Meeting: GO Topeka Board of Directors

Place: Partnership Board Room

Time: 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Date: August 2, 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: Kayla Bitler, Karen Christilles, Diann Faflick, Rhiannon Friedman, Vince Fry, Katrin Holzhaus, Molly Howey, Lindsay Lebahn, Brett Oetting, Bob Ross, Curtis Sneden, Barbara Stapleton. Natalie Zeller, Rebecca Atnip

Guest: Duane Cantrell, Jeff Wietharn, Kim Konecny, Bill Ripahn

Kurt Kuta called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Minutes approval.

The Minutes from April 5, 2019 were presented to the Board. The motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The motion carried.

Financials.

Natalie Zeller presented an overview of the second quarter finances. She explained the East Topeka Learning Center (ETLC) expended most of the $5M set aside. PNC will transfer the $5M back to the Public cash account. This money was set aside for the project. The problem with the contractor etc. slowed down the process. We should see this money back in public cash account in the next set of financials.

Zeller said the public income statement shows revenue is tracking on budget and is slightly better than budgeted by about $23,000. Program Expenses under budget by $150,000. Marketing expenses have been under budget. Overall, GTP G&A is under budget by $75,000, due to shared services coming in under budget.

Quality of place is under budget by $1.7M. We have been slowly expending this out and should all go out by the end of the year.

Revenue is under $150,000, primarily related to events budgeted for 712 that have not happened or will happen later in the year, as well as membership dues. The first quarter of the year they had some rough revenue funds due to the transition of 712 from maker space to co-work space.

Molly Howey commented that Jackie Steele is continuing to with GO Topeka on a contract basis. She is making visits to companies to confirm they are performing before incentive checks go out. They anticipate the incentives will be paid out by the end of the year.

Scott Gales made the motion for approval of the financials. The motion was seconded and carried.

2020 Budget Process.

The budget meetings will begin soon. Zeller said last year we presented a draft of the budget at the JEDO meeting in Sept. Zeller said they are behind because they are down a staff member and working with new software.

They still plan to have the individual JEDO meetings with JEDO board members to get feedback and answer questions on the budget.

Howey added as a reminder that we are moving from modified cash basis to accrual basis. The software changes also fall into that mix.

The budget is targeted for November, rather than December to allow additional time for changes.

No motion was required for this agenda item.

Nominating Committee Report

Dan Foltz thanked the nominating committee for their work on behalf of the board. The report presents the board member list for 2020.

Curtis Sneden added that the nominating process was being followed by all the GTP boards. The nominating committee focused on diversity and other areas. For example, the number of females on the board in 2019 increased from 22% to 38% in 2020. Also, the ethnic diversity of the board changed as well, moving from 13% in 2019 to 16% in 2020.

Dan Foltz made a motion for approval of the nominating committee’s board member list for 2020. The motion was seconded and carried.

Talent Attraction Incentives Strategy

Kuta said this initiative was presented initially at the Executive Committee meeting. Kuta tied that this information was leaked prematurely to the media. Barbara Stapleton presented an overview of the Talent Attraction Incentives Strategy and reminded everyone that the items presented to the board are for internal review only.

Stapleton said they looked at two successful programs in Tulsa and the state of Vermont, both of which targeted remote workers. We would be working with local employers to employees to live and work in Topeka.

To be considered for the Move Topeka program, applicants will meet specific eligibility requirements.

In addition, there are a couple of options. The first would be a 50% match with the employer funding $10K and up to $15K. The second option would be a 33% match with the Employer funds $10K and up to $15K with employee transfer.

Talent Attraction Initiative Roadmap:

* Approval from GO Topeka Board to pursue - MOTION
* Launch and promotion in January 2020

Air Service Update. Doug Wolff said the MTAA is actively engaged with a major carrier. He said Eric Johnson met with the carrier at their headquarters. The meeting went well, and the carrier is very interested in working with Topeka and the Dallas hub. They are now talking about three flights a day, rather than two. This would be effective the summer of 2020 at the earliest.

Wolff noted Topeka has some success before with getting additional funding through small community air service development grant. An application is being submitted for these funds, which could potentially add an extra $750,000 to the revenue guarantee.

Wolff said they have not received the business support they need from area businesses. Molly will be sending out the template to help board members by email to create a letter of support. These letters were critical in the past for securing the grant funds. The deadline for the letters will be the end of June.

Plug and Play (PNP). John Keddy, Security Benefit, presented an overview of PNP. Keddy said he has had a successful relationship with PNP for over three years. PNP’s focus is on organizations and individuals who are in the early stages of development. PNP has a global reach with an extensive network of companies looking for a US footprint. They do not have an animal health vertical and realize this is a gap they need to fill.

Opening up this area could be an excellent opportunity for Topeka and would put Topeka on the map of the Animal Health Corridor. It would also give Topeka an opportunity to lead the region in innovation, attract qualified talent and gain access to Silicon-Valley-based venture capital.

Katrin Holzhaus said their first meeting with PNP was in October 2018. A letter of intent was signed three weeks ago that opens a 90-day feasibility window for both sides to evaluate feasibility for PNP to setup a regional headquarters in Topeka.

Call to action: Holzhaus asked board members to please help welcome PNP during their visit to Topeka June 24 - 26. Holzhaus said the initial meetings will be with key people in Topeka. The second trip would have a more networking event and community involvement. Howey added there has been a lot of support from local government.

Holzhaus also invited the board to join the Summer Summit June 11-13 in person or participate virtually to get an idea of what is to come. Finally, she asked the board members “To be champions of innovation in your organizations and the community.”

Washburn Tech East Barbara Stapleton shared the information about the grand opening for Washburn Tech East. To date, with the classes offered at the temporary space at Antioch Family Life Center, 190 students are enrolled, with 67 GED students and 32 ESL students. Stapleton invited the board to the grand opening on the June 21st, which will be the first opportunity to see the completed building.

Talent Attraction Incentives Strategy. Stapleton provided an initial draft of a strategy for attracting talent to Topeka. Kuta said this was the result of some outside discussions and a local business owner who suggested a pilot project. Examples presented were from Vermont and Tulsa. Although these programs were used to attract remote workers, the basic concept is to provide incentives to attract new talent to the workforce, specifically young professionals.

Howey added this idea started at one of the retreats and with further discussions with one of our businesses. This is the first discussion we are having about this and we want to open this up for conversation and for ideas. This in not currently budgeted and we would also need to cap the amount we would spend.

Stapleton said this would be funded by employers then they could submit for reimbursement after a year, similar to pay for performance dollars. This would be up to the employers on whether and how it was used and how much they would give an employee.

Kuta said this goes back to MO 2022 discussions and GO Topeka in how to attract new talent to Topeka. If we moved forward with something like this, it would need to be presented to JEDO and formally adopted. This would be a positive way to encourage candidates to come to Topeka rather than forcing them to move here.

Feedback, questions and suggestions are welcome as this concept is further developed. More communication will follow about next steps.

Confidentiality/KORA/KOMAJeffrey A. Wietharn, J.D, presented information to the Board regarding the Kansas Open Records Act (KORA) and Kansas Open Meetings Act (KORA).  This was in response to questions which had been raised at the last board meeting.  It is Counsel’s opinion that the organization has never been subject to KORA or KOMA, other than to provide financial reporting regarding the use of public funds.  Even so, Go Topeka has implemented procedures which emulate compliance in order to be as transparent as reasonably possible.  Counsel reviewed a recent Kansas Supreme Court case regarding KORA and KOMA and explained how that decision supports Go Topeka’s position.  No action was requested of or taken by the Board.

Projects Update. The projects update was presented by Rhiannon Friedman and Molly Howey.

* Project Baseball is a Financial Services Company, with projected a 200-250 new jobs. They are looking for 50,000 sq. ft. of Class A office space.
* Project Petal is an International Metal Fabrication Company looking for a new US location, with a projected 455 new jobs. Howey said this project has been fairly active, and they have been able to put some existing space before this company.
* Project Emerald is a Meat Processing Company, with a projected 80 initial new jobs. They are looking to invest $50M into a state-of-the-art production plant.
* Project Lightening is still in the works and decision is anticipated in August. Howey said Topeka is still the preferred site of the two they are considering.

Management Report was presented by Molly Howey

* Retreats are completed for the year. Based on feedback, we are moving forward with the strategic plan and will bringing that to you at the end of the year.
* The GO Topeka nominating committee has been working hard on filling eight spots for next year.
* The incentive discussion continues to evolve. We are looking at how to refresh incentives to attract more of the companies Katrin will be working with and leads generated through PNP.
* Howey, Marsha Pope and a few other community members are involved in Community Philanthropy Innovators Network (CPIN). We are the first cohort in Kansas working with Aspen Institute.

Kuta reminded the board that the next meeting is August 2. There is no Executive Committee meeting in July.

Kuta said they will be assessing the meeting times for the Go Topeka board next year. Board members will receive a survey with options for meeting times. He said Fridays are challenging to get people to attend. It is not only the work during the meeting, but also the networking that can happen after the meetings.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes taken by Rebecca Atnip