

Lorain Port and Finance Authority
Board of Directors
Joint Contract Management and Marketing & Public Affairs Committee Meeting
Port Office
Tuesday, May 16, 2023, at 5:15 p.m.

Contract Committee: Ms. Kiraly; Messrs. Nielsen, Veard, Zellers and Zgonc (5)

Marketing Committee: Ms. Bonilla & Kiraly; Messrs. Nielsen, Scott and Veard (5)

Board of Directors: Mrs. Silva Arredondo; Mr. Mullins

Staff: Tom Brown, Executive Director
Tiffany McClelland, Assistant Director
Yvonne Smith, Accountant
Kelsey Leyva-Smith, Office Manager

Guests: Megan Bush Granson, Inbloom Consulting
Kate Newsome, Inbloom Consulting

I. Roll Call

A. The meeting was called to order at 5:10 p.m. by Contract Committee Chairman Mr. Zellers and Marketing Committee Chairman Mr. Nielsen with roll call indicating a quorum present.

II. Report of Officers

A. Inbloom Consulting Presentation: Humble about what they do. Accountable to their promises. Embrace change. They don't want time wasted. They want to give clients the best ROI possible. They also offer marketing services. They do a lot of strategic planning work, coaching and training. They help people launch their own organizations. They launch campaigns with a kick-off meeting, then onboarding (client describes situation). Then put together the project outline that describes deliverables and when to expect them. General campaign timeline starts with a feasibility study. Going out to the market to see what the market will bear. They meet up with individuals anonymously and distribute surveys. They'll work with us to craft messaging. We already have some of that. Planning phase and then quiet phase (talking with big donors). Go public with campaign after that. One strategy is a brick campaign. Work is categorized into these

components: Leadership, Strategic messaging, Donors and prospects, Process infrastructure, Resources. Generally, there's a four to one ratio (every four prospects will amount to one gift. Megan opened the floor to questions. Mr. Mullins asked about the success rate. Megan said they've never not met a goal, but feasibility studies don't always result in a yes. They realized one of their clients wasn't ready after doing a feasibility study. Instead of a campaign, they built them a two-year plan to get ready for a campaign. That was the only time in 10 years. Mr. Mullins asked where the contacts will come from. Megan said they "start with your contacts and squeeze all the juice." They do a lot of research to expand that list. Some people they know, some people they don't. Getting the right message in when you get in the door. Mr. Scott asked about the cost for the study? And how are they paid? They are paid on hours worked. The study is four months. It will tell us how much money people have said they'll give. They will give us a list prioritized of people to talk to. We should still raise money during that time. First 4 months is the study, the next 8 months is going out to those people. Ms. Bonilla asked about potential funders? Will the reach be beyond Lorain? Megan said it depends on the funder, and who is affected by the economic development you're pulling in. Mr. Zgonc asked if Megan had a similar project. Megan said there are fundamentals they've done before, but they haven't worked with a Port Authority before. They're working with City Club of Cleveland right now. At \$7 million of \$10 million goal. This is their first Lorain Project. They worked with LCCC and hard hatted women, Nord center, Nordson. Mr. Zellers asked who she worked with at LCCC. Terry Sandu. Mr. Zgonc asked when Kate graduated from Lorain Catholic. 2003. One of their team members (Arlene Watson) works in marketing, wayfinding and graphic design. We'll have the whole team. We're better together. They put together a team for every project. Mr. Brown asked if donors would be strictly from Lorain County or regional. Megan said it sounds regional, but she doesn't know for sure. It's a conversation to have with adjacent counties. Kate said they do some look-alike modeling. Comparing similar projects and areas. Megan said they're looking nationally (Florida, Texas, DC.). Mr. Veard asked if it would be more difficult due to the

market? Everyone is losing money. Fundraising follows the market. They're hoping it's a timing issue. Who are our audiences? Think outside the box. It's a family-friendly opportunity. Thinking about different races, and religions. Mr. Zellers asked about the investment. First 4 months, flat fee of \$42,000 or \$10,500 a month. Then the next 8 months is \$44,000 or \$5,500 a month. If this takes longer, then what happens? She said it would be \$5,500 a month. They are flexible. They monitor hours and would have a conversation if they're working more than anticipated. Mr. Zellers asked about travel, printing and what we should expect as far as a cost? Megan said there isn't a lot of travel. They only charge for our printed materials. Kate said over two years marketing materials costed \$600 from one client but brought in \$2,000. Mr. Zellers said if we're targeting Lorain County, without the experience, how nervous should we be? Megan said we shouldn't be nervous. They start by meeting with us. She thinks if they can do it in DC, they can do it here. It doesn't scare her to work in a new area. Even if they did know, they would still start with the leadership. She's confident in their abilities. Mr. Scott said who determines who makes the ask? Kate said during the feasibility study, they call... Megan said with who does the call, it depends on the person. Some people are more comfortable with others. It should feel good to be a part of this. Mr. Zellers points out the typical timeline on page 13. It estimates the campaign to take 3 years, but we want the project completed before then. Are we unrealistic? Megan said the feasibility study will tell them. Mr. Brown asked about skipping the feasibility study. Megan they could do a mini feasibility study, but the initial planning still takes time. Mr. Scott asked how soon we can get up and running? Kate said they would need to know how big our donor database is. Megan guessed 2.5-3 months, versus 4. It would be a feasibility on steroids. Mr. Brown said from the jump, he goes back to a hybrid approach. He thinks people are behind us. He thinks the cost will come down some, we'll have a more realistic number in a week or two. We absolutely need a consultant. Mr. Mullins said he thinks we don't need a feasibility study because we're doing this. He wants to get the ball rolling. Mr. Scott said we want a plan of attack. Megan said the message and sales pitch changes if we skip the study.

Megan asked if people could donate to us directly? Yes. Ms. Kiraly thanked them for their time. (6:11) Mr. Mullins said he hates spending money on a feasibility study. He wants to just do it. Mr. Scott said they're going to come back either way. A three-month study would cost \$31,500. Mr. Zellers said it doesn't seem like they've done a lot of research on Lorain County. PowerPoint not tailored to us. He wants to talk to a few more people. He proposed Kate Brown, director at Lorain County Community College. He wants to run this by her tomorrow. For \$30,000 we're getting world class schematic design. That's a lot of money for one year. He's not sure there's a lot of value outside of the fundraising background. Mr. Mullins doesn't think they have contacts in Lorain. Other firms tied it back to Lorain. Mr. Scott said if not them, then who else. He thinks we need this type of support. Ms. Kiraly said and soon. Mr. Brown said the other firm he met with wasn't a good fit. Ms. McClelland said we can't fall into the trustee or alumni database. We don't have that. They appreciated that Inbloom could still work with us even though we have no contacts. They look at net wealth. Ms. McClelland said we're at a disadvantage because we don't have a donor base. The feasibility study tells us the perception of the port. Personally, she thinks we're "putting the cart before the horse... if people don't know who we are or what we do, why would they give us money?" Mr. Zellers said he agrees, but the college has that base. Ms. McClelland and Ms. Kiraly said no, they won't share that information with us. Mr. Zellers said, "The college is promoting Lorain County, why wouldn't they want to see the project succeed?" Ms. Kiraly said she could see them sharing it if there was some type of incentive. Mr. Brown said the incentive could be letting them have programs here since they don't have an outside amphitheater. Mr. Mullins said every feasibility study has come back not good. He's afraid they might be discouraged. Ms. McClelland said she thinks they're setting up the right fundamentals. She wants to be educated, have the materials and approach them the right way. Mr. Zellers said he thinks we need a firm. But is this the right one? Mr. Brown said we can keep looking. Mr. Zellers said we need to move on this. Mr. Scott said we need a second opinion. We can't go blindly into this. We should have sat down with her six months ago. Kate is

Mary Springowski's daughter. Tom was worried about bringing them in near a mayoral election. This needed to be done yesterday. By Friday, he expects to have more names. Mr. Zgonc will make some phone calls tonight.

III. Adjournment

A. There being no further business to come before the board, Mr. Scott moved to adjourn. Ms. Kiraly seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.



Jeff Zellers, Contract Chairman



Tom Brown, Executive Director



Carl Nielsen, Marketing Chairman