

**Joint Economic Development Organization Board Minutes**  
**Wednesday, September 11, 2024**

Cyrus K. Holliday Building  
620 SE Madison Street  
First Floor Conference Room  
Topeka, Kansas

The Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) Board members met at 6:00 p.m. in-person with the following voting Board members present: Shawnee County Commissioners Kevin Cook, Aaron Mays and Bill Riphahn; City of Topeka Councilmembers David Banks, Spencer Duncan and Karen Hiller by proxy for Deputy Mayor Valdivia-Alcala. Shawnee County Commissioner Kevin Cook presided as JEDO Chair.

The following JEDO Board members were absent: Mayor Michael Padilla, Deputy Mayor Valdivia-Alcala, City Councilmembers Sylvia Ortiz, Brett Kell, Marcus Miller, Neil Dobler and Michelle Hoferer.

*Commissioner Cook noted the addition of Item 3G to the Agenda, Approval of the 2023 JEDO Audit. He also noted that Mayor Padilla will be absent and Deputy Mayor Valdivia-Alcala will also be absent and granted her proxy to Councilmember Hiller for voting purposes.*

**APPROVAL of May 8, 2024 JEDO Board Meeting Minutes, was presented.**

*Commissioner Riphahn moved to approve the Minutes of May 8, 2024. The motion seconded by Councilmember Hiller carried unanimously. (6-0)*

**APPROVAL of Incentive Agreement for Project Queen Bee was presented.**

Ashley Lehman, GO Topeka Director of Business Development, presented. She gave a brief explanation on JEDO's Incentive Guidelines. She then gave the outline of the Incentive Funding for Project Queen Bee, which included:

- Local manufacturing plant
- Capital Investment of \$47.2 Million
- 180 new jobs over the next five years
- \$60,000 - \$120,000 + average wages
- Qualified for employment incentives based on annual salary
- \$1,293,351,371 Economic Impact over the next 10 years
- 178% Return on Investments
- Total Approved Incentives of \$1,590,400

Ms. Lehman announced that Project Queen Bee is PTMW (Equipment Manufacturing Solutions).

Morgan Padgett, PTMW Senior VP of Accounting and IT spoke and said they are grateful of JEDO's continued investment in their company. She gave a brief history of the company and

mentioned they are excited to be able to expand. They will be making improvements and enhancements to their current facility and adding equipment.

Councilmember Hiller asked what products are they doing and if they are adding new products.

Ms. Padgett explained that they started in the rail industry and they have grown to include data centers, energy and those sorts of things.

Councilmember Banks asked what their plan was to hire lower to middle income employees?

Ms. Padgett said their production level employees require no experience or background.

David Dobbs, PTMW Senior VP of Manufacturing explained that they also train their employees to help build their skills.

*Commissioner Riphahn moved to approve the Incentive Agreement for Project Queen Bee. The motion seconded by Councilmember Hiller carried unanimously. (6-0)*

### **APPROVAL of Incentive Agreement for Project Oriole was presented.**

Ashley Lehman, GO Topeka Director of Business Development, presented. She gave the outline of the Incentive Funding for Project Oriole, which included:

- Local manufacturing plant
- Capital Investment of \$31 Million
- 60 new jobs over the next five years
- Average wages of \$50,000
- Qualified for employment and training incentives based on annual salary
- \$240.2 Million Economic Impact over the next 10 years
- 246% Return on Investments
- Total Requested Incentives of \$272,000

Ms. Lehman announced that Project Oriole is Southwest Publishing, which will be rebranded as Moore Digital Print and Mail Center.

Angie McAtee, Southwest Publishing VP said she is very excited of this expansion. They will be getting new equipment to make new card products and increase capacity. She gave a brief history of the company and how much they appreciate the funding.

Zach Hillmer, Southwest Publishing Operations Manager, explained how grateful they are for the help and what some of their future plans are.

Commissioner Banks stated that he is proud to have them in his district and how the building looked so different.

Commissioner Cook noted that for both these projects the economic incentive is \$50,000 or above and both of these have wages starting at \$50,000 or above and we are grateful for that.

Councilmember Hiller mentioned that she toured the facility and it was really cool. She asked if they do tours regularly.

Mr. Hillmer replied that they would do a tour anytime.

*Councilmember Banks moved to approve the Incentive Agreement for Project Oriole. The motion seconded by Commissioner Mays carried unanimously. (6-0)*

**APPROVAL of Incentive Funding for Project Finish Line was presented.**

Ashley Lehman, GO Topeka Director of Business Development, presented. She gave the outline of the Incentive Funding for Project Finish Line, which included:

- Local manufacturing plant
- Capital Investment of \$57 Million
- 300 new jobs over the next five years
- Average wages of \$51,000
- Qualified for employment and training incentives based on annual salary
- \$1.24 Billion Economic Impact over the next 10 years
- 171% Return on Investments
- Total Requested Incentives of \$2,136,000

Commissioner Cook noted again that this has a \$51,000 annual wage.

*Commissioner Riphahn moved to approve the Incentive Funding for Project Finish Line. The motion seconded by Commissioner Mays carried unanimously. (6-0)*

**APPROVAL of Incentive Funding for Project Brick was presented.**

Ashley Lehman, GO Topeka Director of Business Development, presented. She gave the outline of the Incentive Funding for Project Brick, which included:

- Local aviation company
- 13 new jobs over the next five years
- Average wages of \$60,000-\$110,000
- Qualified for employment and training incentives based on annual salary
- \$18.9 Million Economic Impact over the next 10 years
- 301% Return on Investments
- Total Requested Incentives of \$112,000

*Councilmember Hiller moved to approve the Incentive Funding for Project Brick. The motion seconded by Commissioner Riphahn carried unanimously. (6-0)*

**APPROVAL of 2023 GO Topeka Audit was presented.**

Josh Patterson, CFO for GTP and GO Topeka introduced Karen Linn, BT&Co. director.

Karen Linn, BT&Co. Director presented the GO Topeka Audit. She explained that she will go through the conclusions which is what is important to hear. She went on to say the financial statements was free of material misstatement, which is the highest form of opinion you can get. She explained how they conduct their audit process and there was nothing that they believed to be inconsistent or inappropriate. They did identify one significant estimate that is a part of the financial statements, and that is the fair value of the investments that are reported in the financials, so they reviewed the accounting policy, they reviewed the estimation process and they came to the conclusion that that estimate is reasonable. They had no audit adjustments which is a good indication that your financial recording and process is able to provide statements that are representative of generally excepted accounting practices. She then pointed out that there were no issues or problems with management about accounting matters or auditing matters. She said they had great cooperation and everything they needed was provided to them. Lastly, she wanted to bring to attention the Management Representation Letter that has a lot of important information in order to understand the financials.

Commissioner Cook wanted to note that this is a clean audit and there are no notes or issues.

*Councilmember Duncan moved to approve the GO Topeka Audit. The motion seconded by Councilmember Banks carried unanimously. (6-0)*

#### **APPROVAL of 2023 JEDO Audit was presented.**

Emily Sheldon, Principle of BT&Co. presented the JEDO Audit. She said she was pleased to announce that for the fiscal year 2023, JEDO financials are fairly presented in all material respects with generally accepted accounting principles. They did issue an unmodified audit approval, which is the best kind of opinion JEDO can receive. She explained that there was nothing to report on any significant, alternative, adopted, changed or controversial accounting policies, significant transactions, any adjusted journal entries or any uncorrected misstatements. She went on to say that during their audit, JEDO was responsive and transparent with their team members. Finally, she pointed out the Management Representation Letter that was included and how it is important to help understand JEDO's financial statements.

Commissioner Cook wanted to note that this is a clean audit and there are no notes or issues.

Councilmember Duncan explained that he is nervous to approve it since it was added to the agenda today and the public has not had a chance to view it. He made a motion to defer the approval of the audit to the December 11<sup>th</sup> JEDO meeting.

*Councilmember Duncan moved to approve the Motion to Defer. The motion seconded by Commissioner Mays carried unanimously. (6-0)*

#### **A PRESENTATION on 2024 GO Topeka Second Quarter Report was presented.**

Molly Howey, GO Topeka President of Economic Development, presented. She stated that the Quarterly Report is in the Agenda Packet and they will be going over some updates since that has been published. She shared the Q2 Dashboard which did not contain Project Brick or Project Finish Line. There were 123 New Projects, 54 Completed Projects, 60 Active Projects, 249 New

Jobs, 1087 Retained Jobs, 422 Training Investments, 164 Assisted Companies and \$79,826,807 in Capital Investment. She explained they are almost ready to share the budget with the JEDO Board Members and will start reaching out to everyone.

Councilmember Duncan asked if they had a running total of numbers since the beginning?

Ms. Howey stated that they do keep a running total chart and she can bring it to the next meeting.

Stephanie Moran, Senior VP of Innovation for GO Topeka, presented an update of the Plug and Play Program which included that they have ran over 100 startups through this program, over 66 non-disclosure agreements have been signed, 19 pilots have been initiated with corporate partners, 2 partnerships have come out of those startups and 12 country's represented. She went on to share that from the last batch we have a local investor and regional investor who have made an investment from one of the startups from the last batch. We also have Love Life Sciences who are working on a medical device that we hope to announce that plug and play is looking at them for a potential investment as well. The new batch kicks off next week, which has 25 startups selected. They are moving from a 3-month program to a 9-month program, which will give them more time to engage with the start-ups. She announced more events that they have scheduled.

Ms. Moran then gave an update on Kansas State University Grant Funds. They had received a little over \$300,000. Those funds have been used for Entrepreneurial Asset Mapping, starting a Business Concierge office, GO Topeka/K-State partnership with Plug and Play, Tech Validation Support for 9 startups and Student Engagement in projects. She then went over the Business Concierge Office. It is grant funds to support entrepreneurial and small business growth throughout the state. They will be meeting to go over the asset map and collaborating with Washburn University.

Ms. Moran then gave an update on the Innovation Center Project. On May 10<sup>th</sup> they were contacted by BioRealty and told that they did not have success moving some of the leases forward and will be selling the building. On May 16<sup>th</sup> BioRealty sends the Lessor Offer to GO Topeka and on May 30<sup>th</sup> GO Topeka declines the Lessor Offer. On June 11<sup>th</sup> they had further discussions with BioRealty and let them know that we would be looking at alternate locations. Later in June, BioRealty extended a second Lessor Offer and GO Topeka declined. In June and July they are scouting alternate properties in Downtown Corridor. They have now shortlisted some options and are working with a local developer for design and initial cost projections.

Finally, she wanted to share an exciting announcement that they have received \$600,000 in grant funding from Kansas State to continue with the Business Concierge Services, the Tech Validation with the startups and for equipment for the Innovation Center as well as paying for interns.

Stephanie Norwood, GO Topeka Director of Entrepreneurship and Small Business, presented on entrepreneurship and small business. She announced that they have almost filled all the spots on the Small Business Council with local business owners from the community. They have been hosting a bi-monthly business council training session that they have been seeing a lot of success in. She stated that Amanda Thompson from Coldwell Banker will be the Small Business Council Chair for 2025.

Ms. Norwood then gave an update on Small Business Incentives. She pointed out the approved incentive map by neighborhood health, district, industry and investment type. She then talked about the Small Business Incentive Survey they have been sending out to Businesses that participated in the program to see their success after about a year. She gave an update on some upcoming events: Women's Forum in October, Global Entrepreneurship Week and Small Shop Local in November.

Ashley Lehman, GO Topeka Director of Business Development, presented on the current Project Pipeline. She explained that these are companies that come from outside of Shawnee County and are looking to move into our community. She went over what industries are doing site visits.

Israel Sanchez, Director of Equity and Business Development, presented two guests, Curtis and Asar, that came to talk about a program that they are partnering with. Curtis explained how grateful they are to partner with the program. They have a program that helps mentor youths and provides training on writing resumes, getting and keeping a job, urban farming and leadership. He introduced, Asar Bailey to speak about his experience with the program this summer. Mr. Bailey explained how they teach kids about business skills, and agriculture programs to be self-sustaining. He mentioned that since the program started they have seen a drop in violence with youth. He said that they have been able to help hundreds of youth through this program.

Commissioner Mays stated how he thinks the program is great.

Councilmember Hiller asked what the name of the program is and how can people find out about it?

Curtis explained the program is called Summer Career Leadership. He said they reach out to schools, kids can hear about it from other kids, and they hold teen nights at Hillcrest Community Center. Mr. Bailey added that the program is about teaching kids to be self-sustainable.

Stephanie Moran, Senior VP of Innovation for GO Topeka, presented on the 10% Fund Allocation in the Interlocal Agreement. They reviewed the programs and funding allocations to ensure consistency in defining economically disadvantaged groups. They collaborated with community partners and utilized published data sources such as the Topeka Neighborhood Health Map and the American Community Survey. Based on their research and the legal updates from the County Counselor and City Attorney, they have decided to focus on economically disadvantaged, youth workforce development and derelict properties.

Israel Sanchez, Director of Equity and Business Development, presented on how they went about defining the term economically disadvantaged in their programs. He stated that they used sources such as Topeka Neighborhood Health Map and the American Community Survey. He also reached out to the community partners to find out how they find this information. He explained that one big concern brought up was the carry-forward amount of \$1.3 Million with the 10% requirement. He went over a proposal to the Board for proposed fund allocation. He stated that it had three main categories: 1. Youth Employment Programs, 2. Supporting Entrepreneurs, 3. Building Rehabilitation.

Commissioner Mays asked if the building rehabilitation program is designed for buildings that are actually in the at-risk communities or is it for people who live in the at-risk communities who may want to open a business somewhere else?

Ms. Moran explained that there may be both scenarios with the program but they are still working out all the details.

Councilmember Duncan asked if the Health Map was the only qualifier for the program. He stated he wants to dig into it deeper to make sure that 10% is actually going to those economically disadvantaged businesses who don't have any other resources.

Ms. Moran explained that there will be income thresholds and the at-risk neighborhood development may also qualify. She said they will have to look at each individual business on a case by case basis.

Councilmember Hiller asked if their focus right now is on the business/entrepreneur side or the building rehabilitation side.

Ms. Moran explained that it will be a little bit of both.

Rhet Flood, Executive Director of Forge Young Talent presented on how they attract and retain young talent to Topeka and Shawnee County. He explained they do that through events and programs like their program, Top City Intern. This is a program for Topeka and Shawnee County Employers to better engage their interns while they're in town. This summer the program had 35 local employers participate and 375 interns. They had 5 events in 7 weeks. Then they followed up with both employers and interns with surveys to capture additional information. He also went over some of the other events they had.

Trina Goss, GO Topeka Director of Business and Talent Initiatives, presented on the Love Kansas Campaign in which Topeka is one of the pilot community for the campaign. Love Kansas is a talent attraction initiative for Boomerangs which Kansas Tourism and Department of Commerce is putting out. She showed a postcard that they created for the campaign in which people can send to others who have moved away from Topeka, to encourage them to move back. They are also working on a social media campaign. She announced that their 3<sup>rd</sup> annual manufacturing event is happening on October 4<sup>th</sup> at the Ag Hall.

**PUBLIC COMMENT was provided by the following:**

Henry McClure spoke how every time he has asked for help from JEDO they have said that it does not create jobs and he still hasn't gotten the Boards response on his Pizza Hut deal. He would also like to talk to Isreal about getting the 10% funds for development.

The Clerk announced the next JEDO Board meetings will be held on December 11, 2024.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.