

## **Blue Label Packaging TIRC – Lancaster**

Attending the meeting of the August 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Fairfield County Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) were:

James Mako- County Commissioners Appointee, Nathan Hale- Lancaster City Schools, Carri Brown - County Auditor, David Scheffler – City of Lancaster, Stephanie Bosco – City of Lancaster, Vince Carpico- FCEWD staff, Aunie Cordle – County Commissioners Appointee, Rick Szabrak- FCEWD staff, Angel Conrad – FCEWD staff, David Levacy – County Commissioner, Jeff Fix – County Commissioner, Andrew Boyd- representative of Blue Label Packaging, Gareth Boyd- representative of Blue Label Packaging

**Welcome and Introduction:** Carri Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting at 11:00 am and everyone introduced themselves.

**Role of TIRC:** Carri Brown gave an update on the history of Tax Incentive Review Council. Per ORC Code 5709.85, the council is comprised of three members appointed by the Board of Commissioners, two members of the municipal corporation to which the instrument granting the tax exemption applies (in this case, the City of Lancaster) the County Auditor (or their designee), and an individual appointment by the Board of Education of each city, local, exempted village, and joint vocational school district to which the instrument granting the tax exemption applies (in this case, Lancaster City Schools).

The Board of County Commissioners approves the incentives to companies; the purpose of this council is to review company activity and performance as it relates to the Incentive Agreement and to determine if the job and payroll benchmarks are being met given the current business climate and make a recommendation to the Commissioners whether to continue to grant tax incentives.

**Election of Vice-Chairperson:** It was determined that the current President of the Board of Commissioners should act as the TIRC Vice-Chairperson. Aunie Cordle made a motion to nominate Jeff Fix to serve as the Vice-Chairperson. 2<sup>nd</sup> by David Scheffler. A vote was taken, and motion passed unanimously.

**Review and Approve previous meeting minutes:** Meeting minutes from the previous meeting were distributed and reviewed. Jeff Fix made a motion to approve the minutes as is. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Aunie Cordle. With no discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously with David Scheffler and James Mako abstaining.

**Review Enterprise Zone Agreements for Blue Label Packaging (BLP) and update from BLP:** Andrew Boyd and Gareth Boyd shared a company update. Although there are three separate agreements, it is essentially one large expansion project; first is 18,000+ sq. ft. of warehouse space (completed January 2020), second is additional 24,000 sq. ft. of warehouse space (completed November 2021), and third is 14,000+ sq. ft. of office space (completed February 2022). They now have 110,00 sq. ft. of space. With their current space, BLP has planned for additional growth and capacity for the future. When BLP started their expansion, they had 79 employees; they currently have 145 employees. Based on these statistics, BLP is currently meeting the job creation requirement. Andrew also spoke to wages and benefits, indicating that the average annual salary is \$65,400 and the company provides full spectrum of employee benefits (health and dental insurance, tuition reimbursement, retirement benefits, etc.) shortly after hire. He indicated that he follows industry benchmarks to stay competitive in attracting quality employees and said they do not have much turnover in staff.

BLP provided a copy of their non-discriminatory EEO policy, which is compliant with Fairfield County policy. They recently hired a Recruitment and Training Manager to oversee employee hiring and engagement.

Jeff Fix asked how business is going – Andrew replied that during the pandemic, when many businesses were forced to shut down or struggled financially, BLP did quite well due to the nature of their product (labels for packaged goods). Andrew also cited additional consumer spending. Although Andrew feels consumer spending has tapered, they are still positioned to remain profitable.

Jeff Fix asked where they are finding their employees – Andrew replied BLP typically does not have trouble finding applicants due to word of mouth referrals and the generous pay and benefits offered. BLP currently has a few open positions but is not concerned about filling those positions.

Rick Szabrak reminded Andrew and Gareth of an annual fee that BLP will have to pay to file the proper reports with the proper governing body.

With no other questions from the council, Andrew expressed his appreciation of the council, commenting on the good experience he has had working with multiple government entities and applauded the communication and teamwork of all involved. Jeff Fix responded by thanking BLP for choosing to invest in the community and contribute to the welfare of Fairfield County.

**Council Recommendation:** Jeff Fix made a motion to accept BLP progress report, to accept the report about nondiscriminatory employment practices, and to continue with the incentive program. 2<sup>nd</sup> by David Levacy. A vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

**Adjourn:** At 11:40 am, Jeff Fix made a motion to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Nathan Hale. A vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.

Next TIRC meeting is scheduled for June 27<sup>th</sup> at 1pm at a location to be determined, likely the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Recorded by Vince Carpico on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022.