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**Business Development Board of Martin County, Inc.**

**Fourth Quarter Report: July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*This is a quarterly report of the Business Development Board of Martin County (BDB).*

**PART ONE – KEY ISSUES See Page 2**

* William T. Corbin, CEcD, appointed as Executive Director. Mr. Corbin was selected from among ninety-four candidates.
* Officers appointed for Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Susan Rabinowitz agreed to serve an additional year as President. Dan Romence is President-elect. David Rosendahl continues to serve as Secretary, and Lauren Abbott joins the Executive Committee as Treasurer. Eric Kiehn is the Past President.

**PART TWO – ACTIVITIES See Page 3**

* Pulse Program. Pulse continues to guide the focus of the BDB. Three retention/expansion projects were identified directly as a result of Pulse visits.
* BDB contracted with BusinessFlare to supplement its prospect relations efforts. BusinessFlare is a recognized leader in economic development in Florida with a strong working knowledge of Stuart and Martin County.
* Project Sailfish. Power Systems Manufacturing (PSM) identified a location in Martin County, as its expansion site. PSM made application for a tax abatement credit. The Board of County Commissioners gave preliminary approval of the proposal on September 10, 2024. This significantly marks the first time the voter-approved tax abatement program has been effectively utilized.
* Activity Reporting. BusinessFlare has worked with staff to devise an activity reporting system to produce tangible and measurable metrics for the BDB. The work is in progress and on-going at this time.
* Special Projects. Six of the identified Special Projects were completed in the Summer Quarter at a total cost of $17,360.
  + Contract Reserve Amount. A separate analysis indicates an amount available for projects of $51,084. Of this amount, $41,000 is committed to previously approved projects. Therefore, $10,084 is available for additional projects.

**PART THREE – FINANCIAL See Page 6**

* Financial report formats are streamlined for clarity and simplicity.
* Actual cash balance at end of the quarter is $301,153.
* Net income for the quarter is ($15,440).

**PART ONE – KEY ISSUES**

**William T. Corbin, CEcD, Appointed as Executive Director**. A Search Committee consisting of three Board Members and three Volunteers was named and began its work in April. The updated position description was advertised on May 15th, with a closing date of June 15th. Ninety-four (94) resumes were received. An initial review brought the number of credentialled candidates to twenty-five (25). The committee is continued its work in July, resulting in formal interviews of three candidates with the Board of Directors on August 2nd. Mr. Corbin was appointed unanimously and assumed the duties of Executive Director on September 16, 2024. Mr. Corbin holds a bachelor degree in Political Science from Emory University and a Master of Public Administration from Georgia State University. He has extensive economic development experience, and is Certified Economic Developer.

**Board of Directors (BOD) Renew their Terms**. Board members collectively wanted to demonstrate continuity during the transition for the new Executive Director. Therefore, all of the current at-large members with expiring terms agreed to reappointment. Similarly, members appointed by the BDB’s various agency partners agreed to reappointment. The BOD also welcomed newly elected Stuart City Commissioner Sean Reed into membership.

**Officers elected for Fiscal Year 2025**. In keeping with this spirit of continuity, Susan Rabinowitz agreed to serve an additional year as President. Dan Romence is the new President-elect. David Rosendahl continues to serve as Secretary, and Lauren Abbott joins the Executive Committee as Treasurer. Eric Kiehn continues as Past President.

**Board of County Commissioners presentation.** Two reports were submitted to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in June. Although neither report contained actionable items, the BCC requested to discuss BDB operations generally. The BDB is planning a formal presentation to the BCC during the fall.

**PART TWO ACTIVITY REPORTS**

**PULSE PROGRAM**

**Quality Results**. The Pulse Program – interviewing C-suite executives regarding the business climate – continues to be the driving force in guiding BDB activities. Reports through September are still being compiled, but as of August, nearly forty-seven visits had taken place. These in turn yielded 189 follow-up actions, of which 117 have been completed.

**Emerging Projects.** Importantly, three retention or expansion projects have emerged directly as a result of Pulse visits.

**Contributory Business.** The Pulse Program is focusing on contributory businesses – those which bring money into the local economy – as the main targets for interviews. Over 400 businesses are identified in this category, and the list is growing.

**Guiding the Focus**. One of the striking things learned from Pulse visits is that business operators are often unaware of resources available to them. The BDB is then able to tailor specific programs and events to that need. Two events described on the following pages (Connex workshop and Access to Capital workshop) were a direct result of Pulse visits.

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

**Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion.** Prospect relations are a core service of the BDB, and includes relationship building through direct outreach and marketing with owners, investors, site selectors, partners, and others. A few highlights of the quarter activities include:

* Project Sailfish. Power Systems Manufacturing (PSM) builds and services gas turbines and are expanding and identified a location in Martin County, located at the South Florida Gateway commercial center. PSM made initial application for a tax abatement credit. An extensive cooperative effort between PSM, BDB, BusinessFlare, County Administration, County Attorney, and the County Property Appraiser ensued. The Board of County Commissioners gave preliminary approval of the proposal on September 10, 2024. This significantly marks the first time the voter-approved tax abatement program has been effectively utilized.
* BusinessFlare. BDB continued its relationship with BusinessFlare to supplement its BRE efforts due to staff vacancies.
* Grind Hard Ammo. Grind Hard is also a candidate for tax abatement at a planned 75-100,000 square foot expansion in Indiantown.
* Project One. BDB staff has been working with an international eVTOL– electric Vertical Take Off Landing – vehicle company to establish a testing facility at Indiantown Airport.
* Activity Reporting. BusinessFlare has worked with staff to devise an activity reporting system to produce tangible and measurable metrics for the BDB.

**Website Update**. A major update to the BDB website was completed. The website bdbmc.org is a primary marketing tool of the BDB. Significant improvements include: the addition of analytics to track and evaluate usage, the addition of a calendar of events, simplified information updating procedures, a digital resource guide, and of course a fresh look.

**Talent Advancement Team (TAT)** held its summer meeting at the Indian River State College (IRSC) Advanced Manufacturing Center. This was a joint meeting of the TAT and the manufacturers’ roundtable. Emphasis of dialogue continues to be the need to shift academic focus away from the present four-year college orientation and more toward traditional apprenticeships and internships, along with more skills training. IRSC also reports difficulties in recruiting instructors for its manufacturing and trades programs.

**Industrial Development Authority** was unable to meet as planned, due to scheduling conflicts. Annual Meeting is scheduled to meet October 16, 2024. BDB is proposing to establish a quarterly meeting schedule.

**MARTIN COUNTY SPECIAL PROJECTS**

**Special Projects Completed.** Earlier this year, the Martin Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) unanimously approved a set of special projects. Special projects, by their nature, often transcend ordinary time frames, including fiscal years. The BDB took these on, producing the following results:

* Connex Workshop was held August 21st. Supply chain issues is one of the topics which is often reported during Pulse visits. The State of Florida, however, already has an existing website portal for manufacturers and suppliers to connect through. This event was organized to introduce local companies to these connections. It was a hands-on event; participants brought their laptops and were instructed on how to register, search, and utilize the systems. A state official said that it was the best of these type conferences he has participated in.
* Access to Capital Workshop was held September 13th. Businesses have differing capital needs at different stages of growth. This conference introduced attendees to a full range of financing opportunities, from start-ups to Stage 2 businesses to major capital investments.
* Manufacturers Roundtable was taken over by the BDB. This a periodic get-together of manufacturing product lines to compare notes and discuss common concerns. A significant outcome of BDB’s involvement is the establishment of strong ties to the South Florida Manufacturers Association (SFMA). SFMA is now actively participating in Martin County events, including the TAT gathering at IRSC mentioned elsewhere, and also speaking on behalf of Martin commercial-industrial land development.
* Pulse Program & Training. BDB hired an independent contractor using the monies approved by Martin County. This allowed the BDB to maintain a steady pace of Pulse visits, despite staff turnovers. The Pulse “training” project was conducted inhouse by staff. The training monies were directed into visits instead.
* Workforce and Education Resource Guide**.** The resource guide was fully revamped. It is now fully digital and more user-friendly. It also provides comprehensive resources for returning veterans. Visit <https://bdbmc.org/why-martin-county/workforce-education/> for more information.

**Projects Summary.**  The following table summarizes the status and cost of the Special Projects. The reader will note that many of the projects were completed by staff or through existing budgets. Therefore the costs were often less than anticipated. For example, the Digital Workforce and Education Resource Guide, was completed under the website renovation contract which was already paid for. Another example is the Pulse Training which was conducted by staff.

* Special Projects with status labelled “FY25” will be scheduled for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2024. The summary notes that approximately $41,000 of the previously approved funding remains committed for the upcoming projects.
* Contract Reserve Amount. Analysis indicates an amount available for projects of $51,084. Of this amount, $41,000 is committed to previously approved projects. Therefore, $10,084 is available for additional projects. Analytical detail will be submitted to Martin County in a separate report.

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**PART THREE FINANCIAL REPORTS**

The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 financial reports formats have been updated as follows:

* The reports are changed to a cash basis rather than accrual basis.
* The reports are simplified, with extraneous details removed or reclassified in order to present a simple and clear report format[[1]](#footnote-1).
* Reports are prepared directly from BDB accounting software. The Gelinas Group continue to provide routine accounting services and monthly bank reconciliations. Staff has taken on more responsibilities for day to day financial management.

The following reports are included as of September 30, 2024:

1. **Balance Sheet**. Bank statements are reviewed and reconciled monthly by the Board’s independent third-party accounting firm creating separation of duties from staff actions.
   1. Actual cash balance at end of the quarter is $301,153.
   2. Note a pre-paid expense of $7,000 for a site selector software subscription covering the next fiscal year.
2. **Income Statement / Budget Versus Actual**. Please note the following comments:
   1. Net income (or loss) for the quarter is ($15,440).
   2. Investor income is below budget, as an “aspirational” goal was set.
   3. Payroll expenses are below budget due to staff vacancies.
   4. Outside Services are over budget as contractors are hired to supplement staffing.
   5. Technology Communications is over budget. Insufficient monies were allocated in the budget; actual expenses are running close to the costs of prior years.
3. **Line Item Detail**. This is a longer report and is reported separately as **APPENDIX A**. This report provides the reader with every transaction within each line item on the budget versus actual report.
   1. Each line item on the Income Statement has a corresponding listing of itemized transactions. The amount for each line item should match the total.
   2. Each transaction lists the date, the vendor’s name [or customer name, if income], and the Memo field generally describes the purpose.
      1. Transaction Type “Invoice” is income which has been billed but not received.
      2. Transaction Type “Deposit” is actual income.
      3. Transaction Type “Check” is a purchase paid by check.
      4. Transaction Type “Expense” is a purchase paid by debit card. These will require attention in the future to better describe the specific purpose, rather than just the debit transaction information.
      5. Transaction Type “Journal entry” is posted to reclassify certain transaction.

[Financial reports follow]



**End of Report – APPENDIX A Follows**

1. For example, zero-dollar line items which serve no purpose are removed; amounts are rounded to full dollars; conventional accounting practice is used, placing negative numbers in parentheses; and interest earning are reclassified to ordinary income eliminating unusual calculations. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)