



City of Columbus

Office of City Clerk
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Legislation Text

File #: 1378-2015, Version: 1

BACKGROUND: The Columbus Department of Development is proposing to enter into a Jobs Growth Incentive Agreement with Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens (AC Lens) and National Vision, Inc. (NVI) equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount of personal income tax withheld on new employees for a term up to five (5) years for the purposes of job creation and employment opportunities for the citizens of the Columbus community.

AC Lens is a full-service, direct delivery contact lens supply company. The company ship lenses to all 50 US states as well as Europe, South America and the Far East. Dr. Peter Clarkson, MD, PhD founded AC Lens in 1995 with a vision to provide a high-quality contact lens replacement service focusing on the then-emerging internet. Dr. Clarkson has led AC Lens through 12 straight years of profitable growth, allowing the company to develop from a small operation in the back of an optometric office to one of the largest contact lens retailers in the USA. Dr. Clarkson is also President of Eyestyles, a Columbus Ohio optical retailer which he founded. In June 2011, AC Lens was acquired by National Vision, Inc., which is one of the largest optical retailers in the United States, operating over 800 retail locations in 43 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. NVI employs over 7,000 employees and its retail divisions include America's Best Contacts & Eyeglasses, Eyeglass World, Vision Centers inside select Walmart stores, Vista Optical inside Fred Meyer and Optical Centers on select military bases. NVI's lab network consists of three domestic locations (St. Cloud, Minnesota, Salt Lake City, Utah and Lawrenceville, Georgia) and two international locations in China and Mexico. Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens is now a subsidiary company of National Vision, Inc.

AC Lens is proposing to invest approximately \$2.0 million in machinery and equipment to expand its Columbus operations at 4265 Diplomacy Drive and 2250 International Street, Columbus, Ohio. Recently, the company entered into two very large contracts that will require additional support to accommodate its increased growth and to meet its consumer demands. The company will create 50 full-time permanent positions with an estimated annual payroll of approximately \$2.5 million and retain 110 full-time jobs with an annual payroll of approximately \$5.372 million.

FISCAL IMPACT: No funding is required for this legislation.

To authorize the Director of the Department of Development to enter into a Jobs Growth Incentive Agreement with Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens and National Vision, Inc. equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount of new income tax withheld on employees for a term up to five (5) years in consideration of the company's proposed investment of \$2.0 million and the creation of 50 new full-time permanent positions.

WHEREAS, the City desires to increase employment opportunities and encourage the creation of new jobs in the City in order to improve the overall economic climate of the City and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Development has received a completed Jobs Growth Incentive Application from Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens; and

WHEREAS, Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens is proposing to invest approximately \$2.0 million in machinery and equipment to expand its current operations at 4265 Diplomacy Drive and 2250 International Street to accommodate its recently awarded new contracts from two very large retailers; and

WHEREAS, the company will create 50 new full-time permanent positions with an estimated annual payroll of approximately \$2.5 million and retain 110 full-time jobs with an annual payroll of approximately 5.372 million; and

WHEREAS, Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens has indicated that a Jobs Growth Incentive is crucial to its decision to expand the aforementioned operation in Columbus; and

WHEREAS, the City of Columbus desires to facilitate Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens's future growth at the project site; and **NOW THEREFORE**,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of the Department of Development is hereby authorized to enter into a Jobs Growth Incentive Agreement with Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens and National Vision, Inc. equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount of new income tax withheld on employees for a term up to five (5) years.

SECTION 2. Each year of the term of the agreement with Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens and National Vision, Inc., the City's obligation to pay the incentive is expressly contingent upon the passage of an ordinance appropriating and authorizing the expenditure of monies sufficient to make such payment and the certification of the City Auditor pursuant to Section 159 of the Columbus City Charter.

SECTION 3. That the City of Columbus Jobs Growth Incentive Agreement is signed by Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens and National Vision, Inc. within 90 days of passage of this ordinance, or this ordinance and the credit herein shall be null and void.

SECTION 4. The City Council hereby extends authority to the Director of the Department of Development to amend Arlington Contact Lens Service, Inc. dba AC Lens and National Vision, Inc.'s City of Columbus Jobs Growth Incentive Agreement for certain modifications to the agreement requested in writing by the company and or the City and deemed appropriate by the Director of Development with these modifications being specifically limited to reductions in length of term, methods of calculating the incentive, or adding or deleting business entities associated with the employment commitments related to this incentive. All other requested amendments must be approved by City Council.

SECTION 5. That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.