

**Joint Economic Development Organization Board Minutes  
May 11, 2022**

In-Person and Via Zoom  
City Council Chambers  
214 SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Topeka, Kansas 66603  
Wednesday, May 11, 2022

The Joint Economic Development Organization (JEDO) Board members met at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom meeting and in-person with the following voting Board Members present: Shawnee County Commissioners Aaron Mays, Kevin Cook and Bill Riphahn; City of Topeka Mayor Michael Padilla and Deputy Mayor Spencer Duncan. Councilmember Emerson voted by proxy for Councilmember Dobler. Shawnee County Commissioner Aaron Mays presided as JEDO Chair.

The following nonvoting JEDO Board Members were present: City Councilmember Tony Emerson. The following members participated remotely: City Councilmember Sylvia Ortiz.

The following JEDO Board Members were absent: City Councilmembers Hannah Naeger, Neil Dobler, Karen Hiller, Christina Valdivia-Alcala, Brett Kell and Michael Lesser.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was conducted in-person as well as via Zoom meeting. Zoom access was provided to those individuals signed up for public comment.

**APPROVAL of a Motion to Add Agenda Item 3C presented:**

*Commissioner Mays moved to approve the Motion to Add Agenda Item 3C, Project Tree Incentive Funding. The motion seconded by Councilmember Emerson, voting by proxy for Councilmember Dobler carried unanimously. (6-0-1)*

**APPROVAL of February 9, 2022 JEDO Board Meeting Minutes was presented:**

*Commissioner Cook moved to approve the Minutes of February 9, 2022. The Motion seconded by Councilmember Emerson voting by proxy for Councilmember Dobler carried unanimously. (6-0-1)*

**APPROVAL of 2021 GO Topeka Auditor's Report was presented:**

Karen Lynn, Director, BT&Co., P.A. presented the Report to the Board of Directors dated May 4, 2022, and summarized the Growth Organization (GO) of Topeka/Shawnee County, Inc., and Subsidiary Consolidated Statement of Financial Position for the year ending December 31, 2021. She stated no new accounting policies were put in place and no changes occurred. She stated that they did not find any red flags or disagreements of any kind. She referenced the auditor letter and adjusting journal entries document, and highlighted the following in the Consolidated Financial Statements:

- Independent Auditors' Report
- Consolidated Statements of Financial Position
- Consolidated Statement of Activities
- Functional Expenses, Cash Flows, Net Losses and Additional Expenses

Ms. Padgett continued to report on the notes of the Consolidated Financial Statements, which include a Summary of significant accounting policies, concentrations of credit risk, availability and liquidity, investments and fair value, property and equipment, land held for economic development, restricted cash and funds, KFCP improvement fund, long term debt, related party transactions, leases, JEDO grant, concentrations and major customers, 401(K) Retirement plan, incentives, risks and uncertainties and subsequent events.

*Commissioner Riphahn moved to approve the Motion. The Motion seconded by Mayor Padilla carried unanimously. (6-0-1)*

**APPROVAL of Project Tree Incentive Funding was presented:**

Molly Howey, GO Topeka President of Economic Development, presented the incentive funding proposal for Project Tree which is an existing business in the manufacturing industry. She explained that this expansion would create a Capital Investment in real property of \$2 million and \$8 million in equipment over the next five years. It will also create 20 new jobs over the next five years with an average wage of at least \$40,000. Go Topeka is offering a total incentive of \$250,000. As of all incentives, this is performance based.

*Councilmember Emerson voting by proxy for Councilmember Dobler moved to approve the Motion for Project Tree Incentive Funding. The motion seconded by Commissioner Riphahn carried unanimously. (6-0-1)*

**A PRESENTATION on 2021 GO Topeka Fourth Quarter Report was presented:**

Freddy Mawyin, Go Topeka Senior Economic Advisor, started the presentation by providing an overview of some of the most consequential economic trends we are seeing in the community, including: percentage of people living in poverty, income, demands for labor and inflation. He explained some issues that the Partnership is working on, such as: identifying solutions for child care, solutions to affordable housing and strategic population of growth.

Deputy Mayor Duncan inquired on the demographics of age as far as population goes, asking if he can get a comparison on the last couple of years. He also asked how they come up with the numbers for the “Target Numbers”.

Mr. Mawyin responded that he would get him the exact numbers on the population and for the metrics they decided what target would be natural change and what target would go up and down.

Commissioner Cook asked how does inflation effect salary. He also noted that we do not know if this inflation is temporary or how it may change. He then asked how did the net motor score for the county change?

Mr. Mawyin explained how in general inflation could affect the salary rates, however he does not have the specific numbers right now. He went on to explain how the survey metrics showed public satisfaction go from -50 to about -24.

Molly Howey, GO Topeka President of Economic Development, got up to share a few stories about their visit to NW Arkansas with Walmart Distribution Headquarters.

Ashley Lehman, GO Topeka Business Development Manager, reported on the active pipeline that currently has 31 active projects. She also provided an aviation update as well as informing us that they had 2 site visits recently, although they were very different. She went on to talk about the Business Retention and Expansion Community Survey that was sent out to local businesses. They received over 90 responses back, 46 of which said they were likely to increase capital investment in the next 6 months. 57 more are likely to increase the number of employees. From that information they will start scheduling meetings and trying to get their resources out.

Deputy Mayor Duncan asked if there were any subcategories to the questions on the survey to give specific numbers on employees or capital investment.

Ms. Lehman responded that no, there was not that specific of questions.

Ms. Howey came up to mention the success of Mars here in Topeka and how they are going to return to their Chicago plant and try to encourage workers to relocate here to Topeka to work.

Trina Goss, Go Topeka Director of Business & Talent presented slides on the Housing Advocacy Task Force and addressing the Topeka-Shawnee County Housing Strategies Outlined in MO27. At their first meeting they discussed their Aspirations, Challenges/Gaps and what is the Initial Action Item. She also spoke about the Child Care Summit they hosted.

Glenda Washington, Go Topeka Chief Equity and Opportunity Officer, presented on Equity & Opportunity Strategies. She explained the DEI Strategy that includes, Awareness, Inclusion and Commitment. She gave an update that she no longer works just with small businesses but now will focus on minority owned businesses, women owned businesses and veteran owned businesses.

Mayor Padilla had a question about the feed-back from the minority owned businesses and if they have a common problem they share.

Ms. Washington shared that the most common things she hears is: navigating county government, slum lords, language barriers and money. She said they are circling back around to businesses to see if they qualify for the empowerment fund.

Stephanie Moran, Senior Vice-President, Innovation, Go Topeka, presented on Plug and Play, Animal Health as she explained some of the discussions they have been having. She gave an overview of the panel discussion that was held on March 9<sup>th</sup>, titled “Igniting Innovation: The Role of Community in the Startup Journey.” This panel allowed Topeka, Shawnee County and community members to hear from local and national startups about their own entrepreneurial

journeys. She announced the Go Topeka Team is partnering with a current company, Cargill, who has created a partnership with StenCo, a company specializing in sustainable and biodegradable packaging. Plug and Play Headquarters announced they will be opening back up.

Laurie Pieper, Go Topeka Vice-President of Entrepreneurship & Small Business, presented on Entrepreneurship & Small Business. She started by thanking everyone who attended the Small Business Awards. They had a public nomination process which included award categories such as the Young Entrepreneur, Woman-Owned Small business, Veteran-Owned Small Business, Top City Small Business of the Year, among other categories. Ms. Pieper went on to give a brief overview of the slides in the agenda packet that covered the Small Business Incentives. She pointed out a webinar that the small business team had for “Coping Strategies for Dealing with Inflation”. She also attended the U.S. Chamber of Commerce SBC Meeting in Salt Lake City, in which one of the topics that kept coming up was the Small Business Bill of Rights. She explained how they would be speaking with our local businesses more about that. She pointed out an Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Survey they will be putting out soon, as well as launching a platform called DealRoom that will track startup activity in our region and help us engage with companies. On top of that, Go Topeka is partnering and collaboration with different universities to help support innovation and entrepreneurship. These partnerships include K-State, Washburn University and KU. Ms. Pieper then announced Go Topeka will be launching a new Mentorship Network called “Propeller”. The program is designed to offer some structure and guidance to participants while also allowing for organic connections and flexible scheduling.

**NO PUBLIC COMMENT was provided.**

NO FURTHER BUSINESS appearing the meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.