

## Grow Licking County CIC

Board of Directors Meeting  
January 9, 2023

Location: Licking County Administration Building Newark, OH

Present: Corey Alton, Jennifer Ellis-Brunn, Tim Bubb, Duane Flowers, Erin Grigsby, Brandon Hess, Mark Johns, Lauren Massie, Mark Mauter, Jennifer McDonald, Rob Montaganese (12:08PM), Jim Roberts, Joseph Robertson, and GROW staff Alexis Fitzsimmons, Hayley Feightner and Reaghan Willison

Excused: Lauren Massie, Robert O'Neill, Mike Compton

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM by Chair Mark Johns.

Ms. Feightner called the roll. Mr. Montagnese motioned; seconded by Mrs. McDonald to excuse absent directors. The motion passed.

Mr. Flowers provided the welcome on behalf of the Licking County Commissioners as the first meeting of 2023. He stated that on January 5<sup>th</sup>, the County Commissioners reorganized and Mr. Bubb became the President of the Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners also re-established committee assignments, and on January 5<sup>th</sup> Mr. Bubb was appointed to replace Commissioner Flowers' seat on the Board of GROW Licking County to represent the Commissioners for a two-year term. Mr. Flowers thanked the Board for the support during his service.

Mr. Bubb thanked Mr. Flowers for his service to the Board. Mr. Bubb mentioned that as one of the founding members of GROW Licking County and the first Board president, he is glad to be back on the Board. Mr. Bubb also recognized Ms. Ellis-Brunn as the Commissioner's replacement of John Fisher's board seat representing Licking County Job and Family Services. Mr. Bubb stated that Mrs. Ellis-Brunn has been a tremendous long-time staff member of the county and will be a great asset to the Board.

Chair Johns stated that Mr. Bubb is one of the cornerstones of this organization and welcomed him back as a Director. Mayor Johns also welcomed Ms. Ellis-Brunn to the Board of Directors.

Chair Johns welcomed guests, which included: Shelby Doley, Port Authority student fellow, Cassie Turner, Integrity Bookkeeping, and Kent Mallet, Newark Advocate.

The minutes from the November 14, 2022 meeting of the Board of Directors were reviewed. Mr. Layton motioned; seconded by Mr. Mauter to approve the minutes. The motion passed.

### Chair's Report

Chair Johns echoed excitement for what 2023 will bring for the County and for GROW Licking County. Chair Johns stated that 2022 was an impactful year, but the goals for this organization will stay the same: to foster economic growth for the county – for both new and existing

businesses. Chair Johns mentioned that Board Officer elections will be voted on after committee reports during Items of Action. Chair Johns stated the slate of candidates as follows:

Board Chair: Jennifer McDonald  
Vice-Chair: Joseph Robertson  
Secretary: Lauren Massie  
Treasurer: Erin Grigsby

### Committee Reports

Finance and Strategy – Ms. Grigsby presented the final quarter of 2022 financials (see handout). She referenced the December Aging report which shows \$26,000 of pledges still outstanding. Ms. Grigsby provided the status of recently received and outstanding pledge dollars. She also pointed out that Ms. Fitzsimmons received a scholarship from the Licking County Foundation to attend the Chamber’s Advanced Community Leadership class. Ms. Grigsby stated that they are working toward the final accruals to submit to the Auditor of State and those should be received by March, and at that time will be presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

Chair Johns asked Ms. Fitzsimmons if the remaining outstanding pledges be written off. Ms. Fitzsimmons responded that they should be written off because multiple attempts were made to investors to obtain the pledges with no response.

Mr. Alton asked when the invoices for 2023 are distributed. Ms. Turner from Integrity Bookkeeping answered that the bills go out February 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Fitzsimmons stated that the bills are emailed to the appropriate investor contact, and this year a paper copy of the bill will also be mailed.

Mr. Roberts pointed out that although the 2022 budget was approved in deficit, the organization remained within the budget. Ms. McDonald asked if the Board has ever thought of a money market account for funds saved by the organization. Ms. Fitzsimmons stated that the term of CDARS expired last year, and asked for recommendations and direction from the Board on how to manage the organization’s savings.

Mr. Hess asked whether there were any details received for the write-offs. Ms. Fitzsimmons stated that many of the investors with outstanding pledges did not respond to contact attempts with the exception of Miller-Valentine who responded but never sent their pledge. Ms. Fitzsimmons explained that Johnstown paid less than their pledge due to budgetary issues.

Mr. Hess motioned, seconded by Mr. Alton to approve the financial report. Motion passed.

### Marketing Committee

Mrs. McDonald reported that the contract with Expansion Solutions magazine has been renewed for the first year and the first article will focus on Healthcare industry. GROW plans to attend Site Selectors Guild in March in Texas. The Marketing Committee did not meet in December.

### Infrastructure Committee

Mr. Roberts reported that there is a lot of work going on with the committee and continuations of activity previously discussed. Mr. Roberts stated that the Committee heard a presentation for a second outerbelt around Columbus, and the presenters were only vetting interest. The Committee did not make any commitments to be further involved in this discussion. Mr. Roberts stated that the Water and Sewer study is moving forward, data collection mostly complete, and is on track to be completed in late spring/early summer. Mr. Roberts and Ms. Fitzsimmons plan to meet with Franklin County representatives for continued discussions on a Revolving Loan Fund. Mr. Roberts mentioned that many planning efforts from other agencies are ongoing and look forward to seeing the results of those when completed.

Mr. Johns asked if Framework has reached out to Jim Roberts as the Chair of the Infrastructure Committee. Mr. Roberts stated they have not yet connected but plan to. Ms. Feightner stated that staff shared some data from our Infrastructure committee archives to the Framework team.

Mr. Montagnese asked for information on the Cherry Valley Road work next to the bike path. Mr. Mauter provided an update traffic plans for this area, and the Board of Directors had a discussion on this project.

### Licking County Works Committee

Ms. Fitzsimmons stated the LC Works Committee did not meet in December. Ms. Fitzsimmons stated that the committee is currently investigating a potential grant opportunity with JobsOhio and TPMA to continue Career Pathway toolkit work.

### Staff Reports

Mrs. Fitzsimmons introduced Cassie Turner with Integrity Bookkeeping to discuss the financials process, the ways in which GROW has worked with Integrity to improve some of the timing issues experienced over the last year, and an overview of services that Integrity provides to GROW.

Ms. Turner provided an overview of services provided to GROW which include:

- Payroll services
- Pay bills and record them on accrual basis
- Reconciles bank accounts, and reviews for bank account cut-off dates
- Prepare financials, including cash profit and loss
- Submit financials to the state and work with auditors and 990 preparation

For timing issues related to the payment of bills, Ms. Turner stated that Integrity follows the date on the bill, not the date the bill was received. Since many bills are dated at the end of the month, they prefer to wait a couple of days to make sure each month's financials are complete before they are presented. She stated that they do this so that the Board does not have to review multiple revisions for that month's financials. Ms. Turner explained that Integrity has worked with Ms. Fitzsimmons to prepare the bulk of each month's financials 7-10 days prior to the end of the month so that any changes can be revised quickly.

For timing issues related to the reconciliation of bank accounts, Integrity has partnered with Ms. Fitzsimmons and the banks to change some of the statement cut-off dates starting in February. This will help reconcile bank accounts before financials are completed.

Chair Johns asked Ms. Turner if the adjustments made will ensure that financials through the end of the previous month will be ready for the next Board meeting.

Ms. Turner stated that some months are challenging, as Integrity's deadline to Ms. Fitzsimmons is technically the first Thursday of the month. Ms. Turner stated that she will be in full communication with staff in situations where financials will be delayed. Ms. Turner stated that the organization's move in 2022 also caused some issues this year with some bills not received. Ms. Turner explained that she is confident that this year timing will be better suited to the Board. Chair Johns thanked Ms. Turner for her presentation.

Ms. Fitzsimmons provided an update on GROW's economic development efforts (see slideshow). Updates included:

1. Community preparedness efforts – Over the last year, staff has been active engaging with jurisdictions to make sure they have the tools to move their community forward. Ms. Fitzsimmons was appointed to the MORPC Board and is on the Power Siting Board Committee. Chair Johns asked for clarifications on the purpose of the power siting board. Ms. Fitzsimmons stated that the committee is tasked with providing information on renewable energy projects and to be a platform for sharing truthful information. GROW is also working with Union Township and Jersey Township on executing their economic development goals. GROW also attended three conferences this year – Area Development, Economix, Site Selectors Guild. Two of these were in Columbus and had low costs for travel and no cost for lodging.
2. Staff Training and Development – see presentation for list of 2022 completed training and 2023 training plans.
3. 2022 Project Successes – There were seven project successes in Licking County in 2022 in 4 different communities. Two of these were expansion projects. Excluding Intel, these projects resulted in the creation of 485 direct jobs, retention of 159 jobs, and committed capital investment of \$587M. Ms. Fitzsimmons provided a brief overview of each project success, and highlighted the attraction of Freepoint Ecosystems in Hebron. She stated that this project will result in one of the largest advanced manufacturing facility in the world. Ms. Fitzsimmons stated that GROW's involvement included vetting the project and working with the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority to help the company apply for tax-exempt bonds. Mr. Bubb stated that this is also a great project because they are repurposing an existing building and will be utilizing cutting-edge technology that addresses a problem in our nation with plastics waste. Mr. Mauter asked if this is a start-up business or one that has expanded in our area. Ms. Fitzsimmons stated that they are an existing business. Mr. Mauter asked how the company was attracted to Licking County with no financial incentives. Ms. Fitzsimmons stated that Licking County and the Columbus region is a center of plastics manufacturing within the automotive and other consumer-based industry, so Hebron was a strategic location. Mr. Layton stated that the company is already building their inventory of plastics to recycle when they start operations.

Ms. Feightner provided data on 2022's project lead activity for business attraction efforts. Nearly 87% of all project leads were in the manufacturing industry, and GROW had 9 company site visits this year. In comparison to 2020, project lead activity is up 40%, and the projects in the pipeline are more impactful in terms of capital investment and jobs created. Ms. Feightner stated that 30% of the project leads are related to renewable energy, and there were 16 mega project leads, which is a growing trend due to onshoring of manufacturing and covid-calibration.

Ms. Willison provided an update on social media efforts (see slideshow). She mentioned that new people are seeing Grow's posts – not just followers. Chair Johns asked for some reasoning behind increased impressions on LC Works. Ms. Willison stated that there has been engagement with job posting shares from Ohio Means Jobs.

Ms. Willison also provided an overview of the social media content calendar for Quarter 1. She stated that an investor update will be shared this month and will include a blog about community preparedness. She also provided an update on the filming of the Manufacturing career pathway videos.

Mr. Hess asked that slides be shared. Commissioner Bubb asked to see analytics for the website.

### Comments from Citizens

No comments.

### Items for Action

1. Contract with Etna Township for Economic Development Services: Ms. Fitzsimmons stated she spoke with the Etna Township Trustees at their meeting in November. The Trustees had voted at this meeting to amend the contract with GROW Licking County to change the notice period of termination from 90 days to 30 days and to eliminate the auto-renewal clause. Ms. Fitzsimmons also made changes to "work" section of the contract for consistency. Mr. Bubb asked when Etna's contract ends and begins. Ms. Fitzsimmons responded that the contract period ends at the end of February.

Mr. Bubb motioned to approve the amendments to the contract as presented, seconded by Mr. Roberts.

The Board of Directors had a robust discussion on the proposed modifications to the Etna Township contract. Mr. Montagnese asked for information on financials reporting with respect to the termination clause language. Ms. Turner stated that income from investors with written contracts should be reflected monthly due to this clause. Ms. Fitzsimmons stated that she will send Ms. Turner GROW's written contracts. Chair Johns commented that the modifications provide no benefit to GROW Licking County nor Etna Township and would be inconsistent with other contracts with other political subdivisions.

Mr. Alton expressed concern with the entirety of the termination clause. Chair Johns asked for confirmation on whether Mr. Alton is suggesting that the 5.6 clause be removed. Mr. Alton stated this clause creates no accountability with the partners and could impact the organization's bottom line for Budget planning.

Mr. Bubb withdrew his motion.

Ms. Turner commented that the invoicing section in 1.2 includes language related to section 5.6. Chair Johns concurred that if Section 5.6 is removed, the second sentence of 1.2 should also be eliminated.

Mr. Alton made a motion to approve the new contract with Etna Township contract with modifications to eliminate Section 5.6 and the second sentence of 1.2. Seconded by Ms. Grigsby. Motion passed.

2. 2023 Board Officers Election: Chair Johns stated the slate of candidates as follows:

Board Chair: Jennifer McDonald  
Vice-Chair: Joseph Robertson  
Secretary: Lauren Massie  
Treasurer: Erin Grigsby

Chair Johns opened up the floor for other nominations.

Mr. Layton exited the meeting at 1:38.

Mr. Montagnese motioned, seconded by Mr. Alton to approve Board Officers for 2023. Ms. Feightner called the vote by roll call. Motion passed.

3. Accept Resignation of John Fisher from the GROW Board & Welcome Jennifer Ellis-Brunn.

Chair Johns welcomed Ms. Ellis-Brunn to the Board and thanked Mr. John Fisher for his service.

### Executive Session

At 1:40 PM, the Board of Directors entered Executive Session under ORC 121.22 Section G(8) to review confidential information associated with economic development purposes. Ms. Feightner called roll. All present approved. Ms. Fitzsimmons, Ms. Feightner, and Ms. Willison were invited to stay.

Mr. Robertson motioned, seconded by Mr. Roberts to resume public session at 1:54 PM. Ms. Feightner called roll. All present approved.

Mr. Robertson motioned; seconded by Mr. Roberts to adjourn the meeting at 1:56 PM.

Next Meeting: Monday, March 13, 2023 at 12:00 PM – Ohio Means Jobs – Licking County

Respectfully submitted, Hayley Feightner, Secretary