

**JOB TRAINING INCENTIVE  
PROGRAM MONTHLY BOARD  
MEETING**

**Virtual Meeting**

**MEETING SUMMARY OF November 18, 2022**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Board Members**

Mark Roper, EDD Division Director, Board Chair  
Sara Gutierrez, EDD Deputy Division Director, Acting Board Chair  
Marc Duske, NM Public Education Department  
Michelle Doran, Department of Workforce Solutions  
Monica Sandoval-Johnson, STEM Boomerang  
Karla Melendez, NM Public Education Department,  
proxy to Marc Duske for NM Public Education  
Department

**Board Members Absent**

Kathleen Sena, NM Higher Education Department  
Marcos Martinez, Department of Workforce Solutions

**JTIP Staff Present**

Patrick Gannon, JTIP Manager  
Avelina Borrego, Marketing Coordinator

**Guests**

Adam Crespín, The Verdes Foundation  
Joseph Beck, Advanced Manufactured Power Solutions  
Jon Gordon, Universal Hydrogen Company  
Kathleen Donaldson, Parting Stone, LLC  
Shurette Neuman, Sceye, Inc.  
Karla Melendez, NM Public Education Department  
Adam Dodge, NM Department of Workforce Solutions  
Sandy Davis, JTIP Compliance Officer  
Beth Waldrip, Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance  
Rich Brown, City of Santa Fe  
Sam Collins, NM Economic Development Department  
Bruce Bradford,  
Rochelle Bussey, NM Film Office  
Joann Wylie, NM Film Office

**I. Introductions**

The meeting convened at 9:02 am. The introduction of board and staff followed.

**II. Approval of the Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Ms. Doran and seconded by Mr. Duske.  
Motion passed unanimously.

### **III. Consideration of Amendment**

#### **a) The Verdes Foundation – Albuquerque**

*The company requested a total of \$24,032.00 for 3 trainees at an average wage of \$20.83 per hour. The company has been approved for JTIP on nine previous occasions.*

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The company stated that they are a fully integrated production cycle which includes covering every step of the process which includes cultivation to harvest curing to extracting to cooking to packaging. Company expressed gratitude to JTIP for the continual growth of the company. The company will be opening 2 new retail locations in Albuquerque and Santa Fe before the end of the year. The company has initiated an increase to their compensation package to include wage increases for their employees. The company has also expanded their operations to include a new production facility and a new grow facility that the positions requested will be working in.

Board Chair Mark Roper addressed the board informing them the retail component of the operation is not eligible for JTIP funding.

Monica Sandoval-Johnson commended the company on job retention and inquired on the locations of the new facilities.

Marc Duske noted that the company has only hired 8 of the 26 positions approved and questioned the company if they were having a difficult time finding qualified applicants or is the labor pool more difficult to navigate. Company responded to say that it is a complicated labor market and that is combined with set of factors that include a pre-employment process that includes an intensive recruiting process and company culture and environment and building their workforce sustainably. Recruiting does take longer. Another factor is the NM Department of Public Safety that is understaffed, and background checks are taking from 5 to 9 weeks.

A motion to approve this request was made by Ms. Sandoval-Johnson and seconded by Mr. Duske. Motion passed unanimously.

### **IV. Consideration of Proposals**

#### **a) Advanced Manufactured Power Solutions – Albuquerque**

*The company requested a total of \$50,264.68 for 2 trainees at an average wage of \$42.85 per hour. The company has been approved for JTIP on three previous occasions.*

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Company stated that the company has grown beyond battery assemblies to include cable assemblies and is at the board for the consideration of the two positions to support the battery assembly as well as the cable assembly and other components.

Mark Duske inquired on the current application of the batteries. Company stated that they work with the National Laboratories and applications are in space and defense. The company stated that they are more like a boutique manufacturer, following a customer's unique design and assembling a battery pack or a cable to their specification and testing.

Mark Roper complemented company on benefits package. Keep component in keeping employees happy and retaining them. Additionally, complemented company on cash flow and liquidity especially for a start-up company. Company responded by saying that through the help of JTIP the company has been able to hire some high-quality people, some from the labs. Having an attractive benefits package that

someone for example at Sandia might be giving up is important to the company to make sure they want to work for the company and continue to work for the company.

A motion to approve this request was made by Mr. Duske and seconded by Ms. Doran. Motion passed unanimously.

Marc Duske stated that he will be leaving the meeting for a short while and Karla Melendez will be his proxy in his absence.

**b) Universal Hydrogen Company – Albuquerque**

*The company requested a total of \$34,254.00 for 1 trainee at an average wage of \$157.70 per hour. This was the first approval for the company.*

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The company complemented Avelina on her overview of the company. The position requested will help in the design the new manufacturing facility. The work of the aircraft is going very well. The company will be doing their test flights in late December, early January which will be a major milestone for the company. Company mentioned an article in the Albuquerque Journal that ran this week that spoke of the latest iteration of the hydrogen modules, the portable fuel tanks that will be built at the site of which the certifications will be coming soon. Company spoke of benefits and the love of aviation; the position will get flight training.

Marc Duske inquired on the use of the hydrogen fuel cells and if they need some sort of modification to a turbo-prop engine. Company response responded to state that the turbo-prop engine to completely replaced. The combustion engine is removed and is replaced with hydrogen fuel cells that are made in the US by Propower? and the most advanced thing that goes in is the electric motor made by Magnex? in Seattle.

Marc Duske asked if he could reach out to the company regarding an aviation conference that Marc is in the process of coordinating with Representative Diane Vigil for April 2023. Company responded that they would like to participate.

Monica Sandoval-Johnson inquired on the position and the company's overall strategy to hiring in NM. Company responded to say that the HR position is a PT resident of SF and will be working with the local universities.

Mark Roper mentioned that Monica represents a program called STEM Boomerang that works with former NM graduates that have left the state and matched them up with NM companies and finding opportunities for them to return to the state.

A motion to approve this request was made by Ms. Sandoval-Johnson and seconded by Ms. Michelle Doran. Motion passed unanimously.

**a) Parting Stone, Inc. – Santa Fe**

*The company requested a total of \$76,440.00 for 7 trainees at an average wage of \$24.29 per hour. The company has been approved for JTIP on four previous occasions.*

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Kathleen Donaldson, Project Manager and a former JTIP trainee expressed appreciation and thanked the board for the tremendous support proved to the company. The company is working with over 600 funeral homes across the globe and is currently preparing over 5,000 solidifications annually.

Rich Brown with the city of Santa Fe complimented the company on their effective use of state resources to help scale up the company and wished the company continued success in their expansion.

Monica Sandoval-Johnson noted the positions that have been claimed on previous projects and questioned the company on the challenges in recruiting and hiring. Company acknowledged the challenges of hiring, particularly for entry-level production

technicians in Santa Fe.

Monica Sandoval-Johnson inquired on the Director of Marketing position and the company stated that up to this point Justin Crowe, Founder of the company has been promoting the company, however, with the growth the company has experienced in the last year, Justin decided to hire someone to market the company and free up his time to focus on other priorities for the company.

A motion to approve this request was made by Ms. Doran and seconded by Ms. Sandoval-Johnson. Motion passed unanimously.

**b) Sceye, Inc. – Moriarty/Roswell**

*The company requested a total of \$135,613.28 for 5 trainees at an average wage of \$38.00 per hour. The company has been approved for JTIP on three previous occasions.*

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The company expressed gratitude to the board for their continued support of Sceye. The company is currently looking at two locations for their production facility in New Mexico. The company spoke of the Green Good Design award that the company has won in 2022. The award creates an awareness about contemporary design and to honor both products and industry leaders in design and manufacturing that have chartered new directions for innovation and pushed the envelope for competitive products in the world marketplace.

Monica Sandoval-Johnson stated how great it is to have such an innovative company in New Mexico.

Board Chair Mark Roper spoke of the services STEM Boomerang can provide particularly in repatriating former New Mexico graduates to New Mexico for employment opportunities in STEM-related occupations. Board Chair requested that JTIP staff provide company with Monica’s contact information.

A motion to approve this request was made by Ms. Melendez and seconded by Ms. Doran. Motion passed unanimously.

**V. Approval of Minutes**

- a. JTIP Board meeting, October 14, 2022 - a motion was made by Ms. Doran and seconded by Mr. Duske. Motion passed unanimously.

**VI. Fiscal Update**

Mr. Gannon shared the fiscal report and the projects in the pipeline.

**VII. Action Item – Film Office – Pipeline Presentation, \$2M cap discussion**

The JTIP Board heard presentations from the JTIP Staff and Staff from the New Mexico Film office as to the historical numbers on film specifically how it impacts the FCAP program and the overall JTIP balance. The JTIP statute states:

- Up to \$2 million of each appropriation is set aside for film training.
- The statute also allows for the disbursement of up to \$2 million.

Where there is no clear statute or in JTIP policy is how we handle carryover funds from previous fiscal years as JTIP is non-reverting. Based on this information and based on the data presented at the JTIP Board meeting, the following determinations were made, and action was taken.

It was determined that in the two most recent fiscal years:

- JTIP as a whole had carryover funds

- FCAP had not spent \$2 million in those fiscal years
- Projections for this fiscal year indicate FCAP will exceed \$2 million for the first time in history
- Based on these facts the board approved allowing up to \$2 million additional to be set aside for FCAP in FY23.

This is action for only this fiscal year (FY23) as the Economic Development Department is anticipating this issue to be discussed and hopefully resolved in the upcoming legislative session.

### **VIII. Other (Discussion Items)**

#### **a. Recruitment & Retention Training Program Presented by Monica Sandoval-Johnson**

Monica presented a proposal by STEM Boomerang and Cornerstone Consulting Associates that was initially presented to the Economic Development Department. The presentation titled: “Understanding the Challenges and Providing Support for Workforce Recruitment”

The purpose of the proposal is to support NMEDD by assisting NM-based employers in recruiting and retaining a highly technical workforce. To make this training program effective, the proposal contained three individual while cohesive areas to support JTIP-eligible small businesses.

- Data collection and presentation to NMEDD on available workforce in New Mexico
- Recruitment and Retention training program for NM small businesses
- Post-program support for NM small businesses

The training would consist of 6-part sessions with 1 session weekly to include:

1. Overview of recruitment challenges in New Mexico’s STEM ecosystem
2. Strategies to ‘match’ with the right talent
3. Interviewing effectively
4. Retention - the heart of innovation
5. Employment law best practices presented by a Local law firm
6. Fostering company culture

Upon completion of the 6-week training program, each existing small business or startup will learn to develop a recruitment strategy specific to their business growth plan. Specific knowledge gained include these high-level areas:

- Promotion
- Communication
- Interviewing and pre-screening
- Employee retention
- Developing and fostering company culture
- Employment law and employee handbook

Discussion on whether the training could be funded through JTIP, similar to MEP

through STEP-UP Consortium Training. Sara Gutierrez spoke of in-kind contribution that employers would contribute while company employees attended the training (i.e. wages paid to employees while attending the training. This would eliminate or significantly reduce the cost for a company to participate, in most cases eliminate any out-of-pocket costs to the company.

b. Next Board Meeting – December 9, 2022; 9:00 am -12:00 pm; Virtual

## **IX. Adjourn**

Board Chair Mark Roper had to leave the board meeting early and Sara, Gutierrez, Deputy Division Director stepped in as acting Chair. A motion to adjourn was made by Madame Chair. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:22 am.