

**Joint Economic Development Organization Board Minutes
December 9, 2020**

Zoom Meeting
Topeka, Kansas
Wednesday, December 9, 2020

The Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) Board members met at 6:00 p.m. with the following voting Board members present: Shawnee County Commissioners Bill Riphahn, Kevin Cook and Aaron Mays; City of Topeka Mayor Michelle De La Isla, Deputy City Mayor Tony Emerson, City Councilmembers Michael Padilla and Michael Lesser. Shawnee County Commissioner Kevin Cook presided as JEDO Chair.

The following nonvoting JEDO Board members were present: City Councilmembers Spencer Duncan, Neil Dobler and Sylvia Ortiz.

The following JEDO Board members were absent: Karen Hiller, Christina Valdivia-Alcala and Hannah Naeger.

Others present who presented and/or spoke before the Board: Molly Howey, Senior Vice President of Economic Development for GO Topeka; Matt Pivarnik, President and CEO of Greater Topeka Partnership; James Crawl, Shawnee County Counselor; Glenda Washington, Chief Equity & Opportunity Officer for GO Topeka; Barbara Stapleton, VP Business Retention & Talent Initiatives for GO Topeka; Katrin Bridges, Senior VP Innovation for GO Topeka; Rhiannon Friedman, Business Development Manager for GO Topeka; Natalie Zeller, Senior VP Finance for GO Topeka; Bob Nugent, Topeka Metro.

A PRESENTATION on Plug & Play and Innovation Status was presented.

Katrin Bridges, Senior VP Innovation for GO Topeka presented a video on Plug & Play which gave an overview of the program along with a clip from the Founder and CEO of Plug & Play, Saeed Amidi and speakers from the different businesses. Ms. Bridges explained how Plug & Play Topeka is up and running. She talked about the Selection Day that occurred on October 21, 2020, when they welcomed the first three Founding Partners: Hill's Pet Nutrition, Cargill and Everygy. She said it would not have been possible without them. She explained how a huge part of program is infrastructure, including wet lab space, work space, office space and the Innovation Campus and what the status was on those things.

Councilmember Emerson wanted to thank Katrin and everyone else who worked on Plug & Play to get the program off the ground.

APPROVAL of September 9, 2020 JEDO Board Meeting Minutes was presented:

Commissioner Mays moved to approve the Minutes of September 9, 2020. The motion seconded by Councilmember Emmerson carried unanimously. (7-0)

APPROVAL of Project Vita was presented:

Barbara Stapleton, VP Business Retention & Talent Initiatives for Go Topeka, reported that during the September 9, 2020 JEDO Meeting Project Vita's Funding was approved at Seventy Six Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$76,500) based upon their Capital Investment of One Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,500,000), along with the creation of 7 full-time jobs over the next five years with an average annual salary of \$85,000. They calculate an Economic Impact of \$40.5 million over the next 10 years. The incentives are performance based and will be paid out as earned and details are outlined in the contract. She announced that Project Vita was Life Tech Diagnostics. She invited Dr. Sam Al-Murrani, president of the organization to address and share comments related to the project and their growth and success in our community.

Sam Al-Murrani, president of LifeTech Diagnostics, started off by thanking his team at Life Tech and the JEDO Board Members for this opportunity. He reported that they started this company when they saw the need for COVID testing. They put the lab together and are operational, right now doing COVID testing but will plan to do other specialized testing as they grow, as well as focusing on adding new job opportunities.

Mayor De La Isla moved to approve Project Vita. The motion seconded by Commissioner Riphahn carried unanimously. (7-0)

APPROVAL of Project Vertical was presented:

Barbara Stapleton, VP Business Retention & Talent Initiatives for Go Topeka, reported that during the September 9, 2020 JEDO Meeting Project Vertical's Funding was approved at Two Hundred Thirty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$234,000) based upon their Capital Investment of Six Million Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$6,600,000), along with the creation of 40 full-time jobs over the next five years with an average annual salary of \$43,000. They calculate an Economic Impact of \$200 million over the next 10 years. The incentives are performance based and will be paid out as earned and details are outlined in the contract. She announced that Project Vertical was Hayden Tower Service. She invited Tommy Lewis, Project Manager, to address and share comments related to the project and their growth and success in our community.

Tommy Lewis, Project Manager for Hayden Tower Service thanked everyone and reported that over the last several years they have been expanding their services. Along with the need for wireless services, it has led them to a significant future growth plan.

Commissioner Cook, Chair inquired how big an area they are currently covering and where do they plan on expanding to.

Mr. Lewis reported that their expansion will continue to be based out of Topeka, however they serve the entire Midwest.

Commissioner Cook asked what was the anticipated time period of future growth.

Mr. Lewis stated that they anticipate growing about 20% annually over the next five years. Councilmember Lesser congratulated Mr. Lewis and wanted to point out that Hayden Tower Service also utilizes a lot of Topeka's local sub-contractors for their projects. He stated that he will support this incentive agreement.

Mayor De La Isla moved to approve Project Vertical. The motion seconded by Councilmember Padilla carried unanimously. (7-0)

APPROVAL of Amendment of Project Purple Incentive Agreement was presented:

James Crowl, Shawnee County Counselor reported that Project Purple Incentive Agreement and Project Prince Incentive Agreement were previously approved by the Board. After they were approved, both companies came forward with requested changes to the agreements. He explained that both amendments were minor and did not change the basics of what was approved by JEDO. Project Purple had a technical error in the contract for how the incentives were going to be calculated. Project Prince had minor little changes that were requested by the company. Mr. Crowl explained that for a matter of transparency, he felt it was best to bring back both Incentive Agreements to be approved by the Board, that way the public would be able to review both agreements and see what the changes were.

Commissioner Mays moved to approve Project Purple. The motion seconded by Mayor De La Isla carried unanimously. (7-0)

APPROVAL of Amendment of Project Prince Incentive Agreement was presented:

Commissioner Cook, Chair stated as was outlined previously by James Crowl, was there a motion to approve the Amendment of Project Prince.

Commissioner Mays moved to approve Project Prince. The motion seconded by Councilmember Emmerson carried unanimously. (7-0)

APPROVAL of Incentive Funding for Project Meadowlark was presented:

Barbara Stapleton, VP Business Retention & Talent Initiatives for Go Topeka, reported that Project Meadowlark is a Manufacturing Company looking to expand in our community. Their total Capital Investment would be Five Million Four Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$4.5M). They are looking to add up to 41 new jobs over the next 5 years with an annual salary of \$42,000 plus benefits. They were proposing up to Two Hundred Twenty-Six Thousand Eight Hundred Dollars (\$226,800) total requested incentive. The total economic impact is calculated to be \$212M over the next 10 years. The incentives are performance based and will be paid out as earned and details will be outlined in the contract.

Commissioner Cook, JEDO Chair wanted to clarify that this is an existing business that wanted to add additional jobs to the community, totaling up to 41 new jobs with an average wage of \$42,000.

Ms. Stapleton stated that “Yes, that was correct.”

Mayor De La Isla moved to approve Project Meadowlark. The motion seconded by Councilmember Emerson carried unanimously. (7-0)

APPROVAL of Incentive Funding for Project Central was presented:

Rhiannon Friedman, Business Development Manager for GO Topeka, reported that Project Central is a Manufacturing Company looking to expand in our community. They are looking to add up to 50 new jobs over the next 5 years with an annual salary of \$40,000 plus benefits. She stated that they are looking at offering \$4,000 per job, equaling \$200,000 and \$1,000 per new employee for training, equaling \$50,000 and \$9.5M in Capital Investment, equaling \$34,000. Therefore, they were proposing up to Two Hundred Eighty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$284,000) total requested incentive. The incentives are performance based and will be paid out as earned and details will be outlined in the contract.

Commissioner Cook, JEDO Chair wanted to clarify that this was a business that was relocating to Topeka and these were new jobs that were being created as a result of them moving.

Ms. Friedman stated that yes, these are new jobs being created. She pointed out that the business is not actually moving but they are expanding to Shawnee County.

Councilmember Lesser moved to approve Project Central. The motion seconded by Councilmember Padilla carried unanimously. (7-0)

APPROVAL of Incentive Funding for Project Gateway was presented:

Rhiannon Friedman, Business Development Manager for GO Topeka, reported that Project Gateway is a Technology Company looking to expand in our community. They are looking to add up to 168 new jobs over the next 5 years with an annual salary of \$43,000 plus benefits. She stated that they are looking at offering \$4,000 per job, equaling \$672,000 and \$1,000 per new employee for training, equaling \$168,000. Therefore, they were proposing up to Eight Hundred Forty Thousand Dollars (\$840,000) total requested incentive. The incentives are performance based and will be paid out as earned and details will be outlined in the contract.

Commissioner Cook, JEDO Chair wanted to clarify that this Incentive was totaling 168 new jobs and would be done in the time frame of the next 5 years.

Ms. Friedman stated that “Yes, that was correct.”

Mayor De La Isla moved to approve Project Vita. The motion seconded by Commissioner Riphahn carried unanimously. (7-0)

A PRESENTATION on GO Topeka Third Quarter Report was presented:

Molly Howey, Senior Vice President of Economic Development, presented. She prepared a power point to recap the highlights of the year that will be sent to JEDO Board members as well as posted to the GO Topeka website.

She first highlighted the Business Attraction Projects YTD. This included 37 new projects with a breakdown by industry type:

- 12 Manufacturing
- 8 Distribution
- 6 Food Processing
- 5 Bio Science/Animal Health
- 2 Aerospace
- 2 Tech
- 2 Office

She went over the Business Retention and Expansion Projects for 2020 which were highlighted in the power point. They totaled 430 new jobs with a total Capital Investment of \$69M and an Economic Impact of 1.5B. Ms. Howey stated how proud she was of Topeka for being so resilient with all the challenges of 2020 and hope we carry it on to 2021.

Barbara Stapleton, VP Business Retention & Talent Initiatives for Go Topeka, reported on Talent Initiatives. She reported that we are continuing to report on Human Resources, with a breakdown on Unemployment Fraud, iNCLUDED and an upcoming session on Youth Apprenticeship Intermediary Project.

Glenda Washington, Chief Equity & Opportunity Officer for GO Topeka, gave an overview on the HOST Program. She reported that they have distributed over \$1,191,500 to 356 Shawnee County businesses. They have supported over 2,600 furloughed workers totaling over \$617,000 in impact relief. She relayed that she has received so much appreciation with all the support and she thanks JEDO for everything.

APPROVAL of GO Topeka 2021 Budget was presented:

Natalie Zeller, Senior Vice President of Finance for GO Topeka, provided an overview of the budget process, expenditure and revenue summaries as well as an overview of budgeted statement of activities for the year ending December 31, 2021.

Molly Howey, Senior Vice President of Economic Development, provided program overviews for Business Attraction and Retention: Including Aerospace Industry Strategy, Redevelopment, Travel & Marketing Adjustments and Incentives; Small Business Development and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem: Including Innovation Campus/Center Training Courses, Branding and Advertising, WU Pitch Competition and Incentives; Minority & Women Business Development: Including DEI Summit Event, Seat at the Table, THA Incubator and iNCLUDED; and Workforce and Talent Initiatives: Including JEDO Scholarships at WU Tech and Talent Attraction Marketing Campaign.

In conclusion, Natalie Zeller provided an overview of General and Administrative Economic Development Activities: Including Shared Services, Shared PR, Governor's Military Council, Software & Subscriptions and Shared Admin. Services; and Special Initiatives: Including

Washburn Tech East, Choose Topeka Incentives and Workforce Transportation. She reported the total on-going program operating budget for 2021 is \$5.36 million, therefore a use of \$362,000 carryforward funds to support it.

Mayor De La Isla moved to approve 2021 GO Topeka Budget. The motion seconded by Commissioner Mays carried unanimously. (7-0)

APPROVAL of 2020-2021 Carryforward Agreement was presented:

Molly Howey, Senior Vice President of Economic Development, provided an overview of the agreement. She reported the 2021 carry-forward amount being requested was \$11,105,416.00, which includes a number of items that are encumbered and/or committed as well as reserve funds.

Mayor De La Isla moved to approve the 2020-2021 Carryforward Agreement. The motion seconded by Commissioner Mays carried unanimously. (7-0)

UPDATE of Transportation Taskforce was presented:

Molly Howey, Senior Vice President of Economic Development, gave an overview on what the Transportation Taskforce has been doing. She stated that they started out by reviewing the facts around the Transportation pilot, SOTO and NOTO. They discussed topics such as the providers not being able to keep up with capacity, alternate transportation solutions and unique needs of Shawnee County. She explained how they brainstormed on how to fill the unique gaps in our community.

Glenda Washington, Chief Equity & Opportunity Officer for GO Topeka, gave insight on how all businesses could take part and receive incentives to fill the transportation workforce gap in our community.

Barbara Stapleton, VP Business Retention & Talent Initiatives for Go Topeka, provided and overview of the recommendations from the Workforce Transportation Taskforce, provided in the packet on the JEDO website.

Councilmember Padilla, member of the Workforce Transportation Taskforce discussed the different options they have come up with for the different businesses help promote transportation for its employees. He stated that he is confident that they will continue to work and move forward with this initiative.

Commissioner Cook, JEDO Chair, inquired if it is the anticipation of the Taskforce that by going with the a la carte model, we will have more employers able to participate and more citizens able to participate than the previous system.

Mr. Padilla explained that he feels like that is the expectation.

Commissioner Cook, Chair reported that he received correspondence from Kevin Moten from Capitol City Taxi. Mr. Moten reported that the business model for his company has changed and

they are no longer able to provide after hours transportation. He said JEDO, Topeka Metro and GO Topeka have been great partners and he was glad to be able to fill in the transportation gaps when he could. However, he does not have the desire or capacity to continue.

Councilmember Lesser inquired about how many companies at this point have committed to the program.

Ms. Stapleton reported that no companies have committed at this point because they needed approval of JEDO first. She said they have four companies report that they would like to continue and there may be more. They have talked about scheduling meetings with the companies soon so they can get it moving forward.

Ms. Howey added on that if this initiative is approved, they would make a public announcement to all companies within Shawnee County. She stated that this is the difference with this program, it is not bound by Northeast or South Topeka. Therefore there may potentially be more businesses interested based on that.

Mayor De La Isla stated that she is extremely supportive of continuing with the initiative and ensuring the funds are there. It is a critical need in our community. And the idea of it expanding is heading in the right direction.

Councilmember Lesser inquired if the cap is at \$10,000, do we have the ability to increase that if the funds are available because the participation from other businesses is not what we thought it would be?

Ms. Stapleton responded that we do have that option if there are still available funds.

Commissioner Cook, Chair asked a few questions on behalf of Councilmember Valdivia-Alcala. She asked if the decrease in workers participating was due to the businesses dropping out? What was the cost of a one way trip to an employer? Of the businesses who dropped out of the program, what was the percentage of it being tighter budgets or changes in priorities? Was it impacted by COVID-19? Finally, have there been any correspondence from the riders themselves about the program ending>

Ms. Stapleton explained that when the employers dropped out it did impact the amount of riders they were seeing. She stated that their estimation would be approx. \$18.00. Those amounts were heavily discounted when the pilots were created so now they are not a sustainable future rate structure. There was a variety of reasons as to why businesses dropped out, some being the use of temporary workers. She reported that the most they have heard related to the pandemic is just about concerns with riding with other riders. Most of the businesses were not affected. Finally, they have only received a few questions by some of the riders.

Commissioner Aaron Mays inquired if changing the area of riders, does that change the dynamic of the program. He worries if we do it to all locations, will there be enough riders?

Ms. Stapleton reported that they do specify that it has to be a business that is not on the bus route or it is after hours when the bus does not run. So, it actually expands the possibilities.

Councilmember Ortiz asked if they had talked to the State and Federal Agencies?

Ms. Stapleton reported that they have shared with State Agency contacts. She explained that sometimes the barrier she sees for State Agencies is that it is an employer match and they have to put up those dollars.

Matt Pivarnik, President and CEO of Greater Topeka Partnership, shared a story about how he was driving one day and saw someone walking in the pouring rain so he stopped to give them a ride. It was someone who works at the VA Hospital. It made him think about places like the VA that may need this and he thinks it would be helpful to expand this for businesses that may be limited because of geography.

Councilmember Emerson inquired about what will happen when these pilots end and do we have a plan to fill the gap?

Ms. Stapleton reported that they are working out a plan to fill in the gap, and as soon as it's approved they will start communicating with businesses right away.

Ms. Howey followed up that even before the conversation tonight, they knew something was going to happen so they did already start those conversations with businesses and plan to have something in place.

PUBLIC COMMENT was provided by the following:

Carl Frazier spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. He voiced concerns about the SOTO/NETO program coming to an end and nothing to replace it. He believes it is important for people to be able to get to and from jobs. He stated that we should be helping those who already live in Topeka. He would like to see the Board reinstate the Transportation Initiative tonight.

Lynn Boddington spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. She reported that people who rely on the SOTO and NETO program will not be enjoying the Holidays this year because they will be worried how they will be getting to work as of January 1, 2021. She feels there is a concern in the effort to provide transportation to citizens of Shawnee County. Her concern is that companies won't sign up for the program. The way SOTO/NETO was set up was a standard transportation available to a lot of people. She stated that she is encouraged by the options being offered to the companies, she is disappointed that there are not solid plans in place as of January 1, 2021. She is concerned about those that may have to walk. She suggested that Capitol City could provide daytime service during the gap.

Stephen Schiffelbein spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. He believes that solving the workforce transportation problem shows that all people are loved and respected. He wonders why we do not have a solution for this yet? He believes everyone should be responsible for workforce transportation. He suggests that GO Topeka should provide weekly progress reports until

employer agreements are made. He urges the governing body to make sure they have something in place when the SOTO/NETO programs end.

Elvera Johnson spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. She reported that she was offended when she read that SOTO/NETO was ending. She was also worried about not having another plan in place. She expects GO Topeka to come up with a specific plan to get people to work as of January 1, 2021, a list of ideas does not suffice.

Lorna Boden spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. She stated her feelings are more optimistic after hearing the transportation ideas tonight than when she first came to the meeting. She is still discouraged that Topeka JUMP did not have any input in the Transportation Taskforce. Her concern is that they do not know what companies will be involved and how many people that leaves. She said she is still very concerned about the gap.

Pamela Berry spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. She feels better after hearing some of the plans tonight but she is still frustrated that Topeka JUMP was not involved in those decisions. She is also concerned about the gap there will be and states that we cannot afford a gap in service.

Anton Ahrens spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. He was shocked to hear that we are leaving it up to the companies when half the companies dropped out of the program. He's disappointed to think that we can spend millions of dollars in economic development to large corporations, but can't seem to find a way to get their worker's to work. He believes hundreds of people will be affected by this program ending. He is disappointed that we think because it is a pilot program, we have to drop it. He urges that people will always need a way to get to work. GO Topeka should support an initiative every year for workforce transportation. He commends Councilmember Emerson on working on this initiative.

Anne Flynn spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. She stated that we need to have something in place by the end of the year. It is important to get people to work in an unstable economy. She suggested even an interim service during daylight hours.

Elizabeth Gragg spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. She was disappointed that the public was not included in the decisions for Workforce Transportation. She urges the board to come up with a workforce transportation program before January 1, 2021.

Lenora Kinzie spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. She referred to the press release by Topeka Metro about the programs ending. She felt it was done prematurely and with the hope to eliminate the program entirely. She believes workforce transportation programs are important and needed. She said she agrees with Councilmember Duncan that we need to work with businesses, however, she does not believe GO Topeka has adequately done this. She believes something more concrete should have been discussed tonight. She stated she would have wanted to see a draft agreement. She believes we cannot afford a gap in services.

Harry Christian spoke on the Transportation Taskforce. He reported that he was very sad to hear the program was ending. He thinks JEDO gives all kinds of money to everyone else but not the people. He stated that we do too much for the haves, and not the have not's. He feels that it's not

about money, it is about people's lives. He prays you will come up with a program before January 1, 2021.

Commissioner Cook, Chair inquired if it was possible for the Workforce Transportation Taskforce to provide weekly or regular updates to the JEDO Board on the status of the program?

Molly Howey, Senior Vice President of Economic Development, stated that they could provide regular updates to the board.

Commissioner Cook also asked how they would go about advertising the program.

Ms. Howey stated that they would have a media release out this week, and have an agreement drafted to share with companies that would want to jump in.

Commissioner Mays, wanted to clarify specifically what they are going to be voting on, since they already approved up to \$100,000 for this.

Ms. Howey reported that they would be voting on the proposal in the memo, outlining the terms of the program.

Mayor De La Isla moved to approve the terms of the Workforce Transportation Initiative. The motion seconded by Commissioner Mays carried unanimously. (7-0)

Councilmember Padilla wanted it to be on record that he believes those at GO Topeka have communicated effectively with all parties effected.

A PRESENTATION on Choose Topeka Update was presented:

Barbara Stapleton, VP Business Retention & Talent Initiatives for Go Topeka, provided and overview of Choose Topeka Talent Relocation Initiative. In September, JEDO approved to add the Remote Worker Option. The update includes the following.

Employer Matching Funds Option:

- 23 candidates accepted, 26 employer submissions
- 13 employers have matched
- \$138,750 in matching JEDO funds
- Participants from 14 states
- Generated over 4,500 applications

Remote Worker Option:

- Over 80 submissions
- 5 candidates accepted, 5 more interviews in process
- \$45K encumbered
- Submissions from 23 states and 3 countries

Ms. Stapleton added that they do still have enough funds to cover until the end of the year, and then they may look at funding another round.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.