

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF COLUMBUS GEORGIA
March 4 , 2021
Via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Alfred Blackmar, Russ Carreker, Selvin Hollingsworth, Jacki Lowe, Heath Schondelmayer, Lisa Smith, Chris Wightman

ALSO PRESENT:

Ben Adams, Josh Beard, Peter Bowden, Austin Gibson, Pam Hodge, Tom Horn ,Rocky Kettering, Sendreka Lakes, Rob McKenna, Jerald Mitchell, Stacy Pritchard, Joe Sanders, Brian Sillitto, Carrie Strickland, Jimmy Yancey, Katherine Kelly

Russ Carreker, Chairman, noting that a quorum was present and proper notice had been given in accordance with the requirements of Georgia law, called the March 4, 2021 meeting to order.

MINUTES

Upon motion made by Chris Wightman and seconded by Jacki Lowe, the Authority unanimously approved the minutes of the February 4, 2021 meeting attached as Exhibit "A".

FINANCIAL REPORT

Heath Schondelmayer reviewed the income and expenses and explained some variances. Joe Sanders spoke about slides which presented the comparison of the millage fund 2021 versus 2020 and the YTD revenue by categories for 2021. A request was made to see if it is possible to get a comparison with other Development Authorities. **Upon motion made by Jacki Lowe and seconded by Chris Wightman, the Authority unanimously approved the February 2021 Financial Report attached as Exhibit "B".**

PRESENTATION ON TRUTH SPRING TRADE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Pam Hodge reported that City Council approved \$100,000 for the Truth Spring Trade School Program through the City funds maintained for economic development which would require an agreement by the Development Authority. Carrie Strickland and Jimmy Yancey spoke about the program in order that the Authority was comfortable with the decision. Carrie Strickland gave background and information about the objectives, development and current status of this program in the North Highland community. The program was developed so people of the community could get jobs and overcome issues preventing them from working like transportation, childcare, skills, experience, education and criminal background. There are 17 people in this first class. Jimmy Yancey spoke about the success of program and the desire of people in poverty to have jobs and the alignment with Columbus 2025 objective. This program can be a template which could be used anywhere. **Upon motion made by Selvin Hollingsworth and seconded by Lisa Smith, the Authority unanimously approved an agreement with the City to pass the \$100,000 from the City funds designated for economic development through the Authority to Truth Spring Trade School Program.**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

- Brian Sillitto reported on global business attraction. He reviewed the 8 leads, 4 projects, 16 prospects and 2 suspects. He commented on the status of Mercer Medical School and the attraction it could have for other health-related industries to locate here. He updated the status of the hotel projects and reported that the "Apple car" with Hyundai and Kia is just speculation. He spoke about property evaluation and looking at possible large sites in the area and the competitiveness of currently available properties.
- Jerald Mitchell talked about the importance of being competitive in site availability for potential projects. He reported on the Chamber team planning session which showed that economic development was a key area. He asked members to let him know if there is other information they

would like presented in slides. Efforts continue to build up relationships with state economic development partners like DCA, GDEcD, and DOT board. He is working on finalizing plans for a Development Authority strategic planning session with more information to come. Efforts continue to evaluate how marketing lines up with Columbus 2025 areas. He explained that in the area of Existing Industries and Small Businesses Sendreka Lakes is connecting with companies with 50 or more employees and Josh Beard is connecting with companies with less than 50 employees.

- Sendreka Lakes reported that companies are dealing with how they can re-engage with employees and get them to come back to work, having to pay bonuses, find new pipelines for employees, and connecting companies to needed resources. She reported on PIE in relation to Cradle to Career framework, ED² in partnership with MCSD’s TCSG program. Josh Beard reported some focus will be on military workforce development for soldiers transitioning out of Ft. Benning which has a marketing component for them to stay in Columbus. He gave an update on robotics. Ft. Benning has already begun work on the robotic development which was funded with \$7.5M. Work is still ongoing with the involvement of CSU, CTC, and GA Tech. An important area is how to attract vendors to the area.

CITY OF COLUMBUS REPORT

Pam Hodge reported that the City is assisting DCA with the funds approved by State for the Rental Assistance Program to help landlords and tenants with rent and utilities. The City is helping them navigate through the system to apply for funding. The portal should open in the next couple of weeks. The sales taxes collected in January were up 14% over last year which is 6% over FYTD. The evaluation of the Government Center continues and plans continue for SPLOST in November 2021. Courts will be back in session on March 15. T-SPLOST prestatation to City Council will be in April. Chris Wightman offered to share their traffic study.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

None

LEGAL ISSUES

- **Upon motion made by Chris Wightman and seconded by Selvin Hollingsworth, the Authority unanimously approved the ratification of the execution of the Refinancing Documents for the Residence Inn Project.** Document is on file.

OTHER ISSUES

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

MEETING ADJOURNED

Upon motion made by Jacki Lowe and seconded by Selvin Hollingsworth, the Authority meeting was adjourned.

By: _____
Jacki W. Lowe, Secretary

Approved by:

Russell D. Carreker, Chair

NOTE: These minutes were approved at the April 8, 2021 meeting of the Development Authority of Columbus but not signed that day since meeting was by Zoom as well as in person.