

**Joint Economic Development Organization Board Minutes  
December 10, 2025**

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 and Kevin Cook -2; Deputy Mayor Brett Kell, City of Topeka Councilmembers David Banks and Spencer Duncan -3. Mayor Micheal Padilla presided -1. Absent Commissioner Aaron Mays -1.

JEDO Non-Voting Board members present: Councilmember Karen Hiller – 1. Absent: Councilmembers Christina Valdivia-Alcala, Sylvia Ortiz, Marcus Miller and Neil Dobler - 4.

Public comment for the meeting was available via Zoom or in-person. Individuals were required to contact the City Clerk's Office at 785-368-3940 or via email at [cclerk@topeka.org](mailto:cclerk@topeka.org) by no later than 4:00 p.m. on December 10, 2025, after which the City Clerk's Office provided the Zoom link information and protocols prior to the meeting start time. Written public comment was also considered to the extent it was personally submitted at the meeting or to the City Clerk's Office located at 215 SE 7th Street, Room 166, Topeka, Kansas, 66603 or via email at [cclerk@topeka.org](mailto:cclerk@topeka.org) on or before December 10, 2025.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was recited by meeting participants.

**APPROVAL of September 10, 2025, JEDO Board Meeting Minutes, was presented.**

Commissioner Cook moved to approve the minutes. The motion seconded by Deputy Mayor Kell carried unanimously on roll call vote. (6-0-0)

**APPROVAL of the 2024 GO Topeka Audit and 2024 JEDO Audit, was presented.**

Emily Sheldon, BT & Co., Principal, provided an overview of the 2024 JEDO Audit and reported after reviewing the financial statements of governmental activities and the major fund of Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO), it was found that the financial statements presented fairly, and in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities and the major fund of JEDO ended in accordance with accounting principles.

Cynthia Darting, BT & Co., Principal, provided an overview of the 2024 GO Topeka Audit and reported there was an unmodified opinion rendered regarding the Growth Organization of Topeka (GO Topeka) statements for the Fiscal Year 2024. She stated that Management had selected the preferred accounting practice; there were no Audit Adjustments made; and they were not aware of any uncorrected misstatements.

Deputy Mayor Kell moved to approve the 2024 JEDO Audit and 2024 GO Topeka Audit. The motion seconded by Councilmember Duncan carried unanimously on roll call vote. (6-0-0)

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**APPROVAL of Incentive Funding Proposal for Project Team in the amount of \$383,000 was presented.**

Ashley Lehman, Vice President of Business Development, reported GO Topeka has been working with a local primary employer in the food manufacturing industry to assist in an expansion to include a Capital Investment of Real Property in the amount of \$17.8 million and \$2.7 million in equipment.

Councilmember Duncan moved to approve the incentive funding proposal for Project Team in the amount of \$383,000. The motion seconded by Commissioner Riphahn carried unanimously on roll call vote. (6-0-0)

**APPROVAL of Incentive Funding Proposal for Project Vulcan in the amount of \$147,000, was presented.**

Ashley Lehman, Vice President of Business Development, reported GO Topeka has been working with a local primary employer in the manufacturing industry to assist in an expansion with a Capital Investment in Real Property in the amount of \$1 million and \$600,000 in equipment resulting in 19 new jobs over the next 5 years.

Deputy Mayor Kell moved to approve the incentive funding proposal for Project Vulcan in the amount of \$147,000. The motion seconded by Commissioner Riphahn carried unanimously on roll. (6-0-0)

**APPROVAL of the 2026 GO TOPEKA Budget and Business Plan, was presented.**

Josh Patterson, GO Topeka Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of the 2026 GO Topeka Budget and Business Plan.

Councilmember Banks moved to approve the 2026 GO Topeka Budget and Business Plan as proposed. The motion seconded by Mayor Padilla carried unanimously on roll call vote. (6-0-0)

**APPROVAL of JEDO Contract No. C-001-2025 the 2026 Cash Carry-Forward Agreement in the amount of \$13,600,000, was presented.**

Josh Patterson, GO Topeka, Chief Financial Officer, provided a financial breakdown of the proposed agreement.

Commissioner Cook inquired about the uncommitted funds in the amount of \$3 million. He questioned if there is an expected increase from prior years or if it would be consistent with what has been seen in the past.

Josh Patterson reported there was a slight drop from last year; however, he would expect it to remain fairly flat.

Councilmember Duncan moved to approve the agreement in the amount of \$13,600,000. The motion seconded by Councilmember Banks carried unanimously on roll call vote. (6-0-0)

**APPROVAL of Resolution No. 2025-02 granting a waiver for the residency requirement provision outlines in Section 4(b) of JEDO Service Contract No. 2019-01, was presented.**

Nick Jefferson, City Attorney, stated approval would waive the residency requirement provision for a GO Topeka employee.

Commissioner Cook moved to approve the resolution. The motion seconded by Councilmember Duncan carried unanimously on roll call vote. (6-0-0)

**A PRESENTATION on the 2025 Growth Organization of (GO) Topeka 3rd Quarter Report, was presented.**

Rhiannon Friedman, GO Topeka Chief Executive Officer, referenced the Third Quarter Report included in the agenda packet and highlighted the Q3 2025 Dashboard. She provided an overview of their focus for 2026 to include aviation and aerospace.

Stephanie Moran, GO Topeka Senior Vice President of Innovation, shared the Link Innovation Labs grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony will be in February 2026. She advised the Organization of the new tenants, sponsors, members and programing that can be expected in the Link Innovation Labs.

Ashley Lehman, GO Topeka Vice President of Business Development, reported there are 27 active projects in the pipeline to include 10 manufacturing, 4 aviation and aerospace, 9 data center and tech, 2 logistics and distribution and 2 office/other.

Trina Goss, GO Topeka Director of Business and Talent Initiatives, reported on the Topeka Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (TopCity FAME) program which connects area students with employer partners to obtain sponsorship to pursue a two-year degree in manufacturing. Sponsors provide selected students with paid experience, working part-time, while attending classes offering an associate degree program that will develop skills in technical, core and personal development.

Stephanie Norwood, GO Topeka Director of Entrepreneurship & Small Business, provided an update on projects, programs and approved incentives.

On behalf of the Greater Topeka Partnership Staff members, Rhiannon Friedman, Chief Executive Officer, recognized Mayor Michael A. Padilla for his service.

Brenda Younger, City Clerk, announced the 2026 JEDO Board meetings would be held on February 11, 2026, May 13, 2026, September 9, 2026, and December 9, 2026.

PUBLIC COMMENT was provided by the following individuals:

Henry McClure stated he believes the JEDO Board has lost sight of their purpose to ensure property was shovel ready for potential economic development and instead, has turned into a bank for GO Topeka and the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce. He also stated he believes the carry-over funds should be used for city and county water line and street repairs.

LaZone Grays distributed a handout. He referenced past strategic plans (2002 and 2008) that have been conducted for economic development and questioned what has been accomplished then and now and if there is a need to conduct a new study. He mentioned the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it will change future study and workforce development efforts.

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.