

**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**WC Bradley Headquarters
1017 Front Avenue
Columbus, GA 31901**

Wednesday, August 24, 2022 | 2:00 pm

**Compiled by:
Commissioner's Office
Georgia Department of Economic Development
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Pursuant to notice duly given, the Board of Directors of the Georgia Department of Economic Development met on August 24, 2022, in Columbus, Georgia.

Attending Board Members

1. David Belle Isle
2. Cassius Butts
3. Dennis Chastain
4. Jaclyn Dixon Ford
5. Randy Hatcher
6. Allen Hodges
7. Julie Hunt
8. Garnett Johnson
9. Mitch Malcom
10. Jay Neely
11. Mulham Shbeib
12. Mat Swift
13. Jay Wells
14. June Wood

Chairman Jay Neely called the GDEcD Board Meeting to order at 2:00 pm.

Chairman Neely called for a vote to approve the August 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Chairman Neely called on **Andrew Capezuto, Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel – GDEcD**, to explain the GWCC RLA Resolution. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Chairman Neely called on **Mayor Skip Henderson** who welcomed the Board and staff to Columbus and emphasized their commitment and appreciation to GDEcD. The Mayor was followed by our City Manager, **Isaiah Hugley** (who recently had been named one of the top City Managers in America). Isaiah mentioned a number of accolades and achievements by Columbus-- a lot of which were done through public and private partnerships.

Next, **Pace Halter**, President and CEO - W.C. Bradley Company, welcomed the board to Columbus.

Jimmy Yancey, retired chair of Synovus Financial, spoke next. He talked about his long history with GDEcD, which goes all the way back to George Berry's time when it was called Industry, Trade & Tourism. He said that job creation is important and thanked the board and department for their partnership. Good jobs can cure almost any problem that a city has. Thank you for being here and for all you do for this city. With your help, we can continue moving forward.

Next, Chairman Neely called on **Meghan Richardson** – Senior Director of Economic Development, Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce, who presented a video on AFB International, a pet food company, who recently made a \$79 million investment and created 100 jobs in Columbus. She introduced **Stephanie Hackmann**, Vice President, Global Operations, AFB International and **John Soper**, Project Manager, Georgia Department of Economic Development, for a discussion about why AFB International chose Columbus and the state of Georgia for their new location.

Meghan: Stephanie, tell us more about AFB international and this exciting announcement.

- AFB International is a global science and technology company. We focus on making pet food taste great in a global dynamic industry.
- When we think about what the global market is doing right now, pet food trends are varying on the maturity level of pet food depending on which market you're in. In some markets in the world, there are pet foods that are already packaged that are gaining share versus table scraps through premiumization. That's really the dominant pet food trend in that area, meaning they need higher quality, they need varied proteins, they need starches, and tastier more attractive food to get market shares in those areas. Where in other parts of the world packaged pet food is dominant, and in those areas, which are the ones we are most familiar with, there is a focus on humanization. This means that those trends are following human trends. Typically the trends you see in human food follow a year later in pet food because us pet parents want to feed our animals the same things that we feed ourselves. Our pets are our family – we are their family.
- The all natural pet foods that have no wheat, etc. are trending now. You will notice soon that pet food will contain pumpkin to coincide with the pumpkin lattes that everyone likes. It's very interesting to see these trends.
- There is a focus on health and wellness where people tend to want to feed their pets packaged food instead of table scraps where some of the world used to just feed table scraps.
- As an ingredient supplier for pet food, it's critical that AFB honors our claims and nutritional philosophies to our customers. If a pet food brand promotes themselves as soy free or natural, our palatant has to follow that claim that they are making. While that makes our claims and our portfolio more complex, it meets the need of our pet food customers and, in return, it helps satisfy the needs of our pet food buyers.
- This approach continues to help us grow as a business, and to be able to do that, we had to have a manufacturing strategy that led to capacity and the need to meet those complex needs of our customers.
- This investment in the Columbus factory is a key component in AFB's ability to follow those market trends and support our overall strategic growth initiative.
- We are really excited to embark on that journey together with both the state of Georgia and the Columbus community.

Meghan: What attracted AFB to look for a location and site in the state of Georgia?

- We knew we needed to go somewhere to execute our strategic initiatives.
- Some of the major factors were proximity to supplies, in our case in particular, protein or poultry and customer focus.
- Currently, in North America, we have two factories in Missouri so we needed to get close to another customer base and we needed a different area to be able to bring proteins from. That made Georgia really attractive for both of those perspectives.
- As we started to work with the development teams in Columbus and in Georgia, other factors obviously played into those decisions. Some of those things were

- the investments we saw in the community and the state,
- incentives that were offered,
- long term operating expenses,
- and the biggest thing was the talent in the community. We wanted a place where we could get talent, a place that was a great place to live, and a great place for our customers and other employees across the world to come and visit.
- When it all came together, it was the place we had to be.

Meghan: John, share with us what it was like working with the economic development team in Columbus.

- We started working on this project around February and I can't think Gerald and Brian enough for their support of this project.
- It was one of those rare projects where nothing went wrong – it was just smooth sailing – so that was great.
- But, really what it ended up being was something that we hear from companies all the time: speed to market. And, I think Brian and Gerald and all of the leaders in Columbus have really invested in technology and it's a place that is ready and open for business.
- My understanding is that this project was originally named "Operation Warp Speed" and later changed because I guess they thought warp speed was a little too on the nose.

Next was a video on the Mercer Medical School Columbus Campus Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Chairman Neely called on **Heath Schondelmayer**, Market President, Synovus (HQ in Columbus) & Chair of the Development Authority, to moderate a panel discussion on Mercer Medical School.

Today we are going to talk in specifics about the Mercer Medical School expansion into Columbus. There are three leaders here today that were catalyst in bringing Mercer into Columbus:

Dr. Bill Underwood, President of Mercer University

Brad Turner, former chair of the W.C. Bradley Company and Board of Trustees at Mercer University

Representative Richard Smith, Chair, House Rules, District 134 - Georgia House of Representatives.

- Our city-wide leaders have been partnering with the state of Georgia to grow startup companies like Aflac, TSYS, Global Payments, Synovus, and other powerful business forces globally.
- Over the past 20 years, Columbus leaders have successfully taken on
 - Two private \$100 million capital campaigns for Columbus State University
 - Another \$100 million campaign for the arts that includes the River Center and uptown
 - \$100 million private capital campaign to build the 190,000 square foot National Infantry Museum adjacent to Fort Benning
 - and the most recent example is Mercer Medical School

- Leaders were asked to raise \$13 million in private funds to get this project started.
- The community with its “can do attitude”, raised \$15 million in three weeks for this great medical institution. We like to think in Columbus that we can do great things when our community needs us most. It’s a bold statement but we believe it to be true. To our knowledge, we don’t know of another community of our size in America that in a 20-year timeframe has raised over \$400 million in private funds to make their community better.

Heath: President Underwood, Can you tell us how Mercer University’s School of Medicine came to Columbus?

- I had a delegation from Columbus come to see me in Macon who, I think had recognized, like we all do, that if you don’t have access to quality healthcare it is very difficult to build a vibrant community.
- They wanted us to consider opening not a satellite campus to our school of medicine but a full campus here in Columbus. A campus where students could go and stay for four years and graduate with a degree on a campus that would support scientists.
- I tried to talk them out of it because it is very difficult to accomplish that. I laid out the various challenges and hurdles that they would face in trying to do it. I couldn’t convince them that it couldn’t be done but, in fact, they persuaded me that if there is any place that could do it, it was Columbus. And, they did.
- We met in this room in December of 2019 with a group of community leaders and I outlined to that group the challenges that there would be in creating a medical school here
- After meeting with that group, I remember Brad pulling me aside and saying, “give us a little bit of time and we will get this done”.
- It didn’t take long because less than two years later we were having a press conference announcing the medical school coming here to Columbus.
- I challenged them to get the hospitals on board. I told them that they needed to raise money for a facility. We initially planned on taking an older building downtown and renovating it and converting it into a medical school campus but, for this community, that wasn’t good enough. They ended up convincing TSYS to give us the nicest piece of property available in downtown Columbus on the river just on the other side of the TSYS facility. It was such a nice piece of property that I decided that the campus we were planning wasn’t nice enough for that spot and we ended up doubling the amount we were spending on the campus to have a facility that was worthy of this beautiful spot.
- Then we worked with the state of Georgia, and all those things came into being in two years. It was really amazing. It reinforces what I had always heard of in Columbus. They are a “can-do community” and when they see a need, they get it done. That was certainly the experience that we had.

- We have two classes of medical students less than a mile down the road and when that campus is fully operational, we will have 250 medical students as well as PhD graduate students on that site.

Heath: Representative Smith, you were extremely involved both from a vision standpoint and with a partnership with the state of Georgia. Can you give us your thoughts on the project?

- There were four of us that went to Mercer to meet with President Underwood on August 11, 2018, for our first visit
- Soon after that, they started sending their students over here for rotation in the clinical ward
- We got to thinking about it and our goal from the very start was to have a Mercer School of Medicine. There were an awful lot of players, with a lot of them being in this room that made this occur. Money was raised and the location site was picked – one of the most beautiful sites along the river.
- We had to have three commitments: one from the University, a local commitment, and a state commitment.
- In Columbus, when something good shows up, you just have to stand back and get out of the way because it happens. And this is what happened with this medical school. The whole community just came together.
- So then there was the third part and that was the state. With my role in the legislature, that's where I came in. We started funding this University.
 - We started off gradually, the first year it started around \$5 million and was to get up to \$9.3 million by 2027. By 2027, the state would have contributed close to \$59 million towards this project. And the nice part about it, every year after would be another \$9.3 million.
 - There is a lot of state involvement. We had the Governor, the Lt. Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the chairmen of both Appropriations committees at the groundbreaking. I have never seen that occur before except at the Capitol. That's how important the state envisions this project.
- The mission of this University is to send kids, or doctors, to these rural communities to provide healthcare. A lot of these counties don't have doctors, they don't have pharmacists. Some of these people have to drive 40-50 miles to find a doctor or pharmacy to get a prescription filled. So that is what we are trying to do – provide healthcare to these rural counties. It's not just Southwest Georgia.
- I want to commend Mercer because they are putting clinics in a lot of these areas with doctors in them.
- Healthcare is a major issue in the state. We spend an awful amount of time talking about healthcare and the cost of healthcare, how to provide better quality of healthcare. When you look at what's happening with this school and how it's going to send students to those areas, it's a win all the way around.
- That's what this community does. It's a public/private partnership and when we see a good opportunity like this, we know the players and that's how it goes.

Heath: Brad, you led the team that raised the dollars to make this a reality, can you speak to that process?

- We were finishing up a couple of those \$100 million campaigns and we didn't have any one at that point in time that was championing the medical school. So, I called Jimmy and asked if that would be something we should try to think about. From that discussion, we decided to invite Mercer here.
- We also made the effort to get as many prospective donors as we could. The people that normally support \$100 million campaigns. Columbus was tired. We all got together and decided what it was that we were trying to do.
- We asked a bunch of questions. There were good answers to all of the questions and honestly, they blew us away.
- We had recently also been recognized as one of the most unhealthy counties in the United States because of where we are in the states, which didn't help our reputation a whole bunch. We told them to give us a couple of months. We raised money and we found a place and it keeps getting better. Mercer has been very good to us.

Heath: Dr. Underwood, can you talk about how Southwest Georgia and rural Georgia as a whole has a challenging healthcare environment and how Mercer answers that healthcare need?

- Our mission is to prepare healthcare professionals for rural and medically underserved communities around the state.
- For those places, our model is not to recruit a student from Manhattan, NY, and then convince them to practice medicine in a rural county. That is not an effective model. Our model is to find kids, usually in middle school, who are talented in science and convince them that they might want to be a doctor one day and then show them how to do it.
- We try to recruit medical students from the area that we are trying to serve so that we have a much higher yield model for reaching results.
- In this campus, we will have 250 MD students and we will give a preference in admissions to students from this region of the state. That doesn't mean that everyone in this medical school is going to be from Southwest Georgia. But there will be a preference for people from here with the idea that they can spend four years studying medicine here and hopefully we can convince them to do their residencies here at one of the two hospitals in Columbus or somewhere not far away.
- Since this is a great place to live, maybe we can keep them here long term. I think Columbus does have a lot to offer and I think we will be successful in keeping these talented young people to stay here.
- The goal is to have a significant number of these 250 medical students to stay in this area.
- We also hope that scientists that are working in this area will be major contributors here. We see that in Macon now. We hope that there will be biotech spin offs and we also hope that the biotech folks will take advantage of the scientists and students here as well.

Heath: Panelists: Where do you see the Columbus School of Medicine 20 years from now specifically around economic development?

- We have an opportunity to provide trained doctors to go to the counties that are rural and small.
- Columbus is better because Mercer is here.

Next, Chairman Neely called on **Jerald Mitchell**, President & CEO, Greater Columbus GA Chamber of Commerce to moderate a panel discussion on the Columbus 2025 Partnership.

Betsy Covington, President & CEO, Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley

Warren Steele, Retired, Aflac

Peter Bowden, President & CEO, Columbus GA Convention & Visitors Bureau

Becca Zajac, Executive Director, Dragonfly Trails

Heath: The last two years our efforts from an economic development standpoint have been driving activities that make us more competitive as a community.

- Building the team
- Developing pad ready site options that helps advance projects
- Exploring large site and or development projects
- Passed the SPLOST and regional TSPLOST all delivering about \$1 million to help us build a better place
- Building a more robust pipeline of economic development projects
- Continuing to build upon extern economic development partnerships
- Building a better place with expansion of commercial air service
- Building out the Dragonfly Trail networks
- Developing the Mercer School of Medicine
- The emergence of uptown Columbus
- Redevelopment activities – more hotel and restaurant options
- Establish the Columbus 2025 Plan
 - Staffed by the Chamber but totally a community initiative
 - Driven by community volunteers and partners
 - Born inside the chamber as the regional prosperity initiative that has begun to take on a life of its own
 - Businesses, residents, government, philanthropic partners, and non-profits
 - Strengthens the things we work on everyday like workforce development, tourism, community vibrancy, economic development, and making sure that people outside of Columbus know who we are

Panel Discussion

Gerald: Betsy, how and why did the Columbus 2025 plan get started?

- Every year the Chamber hosts an intercity leadership conference where we go to another successful city to learn about things that they are working on that we need to know about.

- Over and over again, when we visited Nashville, Asheville, Austin, we kept hearing that these guys had plans that aren't just traditional economic development plans – they are that plus.
- Their whole community comes together and the common vision in all sectors is to think collaboratively about what they are going to work on and prioritize to get them where they want to go.
- Thankfully, after one of these visits, it was time for our city to do another economic development plan and several of us who went on the visit decided that we wanted to try something that is larger.
- Columbus tends to do things collaboratively well so we decided to give it a go.
- What we ended up with is Columbus 2025
- This is the new framework on which we are going to set our goals and how we are going to think about our communities as we go forward.

Jerald: Peter, as one of the people who were present at the start of this initiative, when support began to grow for the Columbus 2025 plan, how did the key action areas of jobs, talent, and place become the focus?

- When we started this process we asked all of the stakeholders in the community how are we doing and how we do be better, what is needed to fill the gap as we look forward and reinvent the community.
- Obviously, we had five action areas but those were the three that seemed to percolate to the top and the others touched on those.
- That was a way to communicate and a way that we could continue to have buy in outside of the stakeholder group so that it truly became a community project.
- The public/private partnership is truly the mantra that has rallied around the initiative, particularly with those action areas of how we can create success and how we can develop a plan and continue to roll out to create success for not only Columbus but for the region.

Gerald: Warren, how does Columbus work together to support our regional workforce pipeline? And, if you would, as you answer that question, talk about the importance of inclusion of economic development.

- Leadership said that if we don't focus specifically on including those who are less fortunate and who are typically left out of the scenarios, we will fail.
- So, we set up a poverty reduction taskforce in 2020, right in the middle of Covid, From that group, the recommendation was that we have a specific focus as a stand-alone part of Columbus 2025 and I was asked to take that position.
- If you look at poverty in most communities, and Columbus is no different, you probably have 60-70% of your citizens that are functional – they are going to be fine, they will accept programs that are being implemented, but, if you leave out that 30-40%, whether it is children that are growing up in poverty or adults that have been chronically unemployed, have been incarcerated, or homeless – all of those things in a community will drag down your city even if the rest of it is going well.

- So the focus is to make sure that we get everyone together and specifically work on improving those aspects in our community that are typically left out.
- There are a lot of great agencies in the community that are working on some of those issues but what we have done with Columbus 2025 is to bring focus to it and try to expedite the work that they are doing.
- A couple of examples:
 - Columbus 2025 started and implemented a program called The Basics, which is a program that was developed out of Harvard. It is five easy basic things that every parent needs to use with their child in that first three years of life. The majority of the brain is developed by the age of three and it's the simple things:
 - Maximize love and minimize stress
 - Talk, sing, point
 - Work with your child in play
 - Count and math rules
 - Read and discuss stories
- It seems simple and easy to most of us who are in that 70% but it is amazing at the number of parents that don't know what to do with their children and they don't understand that they are their child's first teacher and that they are the ones that need to be working with them while their brain is in its crucial and critical years. We have implemented that and spread it throughout our pediatrician's offices, hospitals, churches, and other service organizations that are working with young families. It's housed in the United Way which is a great partner for Columbus 2025.
- United Way is also doing another program called Community Schools where they are taking individual staff people and embedding them in elementary schools that are Title 1 schools with low parent involvement to help those kids and to help the parents understand how they can be involved. What we are finding is that if we take a more focused effort and take their hand and lead them to where those programs are, a lot of them will accept what you are doing and pay attention and listen.
- A workforce Development Coalition – we got all of the agencies that are working on workforce development and put them in a room where they can talk and share resources. We had our first meeting last Monday with 18 service organizations there. It was a great starting point. We are willing to work together but, someone needs to take the lead, and that is what we are doing with Columbus 2025.

Gerald: Warren, can you talk a little bit more about the actual partners that are coming together on that talent and workforce development frontier to move the workforce?

- Better Work Columbus has implemented the Jobs for Life Program which is a twelve-week training program that is Christian based
 - This is high poverty and unemployed – these are adults that have never worked and have never seen anybody work.

- They started with 14 and graduated 12. This is a great success rate for the Jobs for Life Program. These people are now ready to go into the workforce.
- There are a lot of things that hold an individual back but a lot of it is the mental mindset that does not understand the value of work and going home at night and feeling like they did something that day and earning their own money.
- They teach them why it is more valuable to work than to receive government help.
- We can change the mindset of the community and the kids will start to see it and others will start to see it. We are happy to recruit people in to work in Columbus but, more importantly, if we can develop our citizens to be capable of finding positions in the workforce here, it helps businesses and it helps the city overall.

Gerald: Becca, why is it so important that Columbus 2025's strengthen overall work on community vibrancy and supporting a sense of place?

- Warren just touched on it when he spoke about how we are recruiting businesses and people and we are also trying to retain the talent and the businesses we have here.
- Part of that decision making factor is creating a sense of place and a quality of life and that is really what our action areas focus on.
- Our leadership in Columbus realized early on the asset we have which is the Chattahoochee River.
- We blew out the dams and created this great white water rafting course.
- Since that happened in 2013, we have sorta started defining ourselves as this outdoor tourism recreation kind of location not only to bring tourists in but also for our community here
- We have seen a kayaking uptick, we've seen paddleboards and paddleboard yoga, we've seen trail development, fishing, and angling.
- We've seen all of these different activities and we've seen businesses come out of that vision to redo the Chattahoochee River.
- All of those aspects create a sense of place.
- The work that we do in our action area is really trying to connect all of those assets together.
 - We have the Chattahoochee River that is blossoming and has all of this great activity but how do we get people to the River and the trails and such?
 - We have created some trail systems - we have three different trails in Columbus right now:
 - The Dragonfly Trail is sort of at the heart and center of Columbus. We have 30 miles currently built with another 20 miles on the way. It starts at the core of downtown and goes out into the neighborhoods to ensure that we get people out into the places that they need to go and really creating a way for people to get downtown and explore and enjoy the amenities.
 - Standing Boy Trail, which is the mountain bike, off road trail
 - Fort Benning Trail System

- The trails are also used for transportation as much as they are used for recreation for people who cannot afford a vehicle and who don't want to take public transportation or who choose to walk or ride their bike to work or school.
- Within our action area, we are trying to figure out how to create a more regional rail system. We want to figure out a way to connect all of those trail systems to really create a sense of community around the trails.
- One of the factors of attracting talent is that they are looking for outdoor recreation assets and those are some of the ones that we have.
- We are also looking for ways within this group to activate those systems. Public art has been a great example of that. We have done murals and sculptures are some ways to get people to connect and talk with people who may not look like them or be from their neighborhood. We have done a really great job with public art.
- Our action area is really just trying to figure out what drives people to choose to live in Columbus, whether that's cultural arts or connectivity through our trails, or great amenities like our Springer Opera House or River Center.

Gerald: A word I want to focus on is region. This plan is not just a Columbus plan, it is a regional tool for engagement and how we can lift up Columbus and the areas around us. That is definitely a big part of this.

Gerald: Betsy, if you could identify a component that you believe is a catalyst for overall success related to the Columbus 2025 plan, what would it be?

- The collaboration underpins everything and that mindset that this is something that we are doing together is important but in terms of product, I think for me, it is going to be the piece that we really haven't seen yet which is telling our story.
- Peter and the visitor's bureau do a good job of attracting visitors to our community but I think what we haven't been able to do because our community hasn't had the money for a dedicated budget, is a PR campaign for Columbus.
- We have to tell our story and introduce ourselves in the way that we want to be seen. And that is as a leader in economic development, as a partner in collaboration across our sector, and for me, as a philanthropic leader in our community.

Warren:

- From my perspective in equity economic mobility, one of the first things that I looked at was what other cities were doing around the US to address poverty.
- One of the big things that has been very successful in a lot of cities is a paid Poverty Reduction Executive who can focus on all the things that are related to poverty. We are at a point now where it is in the budget and United Way has agreed to house this position. We are waiting on funding. There has been some commitments for funding and we are waiting on others. I think when we have a person that gets up every day thinking about what they can do to help reduce poverty in this area, it will be game changing.

- Can we get funds for people who are trying to make a difference? I'm not a big fan of paying for people to stay home, but if you are willing to work on yourself and try to become employed, I think there is a great opportunity to pay somebody while they are in job training. I think there are funds available in our philanthropic community who are willing to do that. If they know that this is a person that is trying to make their life better I think they can use something like a scholarship or intern type of program like colleges do. It's that type of thing with a paid position that can be a huge game changer.

Peter: I'm going to talk about branding.

- In this particular context, we are talking about community branding in the sense of what is Columbus's brand promise? What is it that we are known for?
- All of us are in business in some form or fashion so branding is key to our success.
- Community branding in Columbus potentially is focused on getting out awareness. It goes beyond what business in Columbus does and really focuses on the economic development authority here in Columbus and that is telling that story beyond the city limits into markets that we are looking to for talent recruitment and to draw businesses to Columbus so that we can have that continued investment over and over.
 - In other words: to compete with other cities that we want to be like - but one step better.
 - Columbus does amazing things and that is the core of our brand story. Once we lock our sights on something we do big and bold things – 'We Do Amazing'. We do amazing public/private partnerships, we do amazing education, we do amazing trails, and the list goes on and on. We need to continue to create awareness outside of Columbus to focus on the great people in Columbus because everyone has a great story. In telling those stories, we create collaboration.

Becca: We will be successful with our branding when we say we are from Columbus and they say, "Columbus, OH or Columbus, GA?". When we have a presence outside our local region. Columbus 2025 has the ability to do that.

Gerald: How will success in this endeavor impact the Columbus region?

Betsy: I think there will be two ways:

- Immediate impact over the next several years over Columbus's poverty level, connectivity, economic development success, and how we view ourselves will change.
- That is going to generate better information for the communities around us so that we can learn together about how we can work together even better than we already do.
- Regional trail systems can really do a lot to bring jobs to your community. We are going to be learning for ourselves and we are going to be learning for and with the communities around us.
- Columbus 2025 is a real leadership creator for our community. Volunteers want to help but might not know where to go to help. We will put them in charge of something.

Peter:

- Under this program, there are three guiding principles: increasing prosperity, reducing poverty, and quality of life. There are almost 300 organizations working together in Columbus 2025 to deal with all of the action areas that we are focusing on.

Gerald: This is big and not easily done. We are lucky to have someone dedicated to work on all of these different action areas to keep us moving forward on each of these areas and to keep people aligned so that we can communicate on each of these areas.

Becca:

- Success for people in my generation will be when the people who are living in this area or region who are constantly saying there is not enough opportunity in Georgia and are moving to TN or FL or outside of Columbus, stay in Columbus or nearby. I think the work we are doing with Columbus 2025 will help with that – even if folks move to Atlanta or Macon, I think it will help keep them from moving to surrounding states.
- Within the action area that I lead which is vibrant and connected, I have spoken about trails – regional trails are important. Collectively we have 450 miles of trails within Georgia and Alabama. That is economic development.

Warren:

- We have specific goals on reducing poverty. If we can do that, we can change a lot of different aspects in the community.

Gerald: does the Columbus 2025 plan go away in 2026:

Betsy: No, it's a new way of thinking. You set Columbus 2025 – you set that date. But there will be a Columbus 2030 and a Columbus 2035.

Warren: I would love to see equity economic mobility such an integrated part in everything we do that I would work myself out of a job. Every action area is looking at it and working on it.

Peter: It's one of those things that will go on indefinitely. We have to continually check on ourselves and ask ourselves if this truly checked a box, did it solve a problem. We have to always challenge ourselves.

Next, Chairman Neely called on **Pace Halter**: Pace thanked the group and closed with an invite to the World Freestyle Kayaking Championship, which Columbus will host in October 2022 and October 2023. There will be 300 athletes from 30 countries around the world. The last two were in Spain and England – followed by Columbus, GA.

Mat was called on next to do a wrap up.

- We really believe the freestyle thing is a big deal not only for Columbus but for Georgia.
 - We have something unique.

- Athletes can get here quickly, its warm and they can train here all year long in an urban environment, we can control the wave so that they can get good quality practice just about 365 days a year.
- We hear from the athletes that we really have something special. We believe we can one day be the urban kayak capital of the world and that's where we are going.
- Chairman Neely always asked us to take back what we learn to our community. I hope what you have learned today is that no matter what size city you are from, if you can pull together a team like we have with Columbus 2025 – a very cohesive team, and get everybody on board with what the solutions are and the strategies are, you can go bring in all the sectors to come up a cohesive plan that everybody is behind. You can get things done. When you have a cohesive, unified effort, projects get done quickly. We are more than glad to share with you our thoughts and what we have been doing.

Next, Commissioner Pat Wilson presented the Commissioner's Report: It's amazing when you see the leadership you are seeing in Columbus right now. I've been in Georgia politics a long time and Columbus had a reputation for many years of being very insular but it's amazing now what you see once they started rowing in the same direction and now I can't get them to shut up! I hear from Columbus practically more than any place in the state right now. All of the things that we are talking about – whether it's tourism, arts, trails, manufacturing - all of those things touch jobs across a spectrum of people. You are looking at small businesses, major manufacturers, arts communities, philanthropic communities, our nonprofits. There are jobs across that entire spectrum and you guys are working to support them and I think that is really commendable. So to everyone that has worked so hard to put this together – congratulations and thank you for what you are doing. Being prepared for economic development is a very important part of what we do. Looking ahead, creating product, and looking at sites, making sure your sites are ready, organizing workforce – that's all really important. This is really a unique community where the businesses community pours back in as much as they take out. Driving in today I saw the vibrancy downtown – people out for a run, having lunch on the patio on a very hot day. We are seeing this in other places in Georgia too and the backbone of this is our universities. It gives you a sense of place and activity. (New GDEcD hype video)

We shared this new video at an event at the Capitol with Governor Kemp earlier this quarter when we announced our FY22 numbers for business recruitment and expansions. I know some of our board member were able to attend, and we really appreciate that!

I encourage you to review your Board Book if you haven't yet had a chance. Some of what I'll cover will be included there, and some will be supplementary information or a look ahead.

We've had an incredible final quarter for FY22 and month of August. We're celebrating successes and planning for a future we're creating together right now.

FY22 numbers:

- \$21.2B investment
- 51,132 jobs

- 358 projects
 - That's a 94% increase in investment above prior records.
 - Job creation was 53% above prior economic development records.
 - 12 automotive projects created nearly 16,000 new jobs across the state.

Hyundai and Rivian alone provided a combined:

- \$10.545B investment
- 15,600 jobs

Look out for more information on Ground Breaking events later this fall.

- 85% of the investments and more than 30,000 new jobs came from outside the 10-county metro Atlanta region.
- Expansions accounted for 74% of total projects.
- New locations created 33,846 jobs across the state.

Top industries:

- Advanced Manufacturing (10,000 new jobs)
- Bioscience = 147% increase in job creation over last year
- FinTech = \$32 million in investment and 1,215 new jobs this fiscal year.

Additional strong growth in:

- Food processing
- Logistics & distribution
- Agriculture
- Foreign Direct Investment accounted for over \$8 billion in investment in our state during the last fiscal year.
 - Approximate 300% increase.

The top five countries for investment into Georgia were South Korea, Germany, Japan, France, and the Netherlands.

In Columbus:

- Most recently in Columbus, we just partnered with the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce to announce AFB International: (AFB develops, manufactures, and sells palatant ingredients to pet food companies worldwide. Palatants make pet foods, treats, and supplements taste great.)
 - Bringing more than 100 new jobs, and
 - Investing \$79M in a new facility in Columbus
 - The facility will be at the GRAD-Certified Muscogee Technology Park.

Film

- \$4.4 billion in FY2022. Incredible to see the growth of this industry, impacting Georgians' paychecks, small businesses, and more.

- You'll see in the Board Book that right here in Muscogee County, the Sheriff's Office's special response team was cast as SWAT team members in the upcoming film "Cash Out," starring John Travolta, Kristin Davis, Lukas Haas, and Quavo [QUAY-voh].
 - The feature filmed in Columbus from June 9 to June 24
- More stage space is under development to meet demand
- You can see how many film festivals are coming up
- 2023 is the 50th anniversary of the Georgia Film Office

Georgia Council for the Arts

- GCA will receive \$11.4 million from state American Rescue Plan funds, which will be used to support and stabilize the hard-hit arts sector.
- Georgia's \$1.3 billion dollar nonprofit arts sector was one of the hardest hit during the COVID crisis.
- Losses were estimated at \$220 million and 57% of arts jobs, as well as \$4.5 billion for the creative industries as a whole.
- GCA's recovery project will have a positive impact statewide on artists and arts organizations, cities large and small, the tourism industry, restaurants, downtown shops, and all of the other businesses that depend on arts events to thrive.
 - The funds will be used over three years to support:
 - Stabilization grants (\$9 million)
 - Training with Georgia Center for Nonprofits (\$2 million)
 - Programming for Rural Communities (\$200,000)
 - Evaluation through a statewide Economic Impact Study of the arts sector (\$50,000)
- GCA announced their first round of FY23 grant awards this morning, including: Bridge, Partner, & Arts Education grants to support the state's arts sector.
- In Columbus, organizations receiving grants include:
 - Columbus Philharmonic Guild, Inc.
 - Springer Opera House
 - The Columbus Museum (art & history)
 - Chattahoochee Valley Libraries
 - Liberty Theatre Cultural Center, Inc. (Columbus' first black theater)
 - The Columbus Ballet, Inc.
 - The Hughston Foundation
 - Youth Orchestra of Greater Columbus

Tourism

- Our Tourism Division is very disciplined about using data to inform and validate its marketing strategy.
- While all of GDEcD strives to generate investments and jobs all across Georgia, our state tourism office relies on the state's most popular tourism destinations to attract visitors to Georgia and then distribute their visitation and visitor spending across all regions.

- Thanks to the team's use of GPS location data, it's clear that we're succeeding.
- In 2021, nearly 41% of domestic visitors to the Atlanta Metro made a secondary trip to Central Georgia.
- And nearly 45% of those who traveled to Georgia's coast also visited South Georgia.
- What this means is that when Explore Georgia marketing features one region of the state, there's a strong chance that it will also drive cross-visitation to another region.
- Our team has done a fantastic job of leading recovery of leisure travel, with 2021 leisure visitation exceeding 2019 levels, and remains focused on doing the same with international and convention business.

International Trade

- This team has been busy!
- I urge you to review your Board Book for more, but Georgia was proud to host SEUS-Japan in Savannah during the month of June.
 - The event focused on North American innovation in logistics, electric vehicles, mobility, and sustainability.
 - Georgia was the first-ever host of this conference, and this year at the 14th annual conference, we welcomed:
 - More than 240 conference attendees;
 - 3 Premiers;
 - And really exciting: supported 909 business-to-business meetings over two days.
 - Several companies reported signing new business deals during the conference, and follow-up is ongoing.

COI

- The Center of Innovation has welcomed a new Aerospace director after Amy Hudnall's retirement. Alyssa Rumsey began earlier this month in her new role, but she's not new to the team.
 - Alyssa has been a tremendous member of our Manufacturing team for the past 6 years, but prior to that, she worked in several capacities for Lockheed Martin both here in Marietta as well as in Fort Worth.
 - In addition, she has done extensive aerospace-focused research in her pursuits of her PhD from Georgia Tech in Human Centered Computing.
- This team is working hard to develop key ecosystems for growth – like AgTech and Logistics.
- During the year, the team tallied 80 engagements that we know of – with GDEcD or other economic development partners – related to business recruitment or expansion activities in addition to the support they provide small and medium-sized businesses statewide.

MCIE

- From our Marketing division – this team is supporting the work of the entire Department.
- You saw the latest video and you've heard some of our announcements & events.

- And I just returned from a trip to Korea with many of our team from GDEcD, spearheaded by our International Relations team.
 - We were able to recognize our current relationships with a tour of Hyundai's and KIA's facilities in Seoul, including the KIA EV6 Unplugged Ground.
 - During our trip last week, we announced battery recycler SungEel HiTech will locate in Stephens County, Georgia.
 - And we prepared further for Hyundai's investment into the Savannah area, bringing partners from the Savannah JDA and Georgia Quick Start.
- The rapid growth of the EV industry is touching the entire state & we're excited to have Georgia at the forefront of this generational change.

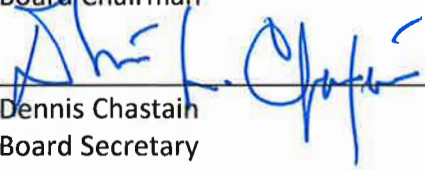
Jay: This has been a fantastic meeting. Mat is right, we emphasize in every meeting that the members' most important role is to be the line of communication and information for the department and their communities. I have been on this board a long time and been through a lot of board meetings in a lot of communities. This meeting gives us more material to take back to our communities than any I can think of. What you guys have done is amazing. In Savannah, where I'm from, we have been talking about some of these things you all have actually done. Mat, thank you very much. You've pulled together a fantastic team to pull this all together. It's all about leadership and pulling the right team together.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:



Jay Neely
Board Chairman



Dennis Chastain
Board Secretary

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Geo. L. Smith II Georgia World Congress Center Authority (the “Authority”) operates the convention and tradeshow facility known as the Georgia World Congress Center and other facilities (“Project”); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 10-9-4(b), the Authority has the power to sell, convey, transfer, lease, sublease, and dispose of real property for its corporate purposes and to contrast with the state and its departments with respect to activities, services, or facilities the contracting parties are authorized by law to undertake or provide; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 10-9-5, the Authority essentially is authorized to act as the agent of the Georgia Department of Economic Development (the “Department”) in the operation, management, and maintenance of the Project; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-16-34, the State Properties Commission (“Commission”) is required to approve a conveyance of state property; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-7-41, the Department is authorized to lease any improved or unimproved land or other property acquired by it under Code Section 50-7-40 to the Authority with the custody to any such land remaining with the Department;

WHEREAS, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 50-16-42, the Commission has the authority to grant a revocable license agreement or easement for property under the custody and control of any state agency; and

WHEREAS, the Authority, through the State Properties Commission, is interested in granting a revocable license agreement, and any subsequent temporary or permanent easement, as required or approved by the Commission, to Georgia Power Company (“GPC”) so that GPC can install the necessary underground power facilities to supply power to two separate hotels located at 250 Marietta Street NW, Atlanta GA 30303; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has requested the Department to enter into this resolution supporting the granting of the revocable license agreement, and any subsequent temporary or permanent easement, as required or approved by the Commission, to GPC as shown in Exhibit “A”; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT THE BOARD OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT request that the State Properties Commission authorize the granting of the revocable license agreement, and any subsequent temporary or permanent easement, as required or approved by the Commission, on the Property as shown in Exhibit “A”;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairman is hereby authorized to do all things necessary and proper to implement the purpose of this resolution.

Adopted this 26th day of August, 2022.

John J. Neely, III

Chairman
Georgia Department of Economic Development

Attest: *Dennis Chastain*
Secretary or Assistant Secretary

{Department Seal}

CERTIFICATE

The undersigned hereby certifies that I hold the position of Secretary or Assistant Secretary, as stated below my signature, of the Board of the Georgia Department of Economic Development and that the Resolution a true and correct copy of which is attached to this Certificate was duly adopted by the Board of the Department at and in a public meeting duly scheduled and for which all public notices required by law were given.

Dated: ^{August 26} _____, 2022.

Dennis Chastain

Secretary or Assistant Secretary

{Department Seal}

Exhibit A

