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## City Council Regular Meeting

**DEPARTMENT:** Economic Development

**FROM:** Alex Philips, Director of Economic Development

**MEETING:** July 24, 2023

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**SUBJECT:**

Consider approval of a resolution ratifying the 4A Economic Development Corporation Board's actions taken on the approval of changes and budget for the Project U Leadership Conference. *(Staff Contact: Alex Philips, Director of Economic Development)*

**SUMMARY:**

The Project U Leadership Conference began in 2020 with the mission to promote the City of Burleson as having a dynamic and innovative business environment. The Conference does this by providing valuable resources for attendees to enhance their current skill set, collaborate with like-minded professionals and become better leaders within their community. The Conference is a full-day leadership event, featuring nationally recognized leaders, authors and business professionals. The event is planned each year to break-even with ticket sales and sponsorships covering costs, this keeps ticket prices as low as \$125/person.

While the inaugural event was planned to be in-person in 2020, due to COVID-19, the event was held as a 6-week virtual series. There were 72 attendees.

In 2022, Project U saw its first in-person event held at First Baptist Burleson. There were 328 attendees.

Project U 2023 was held at Pathway Church with 372 attendees (32 tables of 8 sold), some traveling from Mansfield, Wichita Falls, Wyle and Waco.

The 2023 event had a 4A budget of \$30,000. \$48,000 was raised through sponsorships and \$32,651.58 was collected in ticket sales. The total expenses were \$87,150.26 (\$43,050 attributed to speaking fees). \$6,468.68 was used from the 4A budget to cover the shortfall.

For the 2024 event, the EDC is proposing a much higher caliber of speakers and a budget increase to \$40,000. We anticipate collecting \$50,000 in sponsor revenue and \$33,000 in ticket sales. Allowing the event to cover \$123,000 in expenses (\$81,250 in speaking fees).

The 2024 tentative lineup is as follows:

**Damon West**

- Motivational Speaker, “Change Agent”
- Topic: Keeping a positive mindset

**Jess Ekstrom**

- Founder and CEO, Headbands for Hope
- Topic: Optimism and activating purpose

**Dr. Ed Nichols**

- Superintendent, Madison City Schools, AL
- Topic: Emergenetics personality study

**Carlos Whittaker**

- Motivational Speaker, “Hope Dealer”
- Topic: How to Human, best version of yourself

**Jon Acuff \*Headliner\***

- NYT Bestselling Author, Top 100 Leadership Speaker
- Topic: How the best teams overcome overthinking

The 2024 event will also include a new “Bookstore” offering an opportunity for attendees to purchase books from all the speakers and a chance to meet the speakers and have books signed. In addition to the direct benefit of the bookstore, this will allow for more volunteers to get involved with the event and an additional sponsorship opportunity.

In the end, the Project U Leadership Conference is a unique and effective way to advertise the City for the purposes of developing new and expanded business enterprises.

**OPTIONS:**

- 1) Approve as presented
- 2) Approve with changes
- 3) Deny

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval

**PRIOR ACTION/INPUT (Council, Boards, Citizens):**

n/a

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Explain fiscal impact if any

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