

Grow Licking County CIC

Board of Directors Meeting
September 23, 2021

Location: Doubletree by Hilton, 50 S. 2nd Street, Newark, OH 43055

Present: John Fisher, Duane Flowers, Patrick Guanciale, Mark Johns, Jim Layton, Lauren Massie, Jennifer McDonald, Dan McVey, Jim Roberts, and Alexis Fitzsimmons

Excused: Corey Alton, John Carlisle, Erin Grigsby, Jim Lenner, Robert O'Neill, Joseph Robertson

The meeting was called to order at 9:44 AM by Chair Mark Johns.

Mrs. Massie called the roll. Mr. Guanciale motioned; seconded by Mr. Flowers to excuse absent Directors. The motion passed.

Chair Johns acknowledged guests that included Mark Mauter, Development Director, City of Newark; and Steve Matheny, Executive Director, Granville Area Chamber of Commerce.

The minutes from the July 12, 2021 meeting of the Board of Directors were reviewed. Mr. Fisher motioned; seconded by Ms. McDonald to approve the minutes. The motion passed.

Chair's Report

Chair Johns updated the Board of Directors on Ms. Fitzsimmons' onboarding progress. He commented that Ms. Fitzsimmons is doing very well. He also shared that organization is actively seeking to fill the assistant director position to assist with day-to-day operations, and to make the organization more effective. Interviews are scheduled for October 5, 2021.

Committee Reports

Finance & Strategy –In Mr. Robertson's absence, the July 2021 and August 2021 financials were included in the packet for review (see handouts).

See Items for Action below.

Marketing – Ms. McDonald reported that the committee met in August 2021 and discussed messaging and branding opportunities. She shared that there is a special meeting next week to work in collaboration with the LC Works committee and OhioMeansJobs – Licking County to develop an occupational workforce campaign.

Mr. Flowers shared that he appreciated the comments of Transcendia's CEO during their recent groundbreaking on why the company chose to expand in Licking County. He advised that the committee should see if the comments were recorded, or if he could be quoted as a testimonial.

Mr. Layton echoed Mr. Flower's comments and stated that the comments pertained to the quality and availability of workforce, and the close proximity to I-70.

Mr. Fisher shared that OMJ Licking County is currently working with Perry County OMJ partners to determine collaborative messaging to raise awareness of job opportunities in Licking County. There was discussion among the Board of Directors regarding leveraging resources at GROW/LC Works, OMJ and Perry County to develop a comprehensive marketing campaign.

Mr. Flowers offered to connect the committee to Perry County officials who could offer support and input into the effort.

Infrastructure – Mr. Roberts reported that the committee wants to have open communication with local and regional infrastructure contacts and entities to ensure a collaborative approach, and to leverage resources. He shared that the timing of the formation of the group coincides well with assisting communities and the county to identify and advise on infrastructure projects and expenses allowable under available federal funding. He and Mr. Flowers shared comments on the work the committee is assisting the county commissioners with, and the consideration of an RFQ for a utility study.

Chair Johns commented that GROW Board of Directors and as an organization should help to advocate and move the needle for the county on these kinds of projects.

LC Works – Ms. Massie shared that the committee met in August, with a focus on “back to basics” after the skills analysis and career pathway development work in the last year. The committee discussed marketing the career pathway toolkit and will collaborate with the marketing committee on messaging. The committee would also like to explore the development of workforce success story videos to add to the GROW CIC video library.

Mr. Fisher thanked the committees for their presentations during the Investor's Breakfast earlier in the morning. He commented that a lot of work did take place in the last year despite COVID-19, and that the presentations helped to bring it altogether.

Director's Report

The Licking County median household income has surpassed the GROW 2025 initiative goal.

GROW has hired a Denison University Intern, Erin Anderson. Erin is a Data Analytics major and will be working on data analysis projects for GROW.

GROW is working with The Energy Cooperative to apply for the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant fund with The Energy Cooperative

There has been significant interest in Licking County from developers outside of the region.

JobsOhio and One Columbus project leads have been very active over the past several months. Each lead received is being forwarded to our partners.

Ms. Fitzsimmons has started outreach to Licking County school districts to schedule introductory meetings.

Ms. Fitzsimmons recently signed an NDA for a new attraction project.

The MPW Enterprise Zone tax abatement was approved by the Lakewood Local School District and the Licking County Board of Commissioners this month.

Mr. Fisher commented that Licking County fared well in the latest Census data.

Ms. Massie offered to connect Ms. Fitzsimmons to the Licking County Educational Service Center's Business Community Advisory Council, so that she could attend a meeting to meet the area superintendents.

Comments from Citizens

Steve Matheny extended an invitation to host an upcoming Board of Directors' meeting on behalf of the Granville Chamber of Commerce and Denison University. He shared that the Granville Chamber of Commerce has an active and robust economic development committee in 2021 that meets monthly, and that he would like to connect with GROW and Ms. Fitzsimmons to draw upon the organization's skills and knowledge in economic development.

Mark Mauter thanked the Board of Directors for making a difference in the community and for the organization's growth. He welcomed Ms. Fitzsimmons in her new role, and shared that through his network at the state and local levels, she has a great reputation. He also commented that the infrastructure committee is a tremendous vehicle to enhance existing Licking County resources. He requested to be added to GROW's public distribution list.

Mr. Fisher shared that OMJ Licking County is only one (1) of six (6) grant recipients for a "Benefits Bridge" two -year grant to investigate options to assist underemployed and those receiving public assistance (focus on food stamps), to obtain higher-paying jobs. He discussed the benefit cliff that many face when looking at higher paying jobs, but who will then become ineligible for benefits such as healthcare coverage for their children. This grant will help determine ways to bridge the gap for individuals in these situations.

Items for Action

Mr. Guanciale motioned; seconded by Mr. McVey to delay the approval of the July 2021 and August 2021 financial reports until the next regularly scheduled meeting. The motion passed.

Chair Johns requested that Mr. Guanciale coordinate the committee to determine the 2021 Executive Board discussion and nomination process in order to bring forth a recommendation to consider at the next regularly scheduled meeting in November 2021. Mr. Guanciale agreed to coordinate the effort. Mr. Johns will follow up with an email to the Board of Directors to encourage anyone who is interested in an Executive position to contact Mr. Guanciale.

Mr. Flowers motioned; seconded by Mr. McVey, to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 AM.

Next Meeting: Monday, November 8, 2021 at 12:00 PM – Hosted by the City of Heath.

Respectfully submitted,
Lauren Massie, Secretary