

Technology & Entrepreneurship Advisory Board  
Minutes - January 16, 2025

1. Call to Order: Chairman Richardson called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.
2. Roll Call: Chairman Richardson; Directors Pearson and Ritchie were present with Director Boman via teleconference. Director Rhoades was absent.

Staff: Holly Wharton – Economic Development Director, Alicia Hartley – Downtown Manager, and Christine Sewell – Recording Clerk.

3. Citizens with Input- Guests

4. New Business

- a. Approve December 19, 2024, Minutes

Director Ritchie motioned to approve with noted correction; Director Pearson seconded; Chairman Richardson abstained; all in favor was unanimously approved.

- b. Approve December 2024 Financials

Director Ritchie motioned to approve as submitted; Director Pearson seconded; all in favor and was unanimously approved.

- c. Georgia Resident Survey Options

Ms. Wharton, in follow-up to previous discussions paid participant surveys can be conducted with an estimated cost of \$280. Changes in the age demographics had also been discussed with a new range of 28-35 years old and the survey can be customized for what the board seeks to gather for data. Director Boman has reached out to Cloud Research Connect who will post the survey and the cost is to cover the participants being paid for responses, which will garner more response; and the company will build out the parameters and it can be customized for specific age groups, location. Chairman Richardson inquired if they would provide the results in a report on completion; Director Boman advised they would not, but she would compile for the board's review. Discussion ensued on the parameters for the survey and the questions to ask. It was asked if new residents should be solicited; the board concurred they should be, and staff will provide contact information. Director Pearson felt this was a good group to contact as they can advise what brought them to the area. Ms. Wharton will create a shareable document for the board to submit potential questions and will review at the next meeting.

- d. Startup Week Planning Update

Ms. Wharton advised everything is moving forward and registration has been launched. Ms. Wharton noted a registration was received by a mother for her 11-year-old, which garnered a discussion of the possibility of hosting a young entrepreneurial workshop, which staff and the board will further discuss. Ms. Wharton advised one date was scheduled for the Orleans, however, it has since been moved to the city's event center, however they will still cater.

e. Speaker Series Update

Ms. Wharton advised she has reached out to Grand Farm, and they will be the speaker for May. Ms. Wharton asked Chairman Richardson for the March speaker dates, which he will provide. Ms. Wharton advised she was approached regarding a sponsorship for the series and has created a flyer for future requests.

5. Staff Items

a. Digital Entrepreneurial Training update

Ms. Wharton advised she and Ms. Hartley are in the on-boarding process with the company and it is going well and will send out the link to the board for their review.

b. Integrative Precision Agriculture Conference update

Ms. Wharton advised the UGA conference is scheduled in Perry for May 1<sup>st</sup>; not certain about the city's involvement, other than being the host city, but is assisting as requested.

Ms. Wharton advised two new members will be appointed next week.

6. Member Items – Director Ritchie inquired about follow up from Spark Macon's request. Ms. Wharton from a staff standpoint felt the 2025 program has been set and recommended placing on hold at this point in time. Chairman Richardson advised he would ask Director Rhoades to reach out to them and advise the same.

7. Adjournment – there being no further business to come before the board the meeting was adjourned at 6:36pm.