

Minutes of a **REGULAR** called meeting of the Board of Directors of the Greater Brownsville Incentives Corporation (GBIC), held on **Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 5:00 pm** at The Young House 500 E. Saint Charles St Brownsville, Texas and Cisco WebEx Video Teleconferencing.

Board Members in Attendance at the GBIC Office:

None

Board Members in Attendance via Cisco WebEx:

Commissioner John Cowen Jr (*Chairman of the Board*)
Commissioner Nurith Galonsky-Pizana (*Vice Chairman*)
Commissioner Ben Neece (*Secretary*)
Mayor Juan “Trey” Mendez III (*Board Member*)

Board Members Absent:

Commissioner Jessica Tetreau-Kalifa (*Board Member*)
Commissioner Joel Munguia (*Board Member*)
Commissioner Rose Gowen (*Treasurer*)

GBIC Staff in Attendance at the GBIC Office:

Helen Ramirez, *Executive Director/CEO*
Ramiro Aleman, *Director of Business Recruitment & Development*
Karla De La Riva, *Associate Director of Industry Retention & Expansion*
Elsa M. Galvan, *Executive Assistant*

Others in Attendance at the GBIC Office:

Eleazar Rodriguez, *City of Brownsville (COB) Project Manager*

Others in Attendance via Cisco WebEx:

Allison A. Bastian-Rodriguez, *Attorney Denton Navarro Rocha Bernal & Zech, P.C.*
Lupe Granado, *City of Brownsville Finance Director*
James McCoy, *City of Brownsville Agile Project Manager*
Bryant Walker, *City of Brownsville Assistant City Manager/Aviation Administrator*
Constanza Miner, *City of Brownsville Retail and Redevelopment Manager*
Nathan Burkhart, *Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC) Director of Marketing & Small Business Development*
Josh Mejia, *Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC) Executive Director*
Randy Gonzalez, *Keppel AmFels*
Ana Chavez, *Tequila Group*
Esmeralda Villarreal, *Brownsville Chamber of Commerce (BCoC) President & CEO*

CALL TO ORDER

A) Roll Call- Excuse Members

With a quorum present, Chairman John Cowen Jr., called the meeting to order at 5:11pm to consider the following matters, as posted at the Brownsville City Hall.

Public Comment Period – Randy Gonzalez from Keppel AmFels addressed the board regarding the happy with GBIC. Mr. Gonzalez comments regarding the new projects they have of renewal energy and inviting the board to the shipyard.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

1) Consideration and action, if any on the following items:

a.) Approval of the Minutes of Special Workshop and Minutes of Regular Board Meetings-

- Regular Board Meeting: March 11, 2021

Vice Chair Nurith Galonsky Pizana move to approve. Board Member Juan “Trey” Mendez seconded the motion. Motion carries.

b.) Approval regarding the payment of vendor services invoiced to the GBIC for the months of February 2021 and March 2021.

Board Member Juan “Trey” Mendez move to approve. Secretary Ben Neece seconded the motion. Motion carries.

WORK SESSION

1) Brownsville Chamber of Commerce update regarding COVID-19 Response Unit. – (Esmeralda Villarreal, CEO & President of BCOC)

Esmeralda Villarreal presented to the board of directors the update regarding the COVID-19 Response Unit. She addressed the various methods of outreach and collaborations with GBIC. Ms. Villarreal addressed the board regarding the 9-month program which was funded by GBIC and BCIC assisting with the on-line resources and loans. She addressed that they were able to hire 5 employees to assist businesses here in Brownsville. Ms. Villarreal addressed the resources partners that they are working with to impact the community. Esmeralda Villarreal comments on the surveys, industry outlooks, and community collaborations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

1) Business Retention, and Expansion Outreach efforts. – (Helen Ramirez, GBIC Executive Director and Karla De La Riva, Associate Director of Business Retention & Expansion.)

Karla De La Riva presented to the board of directors the new initiatives, Breakfast with CEO event, GBIC in Action-BRE visits, sister cities to promote economic development. Ms. De La Riva comments regarding the COB Vaccination initiative which has 2,500 vaccinations for industry

partners and funding for the vaccination. She comments regarding the substantial increase in outreach through social media efforts through Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter.

Board member Juan “Trey” Mendez asked what are the requirements for the vaccine and where will they be distributed at specific clinics, going to the businesses?

Karla De La Riva answered that she has provided the industry partners with a survey to get their feedback and helping them register to secure the number in need to have a drive. She stated she wants to make it as fast and easy as possible.

Board member Juan “Trey” Mendez has asked if we have, she has contacted Keppel Amfels.

Karla De La Riva replied yes, she is in talks with them.

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

- 1) Discussion and Acknowledge of GBIC Financials and Quarterly Investment Report. – *(Lupe Granado, COB Finance Director)*

Lupe Granado, COB Finance Director addressed the board regarding the GBIC financials. He presented the balance sheet, summary of income statement, sales tax collections, and fund balances. Mr. Granado stated we are in a positive of \$77, 000 for sales tax collection compared to last year. He continued to explain the sales tax comparison, sales tax history, statement of revenues, expenditures, and designated fund balance.

Secretary Ben Neece motioned to acknowledge the financials and quarterly investment report. Vice Chair Nurith Galonsky-Pizana seconded the motion. Motion carries.

- 2) Discussion, consideration, and possible action regarding the purchase of a Salesforce CRM Software platform in collaboration with the Brownsville Community Improvement Corporation (BCIC) – *(Helen Ramirez, GBIC Executive Director and Nathan Burkhart, BCIC Director of Marketing & Small Business Development)*

Nathan Burkhart addressed the board regarding the Salesforce CRM Software platform which will assist the companies to track their leads or build their portfolio.

Executive Director Helen Ramirez comments that we will split the one-time cost and have two users to be a part of this system in collaboration with BCIC to maximize our resources.

Ben Neece moved to approve.

Vice Chair Nurith Galonsky-Pizana comments that she owns stocks in salesforce which is a public company, and her shares are minimal.

Allison Bastian-Rodriguez comments depends on how minimal, and it wouldn't hurt to her abstain the vote.

Board member Juan “Trey” Mendez comments if Commissioner Galonsky will abstain we only have four members.

Executive Director Helen Ramirez comments to table this item for the next meeting.

Agenda item was tabled.

- 3) Discussion, consideration, and possible action on the payment of Impact Fees and Infrastructure Costs related to the development of the North Brownsville Industrial Park. – (Helen Ramirez, GBIC Executive Director and Ramiro Aleman, GBIC Director of Business Recruitment, Retention, & Expansion)

Agenda Item was Not Acted On.

- 4) Discussion, consideration, and possible action on payment of economic development incentives as provided in the performance agreement for Keppel AmFels. – (Ramiro Aleman, GBIC Director of Business Recruitment, Retention, & Expansion)

Ramiro Aleman addressed the board regarding the audit report for Keppel AmFels and their expansion project. He continues to say that this company have exceeded their job hiring in year 3 and is asking for approval of the \$405,000 per the contract.

Secretary Ben Neece move to approve. Board Member Juan “Trey” Mendez seconded the motion. Motion carries.

Quorum ended at 5:38pm. Board of directors did not move to executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 1) Closed Session pursuant to Section 551.072 of the Tex. Gov’t Code regarding the lease of real property if deliberation in an open meeting would have detrimental effect on the position of the City of Brownsville in negotiations with a third person, and pursuant to Section 551.087 of the Tex. Gov’t code to deliberate financial or other incentives to a business prospect the GBIC seeks to have locate within the City, in relation to the lease of land and provision of financial incentives for Project Sky.
- 2) Closed Session pursuant to Section 551.071(2) of the Tex. Gov’t Code to receive advice from legal counsel, and pursuant to Section 551.087 of the Tex. Gov’t code to deliberate financial or other incentives to a business prospect the GBIC seeks to have locate within the City, for Project U-Haul.
- 3) Executive Session pursuant to Tex. Gov’t Code Sec. 551.087(1) to discuss or deliberate regarding commercial or financial information that the GBIC has received from a business prospect that the governmental body seeks to have locate, stay, or expand in or near the City of Brownsville and with which the GBIC is conducting economic development negotiations, for Project Momentum.

RECONVENE

Board of directors did not move into executive session due to no quorum.

POSSIBLE ACTION ON ANY ITEM(S) AS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. No Action on Project Sky.
2. Consideration and appropriate action, if any, regarding the provision of incentives for Project U-Haul.
3. Consideration and appropriate action, if any, regarding the negotiations of the provision of incentives for Project Momentum.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Nurith Galonsky Pizana motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 pm. Board member Juan "Trey" Mendez Seconded the motion. Motion carries.

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Approved this 27 day of May, 2021.



Commissioner John Cowen Jr., *Chairman of the Board of Directors*

Respectfully Submitted By: Elsa M. Galvan, *Executive Assistant*