

**DOWNTOWN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

**Board of Directors Meeting**

**Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce**

**90 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Troy, New York**

**Thursday, September 15, 2022 – 8:30 AM**

**Present:** Matt Callahan, Jeff Mirel, Dave Gardell, Sarah Caciola, Kate Manley, Marie Gavazzi, Astri Bryce, Seamus Donnelly, Vito Ciccarelli, Jamie Magur, Dylan Turek, Chris Nolin, Angelo Grasso, Theresa Van Duyne

**Via Zoom:** James Kehoe, Kim Fredericks, Kirk Ives

**Staff:** Geoff Brault, Olivia Clemente, Vicki Robert

**Absent:** Kerry Fagan, Sam Toews

**MINUTES**

**Call to order: 8:37am**

**Secretary's Report**

**Sarah Caciola**

- Approval of August Minutes – Review of August minutes. Motion to approve made first by Marie Gavazzi and seconded by Kate Manley. All others approved, none opposed.

**Treasurer's Report**

**Geoff Brault/Dave Gardell**

- August 2022 Financial Update – There was \$9,000 brought in from the Foundation and \$17,000 in sponsorship funds already on the ledger. Sponsorship from DeCrescente came in the amount of \$9,000 and the second installment of the City Tax Assessment brought in \$44,000. Another \$15,000 has been pledged for 2022; Olivia is working to secure those funds. P&L statement shows a net of \$18,000. There is approximately a \$34,000 deficit year-to-date through August. Previous deficit was \$54,000, prior to receiving installment two of the tax assessment, the sponsorship funds from DeCrescente for Rockin on the River. Approximately \$60,000 in funds is still due (funds from the City of Troy, sponsorships, and \$8,000-\$10,000 expected from ChowderFest next month.) Expenses of \$24,000 expected from beautification, winter events, etc. and \$6,500 is due to the Farmers Market from vendor fees collected as part of the Maker's Market. Money is due to Admar for the bobcat rental after the hanging baskets come down.
- 2022 End of Year Projections – The organization is expected to break even or make a small profit. Payroll expenses will be reduced upon Geoff's departure.
- 2023 Budget Planning – Budget planning process for 2023 has been started. A look back at previous years showed that two-thirds of BID funding was brought in through event revenue and one-third of BID funding was from the tax assessment. Board discussion around 2023 organizational goals and priorities. Comments, concerns, and questions included:
  - Public comment made regarding a need for more community cohesion and a need to bring people together more with more businesses working together. Question raised: how can the BID lead businesses to collaborate? Response received stated that it's more of a "math problem" because sponsorships are lacking and the "5%" tax assessment does not support the BID's goals. Responsive comment made stating that one of the problems is that the largest entities in the district are all non-profit organizations and the district does not have any large for-profit entities

to draw sponsorships from, like other BID's such as Lark Street or Schenectady. Response received agreeing that the tax assessment is not enough to support BID functions.

- Recommendation made to revisit the organization's strategic plan. Discussion regarding current strategic plan: current plan was developed in 2019 and put into place in early 2020, right before the start of the pandemic. Recommendation made to survey the BID members to determine their needs or to establish focus groups within the district. Discussion around pros and cons of utilizing surveys in such a manner ensued; some were in favor while others opposed. Another recommendation made to utilize sub-committees to revisit strategic planning initiatives.
- Additional suggestion to hold monthly meetings, or "meet and greets" to determine the needs of the district. Also, to find one mission to focus on, such as beautification and clean streets as BID priorities for 2023. Additional consideration given to surveying BID members. One respondent recognized the challenge to be "prioritizing and affecting change" Comment made that other BIDs focus primarily on beautification efforts. Board discussion around needs and concerns within the city to be addressed, which included lighting and trees. Discussion around determining what is the city's responsibility (sidewalks?) and what is the BID's role. Suggestion made to tackle the city, one block at a time, and deputize the residents, businesses, and property owners in that area to provide cleanup efforts. Reference made to BID's new Quality of Life Committee who is actively working to accomplish this.
- Final suggestion made to utilize short term investments for reserve funds.

- **President's Report**

**Matt Callahan**

- Executive Director Transition & Search Process – Search committee has been established; comprised of 5 Class A members, 2 Class B members, and 3 Class C members. Job posting will go out at the end of this week. Deadline to apply will be October 11, 2022. Suggestion made to survey the board of directors to determine goals and primary initiative for the new executive director. This will help to clearly define our expectations for the position. Concern expressed regarding posting the job description without these clearly defined goals in mind; others felt it was important to get the resume collection process started with the intention of more clearly defining the role prior to beginning the interview process.
- Strategic Plan Priorities – Matt reports that the 2019 strategic plan identified communication, misinformation, and financial and revenue stream diversification as organizational concerns that needed to be addressed back in 2019; board seemed to agree that these issues continue to be of concern. New executive director to be involved in new strategic plan process; executive committee, or separate committee, will work to establish an interim strategic plan for the immediate future.

- **Executive Director's Report**

**Geoff Brault/Matt Callahan**

- Transition Priorities and Staffing – Matt announced that short-term plans are in the works; executive committee to meet to establish an interim plan during the transition. It was mentioned that current BID staff will continue to service the work as needed until a new director is placed. ChowderFest will move forward as scheduled with the Director of Events taking over planning and operations.

- **Committee Reports**

- Governance Committee – One Class B seat is open following Genika Blandshaw's departure from the board. Matt has asked that any recommendations or referrals to fill the open seat (commercial tenant) to be forwarded to the executive committee.
- Beautification Committee – Marie has agreed to be the interim chair of the committee; will schedule a future meeting.

- Finance Committee – to meet again in early October to continue budget planning for 2023.
- Quality of Life Committee Meeting – future meeting to be scheduled soon. Dave expressed that improved quality of life is necessary to get people to shop, dine, and explore Troy, while being mindful of residents, businesses, and property owners. Dave reports that he conducted a preliminary walk after dark of the Congress Street corridor and identified 21 streetlights that are not working or are blocked by trees. Concerns raised regarding non-working lights near the Sage campus and, specifically, concerns over the fact that students are back on campus (as opposed to remote learning over the last two years.) Additional concern expressed regarding the earlier sunset times creating shorter days and longer nights. Pole numbers of the non-working lights were noted and provided to the deputy mayor.
- **New Business Discussion**
  - City Update – an update on city-related matters was provided by Deputy Mayor Chris Nolin:
    - Response to Dave Gardell’s concerns regarding street lighting was provided. He states the city is aware of broken streetlights and lights that need to be upgraded to LED lighting. The upgrades started 2 months ago near Barker Park and has expanded outward from there. Lighting in downtown has been made a priority. Upgrades to the light poles and light heads is complicated; different parts of the lights are serviced by different entities. National Grid, who supplies power to the lights, is responsible for the wiring, while vendors and the city are responsible for other parts of the light fixtures. Supply chain issues have resulted in additional delays to the work. He mentions that online reporting of broken or non-working streetlights is available, and he will send a link to Vicki at the BID office to communicate and distribute.
    - City Council will be holding a public safety committee meeting on Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss homelessness in the city.
    - A public meeting discussing the Bacchanalia music festival was held earlier this week; information was helpful to those involved and interested.
  - Public Comments
    - Question raised regarding the amount of the tax assessment and was answered by Geoff Brault.
    - Request for Board of Director’s meeting agenda, minutes and zoom link to be posted online ahead of the meetings, pursuant to the public meeting laws, and board agreed.
- Motion to adjourn made first by Matt Callahan and seconded by Dave Gardell.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:20am  
BID Board Minutes 9/15/2022