, integrity,  
23 and unwavering commitment to excellence. Prior to  
24 joining the district, Bruce spent 13 years as a  
25 principal contractor at the Walt Disney Engin---



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1 Imagineering where he honed his skills and  
2 established a strong foundation in procurement. His  
3 vast knowledge and attention to detail and strategic  
4 thinking have played a significant role in  
5 achievement and the number of milestones and  
6 successful project throughout his tenure. Please  
7 also join me in expressing our sincere appreciation  
8 to Bruce for his exceptional contribution to the  
9 district and our procurement department.

10 MR. JONES: Thank you so very much.

11 MR. GILZEAN: And then can we do the pictures?  
12 All right, there we go.

13 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE 1: All right. Thank you.  
14 One, two, three.

15 MR. GILZEAN: We're good? All right. Thank  
16 you so much. Congratulations. You have a couple of  
17 words you want to say?

18 MR. JONES: Yeah, just a couple.

19 MR. GILZEAN: Go to the podium.

20 MR. JONES: Okay. All right. Sorry about my  
21 back to you. Eddie taught me that. Thank you. To  
22 all --

23 MR. JONES: Push the button. I thought I did.  
24 Thank you to everyone here that I've worked so  
25 closely with over the years. I recognize a lot of



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1 your faces here. And, you know, over a period of,  
2 well, 20 years and six months, I think it'll be by  
3 about the end of this month when I retire, you do  
4 interact with a whole lot of people at a very  
5 professional level. Everyone here is just so  
6 professional in how they perform their jobs. I -- I  
7 -- I can't imagine working for a more professional  
8 organization. It's been a pleasure, and it's been an  
9 adventure. You know, as Mr. Gilzean mentioned, I  
10 started with Walt Disney Imagineering back in 1990,  
11 and got a tremendous amount of experience in project  
12 delivery, which prepared me well for the roles that  
13 I've had here at Reedy Creek Improvement District.  
14 So you know, that's it. I want to say thank you to  
15 some people in particular, though, I would be remiss  
16 in not doing so. Every single director here I've  
17 worked very closely with, thank you. Mr. Classe,  
18 thank you, sir. Tremendous mentor and a classy guy.  
19 Fits his last name very, very well. You know, he  
20 taught me grace and I think patience, right? So  
21 with that, I think I'll say thank you again, and  
22 we're done. Okay.

23 MR. GILZEAN: All right. Okay. I recently had  
24 the pleasure of meeting Dr. Kathleen Plinske, the  
25 president of Valencia College, and her team to



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1 explore exciting partnerships between Valencia  
2 College and the Central Florida Tourism Oversight  
3 District. This partnership aims to cultivate mutual  
4 growth and community development in key areas of  
5 focus, one internship and job shadow programs. We  
6 can offer them valuable hands-on experience within  
7 our organization. These programs will bridge the gap  
8 between the academic learning and real-life  
9 application while nurturing a pipeline of skilled  
10 professionals. Additionally, talent acquisition by  
11 collaborating with Valencia College will gain access  
12 to a pool of talented graduates who are well versed  
13 in our industry and understand our local context.  
14 This will also allow us to recruit individuals with  
15 the skills and knowledge needed for our  
16 organization's success. With that said, I would  
17 like to bring on Dr. Jeff Goltz, the Executive Dean  
18 of the School of Public Services and Legal Studies,  
19 and Dave Giordano, the Senior Director of Business  
20 in Adult Outreach Recruitment to speak more about  
21 this future partnership.

22 DR. GOLTZ: Thank you, Mr. Gilzean and Board.  
23 Thanks for having Valencia Pumas in the room this  
24 morning. We appreciate it. Valencia was founded in  
25 1967. We have ten locations in Orange and Osceola



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1 County right now, and we are growing. Nearly one --  
2 some fun facts here, nearly one out of four UCF  
3 grads come from Valencia. So we are a big feeder  
4 into UCF. We have over 44 different degree programs  
5 at all the different levels, the associates of arts,  
6 associate of science up to the bachelor's degree  
7 programs, and we're growing those as well. We have  
8 over 100 certificate programs at the college. And  
9 we have a ever growing accelerated skills training  
10 area at the college, so we are sending students out  
11 into a lot of different industries in accelerated  
12 skills. We have two different types of insur---  
13 internships. We have an exploration internship  
14 program that provides students with career  
15 exploration and activities for their educational  
16 plans, but then we have the traditional standard  
17 internship where we send students to -- to fine tune  
18 their skills in the industry, get hired in the  
19 industry, and they are spread all over Central  
20 Florida. Right now, Valencia is in the exercise of  
21 organizing all of our workforce programs into six  
22 different schools. We only have two or three right  
23 now. We're going to have six in the future, School  
24 of Arts and Entertainment, School of Business and  
25 Accounting, School of Computer Science, School of



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1 Health Sciences, School of Hospitality, Tourism, and  
2 Culinary, and the School of Public Service and Legal  
3 Studies. Currently we're the School of Public  
4 Safety. I'm the executive dean there. So I want to  
5 give a shout out to Chief LePere. We have a very  
6 strong partnership with the chief and his team here  
7 at Reedy Creek. We serve over 3,700 law enforcement  
8 officers at the School of Public Safety, nearly  
9 3,000 firefighters from 12 different agencies to  
10 include Reedy Creek Fire. Just some quick-fire  
11 numbers, we have nearly 1,000 enrollments in  
12 advanced specialized fire at the School of Public  
13 Safety, and Chief LePere sends a lot of his  
14 firefighters to us for that. We have over 1,000  
15 enrollments in our fire science degree program. And  
16 what's unique about fire science, they have ten  
17 different -- different industry certifications that  
18 they articulate into our college credit degree  
19 program at the college. So they are exercising that  
20 option on a very regular basis where they can earn  
21 up to 20 -- over 20 credits in our degree program.  
22 And I just want to highlight one other quick  
23 program. We have a very comprehensive Public Safety  
24 Leadership Program in Central Florida at Valencia,  
25 and Reedy Creek Fire, the chief has sent 15



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1 employees over the years to that leadership program,  
2 and he is a huge supporter of that program. So we  
3 hope to continue that with the new chief. We are --  
4 it's very bittersweet. We have such a wonderful  
5 relationship with Chief LePere, but he's leaving,  
6 and we understand it's time for retirement. So  
7 thank you, Chief, for all your support at Valencia  
8 in the School of Public Safety. And before I turn  
9 it over to Dave, we're -- we're adding a another, we  
10 think, very contemporary program, a bachelor of  
11 applied science in public safety administration. So  
12 we can train our leaders in public safety to protect  
13 the millions of millions of tourists and residents  
14 here in Central Florida. And I tell everybody, when  
15 I get a chance to be at a -- public safety in  
16 Central Florida has to protect two to three Super  
17 Bowl crowds every day, so we take it very seriously  
18 at Valencia. And I'm going to turn it over to Dave  
19 to talk about partnerships and upscaling Valencia.

20 MR. GIORDANO: Good morning, and thanks again  
21 for having Valencia College here this morning. What  
22 I'm here really to talk about very quickly is about  
23 partnership. And so, what I do -- my name is Dave  
24 Giordano, and I'm the Senior Director for Outreach  
25 and Recruitment. And what I do is go out in the



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1 community and connect our opportunities that we have  
2 at Valencia College to those that potentially would  
3 want those opportunities. And then once graduates  
4 graduate, they need positions. They need jobs. They  
5 need opportunities, right? So my job, again, is to  
6 connect them to those opportunities. So I have a  
7 staff of six people that go out in the community.  
8 You'll see us on nights. You'll see us on weekends.  
9 You'll see us all over the place. And I have a  
10 staff of three right now that will be growing. And  
11 that's a placement team. And what they do is  
12 directly connect organizations with graduates, and  
13 it can be any graduate that we have. We have 135  
14 programs that are degree programs or certificates.  
15 So there's a lot of different graduates that are  
16 coming out of the college at all times. We have 19  
17 accelerated skilled training programs, and those are  
18 trade skilled programs. So if you need welders, or  
19 you need people to do electrical powerline,  
20 electricians, heavy equipment operators, CNC  
21 machinists, those kinds of positions, even clinical  
22 medical assistants, we're having them graduate on a  
23 regular basis. So -- we have a language program as  
24 well, which has been very, very popular. We are  
25 connecting directly with organizations such as



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1 yours, and we want to do that, and anybody else  
2 that's here in the audience, we would love to  
3 connect as well. We will go right to the  
4 organization. We do that all the time. Matter of  
5 fact, I was at Disney and Amazon last week. We have  
6 over 5,000 people that have taken a program that are  
7 Disney cast members already that have started about  
8 five years ago, and Amazon made about 3,000  
9 associates that are now taking programs. So we go  
10 directly into those organizations, and they have a  
11 direct connect to us in terms of how they can pay  
12 for the programs. Our job is not to just graduate  
13 people from programs. Our job is to graduate, and  
14 then have them have opportunities in business, and  
15 that's what we want to do. So as you're looking at  
16 your needs, and you're looking at your growth, and  
17 it can be upscaling of current employees. It could  
18 be new employees that you're looking for  
19 opportunities. Think about Valencia College. I've  
20 had really great experience over the last five years  
21 in this position of partnering. I -- I go all in  
22 when I do it. So when you need something, reach out  
23 to Valencia, reach out to me. I'll be there for you.  
24 Any questions?

25 MR. GILZEAN: No, sir.



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1 MR. GIORDANO: All right.

2 MR. GILZEAN: Thank you.

3 MR. GIORDANO: It's also good to see Glen. We  
4 used to work together.

5 MR. GILZEAN: All right. The next thing on my  
6 -- in my report, Mr. Chairman and members of the  
7 board, is that the Central Florida Tourism Oversight  
8 District is super excited about hosting local high  
9 school students via CareerSource Summer Youth  
10 Program. This is a four-week summer program where  
11 students will receive a paid internship of \$15 an  
12 hour through CareerSource. These students are coming  
13 from NeoCity Academy High School in Osceola County,  
14 which is one of the top ten STEM high schools in the  
15 State of Florida. And we're excited about hosting  
16 these students come next month. Our colleague from  
17 CareerSource has sent us a note saying that they got  
18 caught up in traffic, and they won't be here. But  
19 we'll be excited about moving forward. And again,  
20 I'm excited about announcing this partnership. Next  
21 thing I have, next slide, is that we're kicking off  
22 -- in one of my remarks at the very beginning, I  
23 talked about how important it is to be a good  
24 neighbor. And as you can see, working with partners  
25 like Valencia College and CareerSource, I think the



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1 other thing that we have to do is also buy local.  
2 The significance --by prioritizing local  
3 businesses, we have an opportunity to make a  
4 positive impact in our community and ensure that our  
5 local businesses share as partners in our continued  
6 long-term success. For example, there's over 9,000  
7 vendors across all industries registered to do  
8 business in the State of Florida where their place  
9 of business is located right here in Orange and  
10 Osceola Counties, of which the numbers who are  
11 actually registered with the state as minority  
12 vendors, that number is 260. And something that's  
13 cl-- that's near and dear to my heart is figuring  
14 out how can we support our veterans who go out  
15 there. So there's a total of 40 veteran businesses  
16 that are registered with the state. And I want to  
17 make that distinction. There are veteran owned  
18 businesses, but they may not be registered with the  
19 state, but the total number that is there is 40. So  
20 my goal is --and it's sad that Bruce is leaving me  
21 as I get ready to kick this off, so he's probably  
22 happy, that's why he's chuckling over there. But  
23 our goal is to figure out how can we be a better  
24 neighbor and support our local vendors. Why is this  
25 important? Supporting local vendors stimulate our



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1 local economy. Every purchase that's made with a  
2 local vendor directly contributes to creating and  
3 sustaining jobs while ensuring profit stays within  
4 our local economy. By investing in our community,  
5 we become vital partners not only to the business,  
6 but to the citizens who benefit from the investments  
7 staying here. Quality products and services, local  
8 vendors often take great pride in their work and are  
9 dedicated to providing exceptional products and  
10 services. By choosing local, we can ensure that  
11 we've seen a high quality good while meeting our  
12 standards and promoting the sense of trust and  
13 reliability. And lastly, is the personal  
14 relationships, when we buy local, we have an  
15 opportunity to build personal relationships with  
16 vendors. These relationships foster collaboration  
17 and deeper understanding with the district needs,  
18 leading to better outcome and tailored solutions.  
19 Local vendors often go the extra mile to meet the  
20 expectation and provide personal customer service.  
21 So we're really excited about this effort going  
22 forward. All right. Now, as you guys have seen  
23 with Ms. Erica Washington Perry (phonetic), she's  
24 really bossy, so she made sure that this social  
25 media slide was in here. No, I'm joking. But I'm



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1 really excited about this effort. This is something  
2 that's near and dear to her heart and mines as well.  
3 We're excited to announce the official launch of the  
4 Central Florida Tourism Oversight District's  
5 presence on Instagram and Facebook. We will invite  
6 you to join us click, sign on to, and like us, like  
7 our page as we get ready to kick off this awesome  
8 journey. This will allow you to get direct access  
9 to the latest news and announcements, will keep you  
10 informed and engaged. You'll get a behind the  
11 scenes, gain exclusive glimpse of our inner working  
12 as a district. We'll provide the behind-the-scenes  
13 contents, photos, videos, insights to a lot of the  
14 projects that we're doing on a day-to-day efforts.  
15 And lastly, you get to see some of the visual  
16 stories that are captured -- that we captured  
17 through videos and photos and bring to life a lot of  
18 the great things here. When I started, and I had an  
19 opportunity to learn firsthand members of the board,  
20 I was like, wow, does anybody know this? And the  
21 answer is no. So I said, okay, let's figure out how  
22 we can share our story. And we're really excited  
23 about that. Next item I have is thanks, Chief. As  
24 you heard, our friends Valencia stole the punch. I  
25 should have put them at the end, but it's okay.



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1 After an illustrious career spanning over two  
2 decades, Chief LePere has announced his retirement  
3 from the Central Florida Tourism Oversight District  
4 effective August '23 -- August 2023. The chief has  
5 devoted his life to safeguarding millions of  
6 tourists who visit the district each year.  
7 Throughout his tenure, he has demonstrated  
8 exceptional leadership within our fire department  
9 starting in 1999 and assuming pivotal roles in  
10 operation and fire prevention. Serving as our chief  
11 for the past decade, the chief enhanced our  
12 emergency response capability, implemented  
13 innovative strategies, and prioritized the safety of  
14 our students -- of our citizens. Under his  
15 guidance, the district fire department have achieved  
16 remarkable milestones including significant  
17 reduction in response times and the integration of  
18 cutting-edge firefighting technology. Chief  
19 LePere's unwavering commitment to excellence and  
20 professionalism has gained the respect and -- and  
21 from his colleagues and communities at large.  
22 Throughout his tenure, the chief has faced a number  
23 of challenging and displays -- and displaying  
24 exceptional crisis management skills and setting a  
25 high standard for all firefighters to follow through



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1 his unwavering dedication and selflessness. Chief,  
2 we will deeply miss you and your leadership and your  
3 expertise, and we extend a heart field -- heartfelt  
4 gratitude for your tireless service to our  
5 community. Do you have any words that you want to  
6 say? I know it's dangerous, but I'm going to let --  
7 if you know, Chief, you know that's dangerous, but  
8 I'll give you the floor. You only have two minutes.

9 MR. LEPERE: Just thank you to everybody that  
10 I've worked with. I think I'll just defer to maybe  
11 a future board meeting when I get my plaque. I'll  
12 say a few words.

13 MR. GILZEAN: Okay.

14 MR. LEPERE: Thank you for recognizing me today  
15 and for my -- one thing, my success on the fire --  
16 of being the fire chief here is because of all of  
17 you --

18 MR. GILZEAN: Yes, sir.

19 MR. LEPERE: --and all of the people in the  
20 fire department who worked for me. I could not be  
21 successful without them. So they have a big part in  
22 me being successful. They're -- they're the real  
23 boots on the ground, and it made me look good. Thank  
24 you.

25 MR. GILZEAN: All right. Last but not least,



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1 during the last board meeting, I mentioned the  
2 creation of advisory boards. I had several  
3 conversations with some of our taxpayers, including  
4 Steve Schussler (phonetic) who was -- who owns  
5 several restaurants at Disney Springs. We are in  
6 the process of discussing what the board will look  
7 like with the goal and importance of honest and open  
8 conversations that deals with most of the  
9 misinformation that is currently out there. I'm  
10 pleased to say that yesterday's meeting was very  
11 productive. And I might say that he's also taken  
12 the time to meet with me on his birthday. So very  
13 grateful for that as well. And one of the things  
14 that I had an opportunity to do with Steve, and as I  
15 shared, it's always important to get feedback from  
16 our -- our community. I got his feedback, and I am  
17 pleased to announce that we have a brand-new logo.  
18 And there it is. This is our brand-new logo. I was  
19 able to get some feedback from not only staff,  
20 taxpayers, but we felt that this is super important.  
21 And I'm thrilled to announce the upgrading our  
22 government digital identity and brand. After weeks  
23 of multiple planning, exploration, pleased to reveal  
24 this fresh, new bright -- brand-new, exciting logo.  
25 And this is a new chapter in our history. And with



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1 that said, I'm confident that this new look will not  
2 only enhance our brand recognition, but also  
3 resonate with millions of guests who visit our  
4 district each and every year. With that said, Mr.  
5 Chairman and members of the board, that concludes my  
6 manager report.

7 MR. GARCIA: Ah, thank you very much, Mr.  
8 Gilzean. And on behalf of the board, I want to  
9 thank you for taking the initiative to recognize the  
10 chief and the other retiring members of our staff  
11 there is nobody more important to us in the work of  
12 this organization than our employees. And so, thank  
13 you very much for taking that initiative. And in  
14 addition, thank you for reaching out with the  
15 programs that you have presented here today. I  
16 think that is wonderful. We want to be good  
17 community citizens. And the fact that you're  
18 reaching out to -- to the local universities and  
19 other constituents really speaks volumes about your  
20 leadership, and we're deeply appreciative for that.  
21 So thank you for that wonderful report. Next, Mr.  
22 Langley, do you have any comments? Do you have a  
23 presentation?

24 MR. LANGLEY: No presentation, but I do have a  
25 few things. It's hard to follow that -- all the



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1 slides. I don't have any slides. So apologies for  
2 that. But I have two things. So first of all, I'm  
3 recommending and requesting from the board that we  
4 hold a closed-door executive session on union  
5 negotiations pursuant to Statute 447.605 Florida  
6 statutes to meet this Friday at 8:30 a.m. to discuss  
7 union negotiations. And we'll post that meeting  
8 shortly. And that'll be a meeting, closed door, no  
9 public is allowed to attend that. It will be the  
10 board members, Mr. Gilzean, myself, and then the  
11 labor attorneys. So that's my request. And we'll  
12 go ahead and move forward with that unless there's  
13 any objections. Second thing is I'm requesting a  
14 closed-door litigation strategy meeting with the  
15 board and the litigation counsel, myself, and my  
16 partner to discuss the pending litigation filed by  
17 Walt Disney Parks and Resorts USA, Inc., both the  
18 state and federal cases. I think it's a good time  
19 to have a closed-door meeting to have discussions  
20 and elicit input from the board, and seek your  
21 guidance, and discuss litigation strategy and  
22 expenditures. So we will, unless there's any  
23 objection, schedule that for the July meeting or  
24 sometime either before or after the July meeting.  
25 That also will be a closed-door meeting. We will,



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1 of course, have a -- we'll open will be during the  
2 public meeting discussing that we'll be doing the  
3 private meeting. And then we'll -- after the  
4 meeting, we'll come out back to the public session  
5 and close it. I do not have any further things in  
6 my report unless you have any questions for me.

7 MR. GARCIA: Any questions from my fellow board  
8 members?

9 MR. BARAKAT: Not at this time. Thank you.

10 MR. GARCIA: Okay. The -- thank you very much,  
11 Mr. Langley. The -- the next item on the agenda is  
12 Resolution 644. And before I ask Mr. Langley to  
13 walk us through the formalities of that resolution,  
14 just want to comment briefly that, you know, I hope  
15 you all have seen that I think at almost every board  
16 meeting, this board has adopted a new governance  
17 policy or practice. And that's because when we were  
18 appointed to this board, the first thing we did is  
19 -- is ask for what -- what are the board policies,  
20 and we discovered that there essentially were no  
21 board policies. And as a -- as an independent  
22 government agency, it's our obligation to function  
23 pursuant to best practices, and best practices  
24 obligates us to have board policies and practices.  
25 And this is a -- another one that we'll add. You'll



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1 see at our next meetings and the meetings after that  
2 that we will continue to add policies and practices  
3 to make us a -- a legitimately independent governing  
4 entity. And the current one that we're going to  
5 adopt here today is a whistleblower policy. And one  
6 of the bits of feedback that we received shortly  
7 after being appointed to this board is that some of  
8 our staff and employees felt like maybe their  
9 grievances or concerns or new ideas were falling on  
10 deaf ears with respect to the prior board. And we,  
11 as a board, want to make sure that our policy is to  
12 be open, honest, transparent, and receptive to ideas  
13 from anybody, including our staff and employees. And  
14 so, we're adopting a formal whistleblower policy.  
15 That's -- that's new to the district. And  
16 hopefully, that sends a message that the culture  
17 here is from the board's perspective, we want to  
18 hear from you good, bad, and ugly, whatever it is.  
19 So with respect to that, let me turn it over to Mr.  
20 Langley to go through the formalities of our  
21 adopting this resolution.

22 MR. LANGLEY: Thank you. Before I read the  
23 resolution, I did want to note that we do have two  
24 members of the board appearing virtually, and I just  
25 want to make sure that they're on because we will



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1 ask for a roll call on this particular matter. They  
2 are?

3 MS. ZIEGLER: Yep, we're on.

4 MR. LANGLEY: Okay.

5 MR. SASSO: I'm here.

6 MR. LANGLEY: All right. Thank you. So when  
7 the chair calls to vote on this item, just make sure  
8 you vote. Thank you. All right, Resolution number  
9 644, the resolution of the board of supervisors of  
10 the Central Florida Tourism Oversight District  
11 adopting a whistleblower policy for district  
12 employees, this is a public hearing. We do have  
13 with us today a lawyer with Ford Harrison, which is  
14 the district's labor and employment law firm. I  
15 think it's Jessica Walberg, correct?

16 MS. WALBERG: Yeah.

17 MR. LANGLEY: Okay. If you have any questions  
18 about the particulars of the policy -- so as the  
19 chair stated that we are proposing a whistleblower  
20 policy to essentially request that -- or give our  
21 employees the ability to come to Mr. Gilzean or the  
22 HR department and report any -- in good faith any  
23 violation they suspect of any federal, state, or  
24 local law, rule, or regulation committed by another  
25 employee or an agent of the district. We're



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1 independent contractors, so that those matters are  
2 taken seriously and dealt with in appropriate  
3 manner. And also, if they believe there's any act  
4 or suspected actor gross mismanagement, malfeasance,  
5 misfeasance, gross waste of public funds, or gross  
6 neglect of duty committed by any employee or agent  
7 of the district, or any independent contractor. What  
8 it makes it clear in this policy is that we welcome  
9 employees to come forward to report these things to  
10 the appropriate channels. And that in doing so, we  
11 want to make sure that they understand that there  
12 will be no adverse action taken against the employee  
13 for doing so. There is a Florida Whistleblower Act  
14 that this policy does not try to override, this  
15 supplements it and gives direction on the employees  
16 that who the appropriate channels are for making  
17 such reports. And with that, I -- I really don't  
18 have anything further. We do have a delayed  
19 effective date in the resolution with respect to the  
20 union employees. And it gives Mr. Gilzean the  
21 ability to delay the effective date even further if  
22 he feels that's necessary in dealing with the union  
23 on this particular policy. With respect to non-  
24 union employees, it would take effect immediately.  
25 Unless there's any questions for me, I ask that you



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1 consider this resolution for adoption. And at this  
2 time, I don't believe we have any speakers, but I  
3 would ask if there are any public comments, that now  
4 would be the appropriate time for someone to make a  
5 comment on this resolution since it's a public  
6 hearing.

7 MR. GARCIA: Debbie? Yes, ma'am. Did you want  
8 to make a comment?

9 MS. MCDONALD: No, this is a federal policy. It  
10 applies to --

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Microphone?

12 MS. MCDONALD: --every corporation.

13 MR. GARCIA: Did you want to come up to the  
14 microphone, please?

15 MS. MCDONALD: I guess my only question would  
16 be this is a federal policy that we all learned  
17 about in business school 101. It's for every  
18 corporation, every business in the country. And I  
19 just am curious why it needs to be specifically  
20 adopted? I mean, it's every employee realizes there  
21 was a whistleblower policy, and you're protected  
22 under the federal government. You comply. You  
23 complain to OSHA and go through this. It's -- it's  
24 unspoken, just like our right to nondiscrimination  
25 or other rights that are prevalent in every



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1 business. And I guess I'm just curious why the need  
2 to adopt specifically for Reedy Creek or to keep  
3 bringing in policies that seem to be generic that  
4 are already well established? So thank you.

5 MR. GARCIA: The answer to that question is  
6 that we want to encourage open and honest  
7 government, and we want to establish a culture of --  
8 for the employees so they feel free to come forward.  
9 And when we took over these responsibilities, the  
10 information we received is that certain ideas and  
11 other issues were falling on deaf ears. And so, we  
12 want to make a public statement as a board. We want  
13 to adopt a policy that says we don't have deaf ears.  
14 Nothing will fall on deaf ears. And so, if you have  
15 an issue, here is a new policy, here is a new  
16 culture, and we want you -- we want to -- want you  
17 to be heard. And so that's why we're specifically  
18 doing that.

19 MR. LANGLEY: And if I might add to that is  
20 this resolution gives the employees specific  
21 direction on who the appropriate people are to make  
22 -- to make these reports. And this policy is  
23 similar to what other local governments do. I mean,  
24 a lot of employers have a whistleblower policy. So  
25 you know, it's not necessarily correct to say that



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1 just because it may be in federal and state law,  
2 that it's not appropriate to adopt the policy,  
3 because most local governments have policies like  
4 this so they can make it clear to the employees who  
5 to report to, because it's important who to report  
6 to in order to have the protections under -- under  
7 the policy or under state law. So that's one of the  
8 things that does. In addition, it -- as the chair  
9 said, it gives a strong statement by this board of  
10 their encouragement to make it clear that there is  
11 this process in place, and it is encouraged to  
12 report these things. So anything that is against  
13 our policies or misfeasance, malfeasance, gross  
14 mismanagement could be corrected. So it is an  
15 important policy to have. Thank you.

16 MS. MCDONALD: Thank you.

17 MR. GARCIA: And you may find, too, that we  
18 will be superfluous as a board in promoting good  
19 policy. And we don't mind being superfluous in  
20 promoting good policy. So you may see more of that.  
21 But thank you for your question. So is the -- we  
22 need a vote on this, Mr. Langley?

23 MR. LANGLEY: We need a motion, and a second,  
24 and then a vote.

25 MR. GARCIA: Okay. Is there a motion?



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1 MR. BARAKAT: Mr. Chair, I will so motion.

2 MR. GARCIA: Is there a second?

3 MR. PERI: Second.

4 MR. GARCIA: Any discussion? All in favor,  
5 please indicate by saying aye.

6 ALL: Aye.

7 MR. GARCIA: Any opposed?

8 MS. ZEIGLER: Aye.

9 MR. SASSO: Aye.

10 MR. GARCIA: Any opposed? Let the record  
11 reflect the motion passes unanimously. And there's  
12 no unofficial -- unfinished business on the agenda.  
13 I'd ask my fellow board members if there's any other  
14 business they'd like to bring before this meeting?  
15 Hearing none, we will adjourn, and I want to thank  
16 everyone for attending. Thank you very much.

17 (MEETING CONCLUDED AT 10:14 A.M.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA)  
COUNTY OF ORANGE)

I, LANNA GODFREY, Court Reporter and Notary Public  
for the State of Florida at Large, do hereby certify  
that I was authorized to and did report the foregoing  
proceeding, and that said transcript is a true record of  
the said proceeding.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not of counsel for,  
related to, or employed by any of the parties or  
attorneys involved herein, nor am I financially  
interested in said action.

Submitted on: June 21, 2023.



LANNA GODFREY

Court Reporter, Notary Public



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