Meeting: GO Topeka Board of Directors

Place: Partnership Board Room

Time: 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Date: October 11, 2019

Board: Scott Anderson, Linda Briden, Tony Emerson, Andrea Engstrom, Jerry Farley, Dan

Foltz, Scott Gales, Colin Hildebrand, Shane Hillmer, Eric Johnson, Wade Jueneman,

Robert Kenagy, Kurt Kuta, Treena Mason, Martha Piland, Matt Pivarnik, Matt Strathman,

Stephen Wade, Wendy Wells, Doug Wolff.

Staff: Karen Christilles, Rhiannon Friedman, Vince Fry, Katrin Holzhaus, Molly Howey, Lindsay Lebahn, Freddy Mawyin, Brett Oetting, Bob Ross, Curtis Sneden, Barbara Stapleton, Natalie Zeller, Josh Patterson, Glenda Washington.

Dan Foltz called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Motion: Consent Agenda

The minutes from the August 2, 2019 were presented to the Board. The motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The motion carried.

Motion: Approval of Officers

Curtis Sneden conducted the appointment of annual officers who will assume the duties on January 1, 2020. Motion approved and seconded.

Financials

Natalie Zeller presented an updated on the 2020 public budget. She explained that a new format will be used starting January 1, 2020 once the new accounting system goes live. Along with the new accounting system, The Partnership will also move from a cash to accrual bases. The Partnership will be charging a management fee opposed to a charge for every expense that is incurred for shared services such as marketing. These changes will make financials easier to record on a month over month basis for review.

Zeller mentioned that the presentation of the budget will have some visual changes as well with categories being outlined across the top of the document in a column format vs. line by line in the past. She stated that the draft budget is near completion and will be ready for presentation to JEDO at the December 11, 2019 meeting.

Project Update

Staff presented a project overview and indicated heavy activity recently with a couple existing projects that required Executive Committee to approve incentives outside of a regular meeting

The most recent project announcement was Project Purple which is now public, Advisors Excel.

Barbara Stapleton presented Project Oyster, that was approved by the Exec Committee on September 25, 2019, to the rest of the board. Oyster is a manufacturing company looking to add 17 net new jobs with a total incentive up to ­­­­­­­$96,000. Additional updates on the status of recent business retention projects in the pipeline were provided.

Rhiannon Friedman presented an update on business attraction projects that are in the pipeline.

Choose Topeka

Barbara Stapleton shared that materials for the Choose Topeka program are starting to be shared with HR and Talent Recruitment managers within the community. These items are readily available to organizations who would like to utilize the marketing materials. JEDO will be reviewing the Choose Topeka program at the next meeting on December 11, 2019.

Topeka Housing Authority Empowerment Center

Glenda Washington presented on the Topeka Housing Authority (THA) pilot program. This program will take a targeted look at residents in the community that are living in public housing. The goal is to understand how we can help these individuals prosper and find a way to lift them up in our community.

Washington stated that a participation survey was completed by nearly 30 individuals of which 8 said yes, and 6 ended up being participants. These 6 individuals started an 8-week fast track program that will hold graduation the week of November 4, 2019. Following graduation these individuals will have access to an incubator space that will be located at the old aquaponics center that is being redesigned for this purpose this winter. In the spring of 2020 4 to 6 new businesses will be created out of this program.

Innovation/ Plug and Play

Katrin Holzhaus provided an update on progress made with Plug and Play. Plug and Play has started to recruit business startups for the accelerator that will be ready to start once the project goes live in Topeka.

Holzhaus stated that the innovation team has continued to purse building infrastructure for Plug and Play so they can start their program early next year. Downtown is the preferred location for an innovation center. Conversations have taken place with local coworking facilitators surrounding a downtown innovation center.

JEDO Contract

Molly Howey shared an update on GO Topeka’s contract with JEDO. In the past GO Topeka had been on a 1-year contract with JEDO that was up for renewal every December. A few years ago, after a lengthy RFP process this moved to a 3-year term. The board has met with JEDO leadership to discuss the 3-year term and what the end of this term means. It has been proposed by volunteer leaders to move forward with a rolling 3-year contract, commencing on January 1, 2020, with a renewal at the end of each year. It was noted that this contract contains a provision that allows for termination of the contract with 180-day notice from either party. The next step is for GO Topeka counsel to meet with JEDO counsel before it is presented for approval by JEDO.

Economic Snapshot

Freddy Mawyin provided a presentation that focused on the regional economy. A copy of this presentation can be provided upon request.

Intercity Visit Recap

Brett Oetting provided a recap on the 2019 Intercity Visit to Montgomery Alabama. Oetting said that this is the 2nd year in a row where Topeka participants of the visit left with a takeaway of seeing a city similar to Topeka but able to recognize that Topeka staff is operating the similar initiatives at a higher, more effective level.

Molly Howey shared that one difference that stood out between Topeka and Montgomery was the strong presence of their military and the defense contract that resulted from that. Montgomery showed a strong focus on quality of place and public private partnerships which provided another validating point since we are working on similar initiatives.

Planning committee is already working on looking at the 2020 Intercity Visit and is open to suggestions for potential communities to visit.

Management Report

Howey stated that the board will see a strategic plan that aligns with Momentum 2022 for approval at the December 6, 2019 board meeting. Additional mention was made of an all-inclusive incentive guide that will be posted on the GO Topeka website as a resource.

Howey shared that a partnership between the Community Foundation and GO Topeka is taking place to take a deeper dive into working on inclusive prosperity. This group is working on creating an economic development action focus for the community foundation to focus on with other local partners. This is a 2-year process that the Aspen Institute will be guiding.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 a.m.