

# Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

**Date:** March 31, 2022  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Benjamin H. Pingree, PLACE Director  
**Subject:** Summary Minutes to Board of Directors Meeting of February 24, 2022

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## **MEMBERS PRESENT**

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>CITY</b>
Commissioner Nick Maddox, Chair	Mayor John Dailey
Commissioner Kristin Dozier	Commissioner Curtis Richardson
Commissioner Carolyn Cummings	Commissioner Jeremy Matlow
Commissioner Brian Welch	Commissioner Jacqueline Porter
Commissioner Rick Minor	Commissioner Dianne Williams-Cox
Commissioner Bill Proctor	
Commissioner Jimbo Jackson	

## **I. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

There were no agenda modifications.

## **II. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Public comments were received by email to Comments@BlueprintIA.org through 5:00 p.m. on February 23, 2022. All emails received were provided to the IA Board. Live comments were also taken in person and via WebEx during the meeting. There were no citizens to be heard on non-agenda items.

## **III. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS**

- Receipt and File:
  - Approved Economic Vitality Leadership Committee February 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes
  - Draft Economic Vitality Leadership Committee February 14, 2022 Meeting Minutes
  - Blueprint Infrastructure Community Engagement Update

## **IV. CONSENT**

**ACTION TAKEN: Mayor Dailey moved, seconded by Commissioner Richardson to approve the Consent Agenda.**

**The motion passed 12-0 (weighted (70-0)).**

1. Approval of the December 9, 2021, Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Board Meeting Minutes

Option 1: Approve the December 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

2. Approval of the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality Mid-Year Report

**Option 1:** Approval of the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality Mid-Year Report.

3. Approval of the Budget Amendment in Recognition of a Grant from the Knight Community Foundation of North Florida to Support Minority Women and Small Business Activities

**Option 1:** Approval of the Budget Amendment in Recognition of a Grant from the Knight Community Foundation of North Florida to Support Minority Women and Small Business Activities.

## **V. GENERAL BUSINESS**

4. Approval of the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality Strategic Plan

Citizen Comments:

Ricardo Schneider, EVLC Chair, spoke in favor of accepting the updated Strategic Plan and acknowledged OEV's impact and accomplishments over the last five years. He also encouraged the Office of Economic Vitality to continue working with minority-owned and small businesses and focus on business recruitment, expansion, and retention in the Tallahassee-Leon County area.

Ramona Abernathy Paine spoke in favor of the updated Strategic Plan and opposed allocating \$20 million to Florida State University for improvements to the Doak Campbell Stadium from OEV funds. She stated that OEV funds were intended to promote economic growth by creating permanent jobs and that it would be more appropriate for the money to come from the Blueprint Infrastructure budget.

Max Epstein spoke about the current economic impacts of the Office of Economic Vitality and expressed concern that awarding \$20 million to FSU would negatively affect OEV's ability to continue promoting positive job growth in the Tallahassee area. He expressed concerns that the allocation of \$20 million to FSU would negatively impact OEV's ability to implement the updated Strategic Plan.

K. Lennorris Barber expressed concern that more projects under the Strategic Plan should be in neighborhoods with a large minority population to have a greater impact on poverty in the Tallahassee-Leon County area. He would like more efforts or programs to address poverty and wealth disparities.

Ben Pingree, PLACE Director, gave a brief introduction to the updated Office of Economic Vitality Strategic Plan presentation. Director Cristina Paredes opened the presentation by covering the original vision and mission statements. Director Paredes discussed the impacts of the OEV over the past five years under the original strategic plan and highlighted the annual economic impact of \$430 million into the Tallahassee-Leon County economy. OEV has had five (5) major recruitment, retention, or expansion projects, including Amazon and Danfoss. OEV

has leveraged \$6.30 for every \$1 committed for a total return on investment of \$62 million on 11 projects with a growth of 7,854 jobs. Overall, OEV has implemented over 87% of the current Work Plan and anticipates incorporating additional key strategies into the updated Strategic Plan.

Gray Swoope, President and CEO of VisionFirst Advisors, presented on the history and development of the Strategic Plan and the goals of the economic development program for the Office of Economic Vitality. Mr. Swoope emphasized the importance of bringing new dollars and jobs into the Tallahassee-Leon county area. He discussed some of the core and enabling strategies in the updated Strategic Plan and discussed the importance of recruiting competitive projects to the Tallahassee-Leon County area. Mr. Swoope stated that an important economic driver is the creation of new jobs in the Tallahassee area, that the quality of jobs and the payroll increases are equally as important as the number of jobs brought into the area; and that an important element to business recruit was the customer experience.

Director Paredes concluded the presentation by explaining the next steps following IA Board direction related to the Strategic Plan. She highlighted that tax revenue over the past eight months was exceeding projections bringing in over \$452 million and that the 11 projects approved to date have had a positive annual economic impact of \$430 million. Director Paredes stated that staff would bring the budget before the IA Board's May meeting. Director Paredes concluded with staff recommendations of Options 1 and 2.

Commission Minor suggested that workforce development be elevated to a core strategy under the updated strategic plan and update the 2019 Competitive Report.

Commissioner Proctor requested that the top three projects for the strategic plan include Capital Circle from Crawfordville Highway to Highway 20, the Airport Gateway, and the Fairgrounds project. PLACE Director Ben Pingree responded that one of the segments on Capital Circle that Commissioner Proctor identified is the top-ranked Blueprint project; however it is being funded in conjunction with the Florida Department of Transportation. Proctor requested that older projects, such as the Capital Circle project, take priority over newer projects. Director Pingree explained that right of way acquisition on section one of the Capital Circle project from Orange Avenue to Springhill Road is nearing completion and that there is \$52 million in construction scheduled to begin in September.

Commissioner Welch expressed concern that if \$20 million were allocated to FSU's Doak Campbell Stadium that it would negatively impact OEV's ability to implement the Updated Strategic Plan.

Commissioner Cummings and Maddox requested staff provide guidance and information to minority business owners applying for OEV assistance. Director Paredes explained that the updated strategic plan included core strategies targeted to MWSBE. Commissioner Maddox requested OEV staff conduct a workshop to educate minority business owners on financing opportunities and other resources

by collaborating with the Chambers, local financing institutions, the City of Tallahassee, Leon County, and Blueprint.

Commissioner Dozier requested that OEV staff identify techniques for tracking the indirect benefits of the competitive and non-competitive project investments. She also asked Mr. Swoope whether OEV would be able to facilitate the creation of more jobs in the Tallahassee-Leon County economy if it retained revenue in the bank for future projects. Mr. Swoope explained that making the Tallahassee market more competitive would require implementing the identified projects from the strategic plan using the allocated tax revenue.

Commissioner Proctor requested that the strategic plan include a core value or strategy specifically addressing poverty.

**Commissioner Minor moved Options 1, and 2 and Commissioner Proctor seconded with the addition of elevating the tactic "Serve as an advocate for workforce alignment" to a core strategy; including strategies and values directed towards addressing poverty; and adding an update of the 2019 competitive report that would be aligned with the new strategic plan including such metrics as incentive funding and job market comparisons.**

**Option 1: Accept the update to the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality Economic Development Strategic Plan.**

**Option 2: Adopt the refined Vision and Mission Statement for the Tallahassee-Leon County Office of Economic Vitality.**

**The motion passed 12-0 (weighted: 70-0).**

5. Approval of Resolutions for the Planner Fiscal Year 2022 Bond Issue and the State Infrastructure Bank Loan

Citizen Comments:

Donna Cotterell spoke against the funding for Doak Stadium stating that funding could be better circulated throughout the Tallahassee community.

Bob Rackleff spoke against the funding for Doak Stadium stating that the funding would not benefit the surrounding 32304 zipcode.

Carlos Alvarez spoke against the funding for Doak Stadium stating that this was not intended use of Blueprint Sales Tax Funds.

Lonnie Mann spoke against the funding for Doak Stadium stating that FSU has a larger annual budget than the City government.

Willie Givens spoke against the funding stating that FSU has not demonstrated a need for government assistance where other individuals or entities would have to demonstrate a need for assistance when asking for government assistance.

Charles Dudley spoke in favor of the funding for Doak Stadium stating that FSU is a major partner to the Tallahassee area and that the Board consistently with its actions from September.

Hugh Tomlinson spoke in favor of the funding stating that the stadium will have a large positive impact on the Tallahassee economy.

Michael Alford spoke in favor of the funding because of the age and need of the stadium.

Alex Carson spoke against the funding based on social economic reasons and class discrimination.

Bill Davis spoke against the funding based on judicial temperament and intellectual honesty and asked commissioners to change their pervious vote to support funding for the stadium.

Mutaqee Akbar spoke against the funding for the stadium and argued that the people of Tallahassee oppose the funding for the stadium, that funding the stadium would not maximize OEV's impact, and the five year plan would be negatively impacted. He asked FSU to better serve the local community.

David Okeefe spoke against the funding for the FSU Stadium arguing that the funding would not go to economic development and reminded citizens to vote on August 23, 2022.

Kendra Light opposed funding for the stadium stating that the money could be redirected to affordable housing.

Max Epstein spoke against the funding for the stadium because the use of funding could be applied to micro-loans for small businesses or other smaller projects.

Gerri Seay spoke against the funding for the stadium because the people in the community surrounding the stadium will not see an economic benefit. She argued that the commissioners voting in favor of the stadium are ignoring the citizens' wishes.

Stanley Sims spoke against the funding for FSU and voter suppression.

Stephen Broadway spoke against the funding for FSU stating that it goes against the will of the people.

Jared Willis spoke in favor of funding the stadium. He argued that stadiums are good economic drivers and that the funds will be inducing outside dollars into the Tallahassee community.

Margaret Moore spoke against the funding for the stadium arguing that there isn't enough data on the quality of permanent jobs created by providing the FSU does not need the money and that citizens in the area could better benefit from other uses of the funds.

Will Crowley spoke against the funding for the stadium stating that the funding that the money could be used to recruit businesses that will provide better jobs to the Tallahassee area.

Ruth Chase spoke against funding the stadium arguing that the money could be better used if directed towards recruiting manufacturing jobs or jobs related to the research coming from the FSU.

Brian Lupiani spoke against the funding for FSU arguing that the jobs that will be created by the stadium improvements will not have a meaningful impact on the local economic development.

Michael Rosenthal spoke against the funding for the stadium stating that the majority of people in the Tallahassee community oppose giving the money to FSU.

Joey Lamar spoke against the funding arguing that it is not a good investment of local funding.

Whitfield Leland spoke against the funding arguing that the majority of citizens oppose the measure and that the economic return from funding the FAMU stadium improvements will be better felt in the community directly surrounding that stadium than will be felt by the community surrounding the FSU Stadium.

Kenneth Webster requested that the IA Board ensure that maximum minority enterprises are used during the FSU improvement project.

Dorothy Johnson spoke in favor of Commissioner Dozier's motion to rescind the action taken on September 27, 2021, and against the funding for FSU stadium. In addition, she spoke about the need to against poverty and crime in the Tallahassee community.

Josh Johnson spoke against the funding for stadium arguing that it is irresponsible.

John St. Claire spoke in favor of funding for the stadium.

Catherine Roth spoke against the funding for FSU arguing that it is immoral.

Randie Denker spoke against the funding for FSU stating that it has the fundraising capacity to fund its own repairs.

Joshua Johnson spoke against the funding for FSU stating that responsibly of complying with ADA regulations is the responsibility of FSU not OEV.

Austin Hansek spoke against funding the stadium stating that FSU could raise the money on its own without the contribution of taxpayer dollars and that Blueprint funds could better serve other projects.

Jeannie Dixon spoke against the funding for the stadium and asked the IA Board to reconsider their position on funding the project.

Serenity Williams spoke against funding for the FSU stadium stating that the funds could better used for other projects.

Marissa Langston, Chief of Staff for Richard McCullough, introduced a video for the FSU President. President McCullough thanked the IA Board for their support of FSU in the video.

Commissioner Dozier spoke against funding for the FSU stadium covering the reports from OEV and the impacts on the updated Strategic Plan.

**Commissioner Dozier moved to "rescind the Blueprint IA Board action of September 27, 2021, to "[a]ccept the Report on the Funding and Economic Analysis for Florida State University's Doak Campbell Stadium Infrastructure Repairs and Maintenance. Direct the Agency to proceed with obtaining bond or bank financing and disbursing of funds of up to \$20 million. Authorize the Director of PLACE to execute the necessary agreements with FSU to effectuate project commencement from the economic development portion of the sales tax proceeds from the Blueprint Sales Tax to meet the bonding deadline requirements for disbursement and expenditure by December 9, 2021." Commissioner Porter seconded the motion.**

**Commissioner Jackson moved a substitute motion to approve Options 1 and 2 and seconded by Mayor Dailey.**

**Option 1: Approve Resolution 2022-01 authorizing the issuance by the Agency of up to \$90,300,000 in aggregate principal amount of sales tax revenue bonds, Series 2022 to construct certain capital improvements and pay the costs of issuance.**

**Option 2: Approve Resolution 2022-02 authorizing a loan from the State of Florida Department of Transportation in the amount of \$25,500,000 to fund certain capital improvement projects.**

Commissioner Jackson stated that he supported providing the funding to FSU as an opportunity to get an improvement project in County District #2 and the west side of Tallahassee. In making the substitute motion, it is his intent to move forward with the other eight projects included in the funding bond issuance.

Commissioner Dozier asked for clarification from Blueprint staff as to whether removing the stadium from the list of projects would impact the ability to fund the remaining projects. Director Pingree and Director Paredes explained that the funding for the remaining projects would be unaffected.

Commissioner Porter expressed concerns about how the project was brought before the IA Board and expressed disappointment the funding for the FSU stadium was not going to be handled separately from the remaining eight projects in the bond issuance.

Commissioner Matlow expressed concern about why the FSU Stadium project was being lumped with the remaining projects when the citizens expressed a desire to handle the stadium funding separately.

Commissioner Welch spoke against funding the FSU stadium based on the staff analysis. He also expressed concern that if the money was allocated to the FSU stadium project OEV would not have funding available for other economic development projects or to implement the updated Strategic Plan for the next five to seven years.

Commissioner Williams-Cox stated that she intends to support the motion because after speaking with representatives of FSU she has been assured that FSU will commit to providing community benefits, such as economic growth to the Tallahassee area. Commissioner Williams-Cox read a letter from the University to the IA Board and audience. She also stated that the nine projects included in the bond funding are important for the Tallahassee community.

Commissioner Minor clarified that removing one of the projects from the bond issuance would not negatively impact Blueprint's credit rating or funding for the remaining projects.

Commissioner Richardson stated that he intended to support the motion to remain consistent with the previous actions of the IA Board and to move forward with all of the projects.

Commissioner Minor spoke against the funding for the stadium, stating that he believes the funding could be used to serve the citizens of Tallahassee better. He stated that he supports the other eight projects included in the bond funding but that he did not support allocating \$20 million to FSU for stadium improvements.

**Substitute Motion Passed 7-5 (weighted: 41-29) with Commissioners Matlow, Porter, Dozier, Minor, and Welch in dissent.**

## **VI. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Robert Blackledge, Executive Director of Domi, spoke about the impacts and growth of DOMI since its creation in 2014 and asked whether Domi's request for \$100,000 for renovations as a non-competitive project application could be considered by OEV and presented before the IA Board at the OEV related IA meeting on May 19, 2022..

**Commissioner Dozier moved to review the DOMI non-competitive project request and bring back an Agenda Item at the next joint IA Board Meeting scheduled for May 19, 2022. Commissioner Williams-Cox seconded the motion.**

**Passed 12-0 (weighted: 70-0)**

## **VII. DIRECTOR DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Porter expressed concern about the IA Board not having hiring and termination authority over the IA Director.

**Commissioner Porter moved for Blueprint staff to bring an informational item the Interlocal Agreement for the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency as well as the Department of PLACE for the next IA Board Meeting, which should include historical information on the organizations. Commissioner Matlow seconded the motion.**

Susan Dawson, Blueprint Attorney, explained that there are multiple interagency agreements currently in place related to the creation and regulation of the Director of PLACE and that modification to the Blueprint Interlocal Agreement would need to be coordinated with the City and County and that it would be a multi-step process to modify the agreement.

Commissioner Dozier requested clarification about the steps necessary to modify the interlocal agreements, history about the alignment of Blueprint with the Planning Department and the Office of PLACE, and whether any action related to the PLACE Director could be taken at the next meeting.

Commissioner Cummings supported bringing back an informational item about the historical establishment of Blueprint and PLACE.

Commissioner Richardson commended staff for their professionalism and stated that staff has done good work implementing the directions of the IA Board.

**Passed 12-0 (weighted: 70-0)**

Commissioner Minor provided an update on the Lake Jackson Greenways Project stating that it was currently under design and approximately 60 percent completed and should be ready for review in December of 2022.

**Commissioner Minor moved to have Blueprint staff provide support at a community meeting hosted by Commissioner Minor in spring 2022 regarding the Lake Jackson Greenway Project. Commissioner Welch seconded the motion.**

**Passed 12-0 (weighted 70-0)**

**VIII. ADJOURN**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.**

*The next Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for **March 31, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.***