

Hoboken Business Alliance, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Video Conference – November 1, 2022 4:30pm

Present: James Runkle, Edyta Espasa, Hany Ahmed, Phil Cohen, Dave Jacey, Chris Mazzola, Jennifer Gonzalez, Catherine Willhoit, Jenny Davis

Absent: Pratik Patel, Mark Stehli, Mario Fini, Anthony Pino

Also Present: Roxanne Earley, Daniel Ackerman, Larissa Szilagyi, Ted Geier

Call to order - 4:41 pm

J. Runkle welcomed everyone and asked **D. Ackerman** to read the Open Public Meetings Act statement. **D. Ackerman** read the statement of compliance with Chapter 231 of the Open Public Meetings Act noting that adequate meeting notice was provided.

The minutes from the October 4, 2022 meeting were reviewed. **Motion to approve the October 4th minutes: P. Cohen. Second by E.Espasa. All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

Treasurers Report

D. Ackerman provided the financial report and reported that there is a bank account balance of \$1,329,313.36 as of September 30th. HBA received our first assessment payment of \$666,264.91 on September 24th. The Statement of Financial Position (balance sheet) shows a balance of \$1,268,151.81 which accounts for uncleared transactions of \$61,161.55. The reconciliation report shows a register balance of \$1,135,126.14 as of 10/19, accounting for additional uncleared transactions after 9/30 of \$133,025.67. **Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report: P. Cohen. Second by: J. Runkle – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

Executive Director’s Report

R. Earley shared a presentation updating the board on October events including the success of the *First Annual Plant Adoption Event*, where staff and Hufnagel Landscaping gave out over 75 plants and cuttings to members of the public. In addition to creating additional activations for local bars and restaurants, *First Street Sundays* has provided free market vending space to more than 16 small businesses, public seating with children’s activities and turf for play and has received generally positive feedback from businesses, residents, and visitors. *Garage B* work continues, with Phase 2 extended through Nov 6 due to rain delays. A press event is being organized upon completion, and the HBA recently hosted the artist for a small reception at the W Hotel.

R. Earley further previewed November and December programming including an upcoming Nixel survey to gauge support for the return of the *Saint Patrick’s Day parade*. The HBA is also

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piloting a new business waste management program with *CitiBin*. Public programming includes a *Marketing Panel, Tree Lighting Ceremony, and Holiday Float*. Business marketing and promotions include a focus on the approaching holiday season with *Small Business Saturday* events, the *Holiday Extravaganza*, and several distinct *Holiday Promotions*.

R. Earley introduced **Larissa Szilagy**i who will be joining the HBA as the Director of Finance & Operations on Nov 14th. She brings with her a range of expertise in financial management, fiscal responsibility, and event production and is excited to return to her roots in Hoboken, where her family first settled after immigrating from Cuba.

R. Earley introduced **Ted Geier** from the Support Center for Non-Profit Management. **T. Geier** shared a brief report on the results of the self-assessment for the ten areas of strength and ten areas that need further development. The board will host a first session on roles and responsibilities in early December and move forward refining and prioritizing areas for growth.

Staff Updates

Visual/Capital

D. Ackerman reviewed the plan for designing and sourcing new seasonal banners. We would like to print and install them using Gates Banner and Flags. These banners would be stored and can be used annually during the holiday season. Moving forward, we should have a few static banner rotations throughout the year and then do one-off promotional banners for specific events. We currently estimate the cost to print and install 45 banners to be about \$5600 and ask for your authorization to spend up to \$6500 to get this done.

Motion to approve expenses for Seasonal Banners for \$6,500: E. Espasa. Second by: H. Ahmed – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

R. Earley updated the board on conversations that the Visual/Capital committee had to explore bringing holiday decorations into major public areas as a way to create additional seasonal cheer and engage in placemaking activity. Staff reviewed two proposals for nutcrackers, lit stars, and round ornaments and recommend moving forward with a proposal for stars and ornaments only by Holliday Collective, a local vendor with a more affordable price. These will be located in public sites like the Pier A fountain, to be finalized with vendor and City.

E. Espasa asked if the proposal represented prices for rental or purchase of decorations and the timing on installation. **R. Earley** clarified that this is a rental price, and the vendor can install after Nov 15. If the board is very satisfied with this kind of installation, we can consider purchasing next year.

Motion to approve the Holliday Collective proposal for a not to exceed budget of \$25,000: E. Espasa. Second by: J. Runkle – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

R. Earley updated the board on her efforts to secure a long-term public art installation and winter activation for Hoboken. Previous conversations involved the potential to contract with a vendor out of Montreal for a large scale interactive public art exhibit. Given the large scale and technical specifications of that project, **R. Earley** also reviewed an additional proposal from

Holiday Collective for a Tom Fruin art installation and is bringing that to the board for review today.

The vendor is local to Hoboken and the scale of the project is a smaller physical installation over multiple sites, and includes the Hi 5 House and three mini houses to be installed in multiple locations in Hoboken starting Mid-December through late March for a rental fee of \$47,000, with fabrication, installation, and delivery fees totaling 10,200. There is an optional add on of another large structure for another \$17,500. Included in this price is an interactive texting feature for one of the sites.

C. Willhoit noted that the art is lovely and asked about the cost and how this compares to other public art installations of this nature. **R. Earley** noted that this cost is comparable to the other proposal reviewed for a long-term installation and is within the allocated budget for art programming. **E. Espasa** asked about insurance requirements, and impact to HBA coverage. **J. Runkle** asked about offsetting costs of the project with sponsorships in exchange for advertising as part of the interactive component. **R. Earley** recommended avoiding advertising as part of our public art production, but recommended potential partnerships with other Hoboken institutions. Members of the board further discussed their comfort with liability and risk associated with this project in the event of vandalism or damage. **R. Earley** agreed to work closely with vendor and current insurance brokers to minimize HBA liability. The board agreed to proceed pending a report back on discussions regarding insurance and any additional associated costs.

Motion to approve a not-to-exceed budget of \$75,000 with Holliday Collective to produce and install a 3.5-month interactive engagement of Tom Fruin art pieces pending review of impacts and costs to insure the project: C. Willhoit. Second by J. Runkle – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

End of year Planning

R. Earley presented a recommendation to engage with ADP Total Source PEO (Professional Employment Organization) to provide several services that HBA would otherwise need to contract with multiple vendors to maintain and provide and which will reduce staff hours needed to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and liability reduction. The proposal also provides HBA access to a dedicated team of professionals and a wide range of high caliber benefits and expertise to offer employees attractive and affordable benefits options.

Several similarly sized BIDs in NYC utilize these services and PEOs are an industry standard for small businesses seeking to partner with trusted experts in HR, compliance, and benefits.

D. Jacey asked for more information on the one-time cost. **R. Earley** clarified that the one-time cost is a fee for setting up HBA as a client with ADP.

Motion to approve engagement with ADP Total Source PEO for a one-time cost of \$1840, and a not to exceed annual cost of \$10,000: D. Jacey. Second by: H. Ahmed – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

R. Earley presented a recommendation to cancel the Dec 6 Board meeting and transition the board into bi-monthly meetings for the remainder of the Fiscal Year to best develop policies and

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procedures for ensuring the organization remains transparent and accessible to members of the public. This proposal reflects feedback from the October board meeting.

The board meetings for FY 23 would take place 1/10/2023, 3/7/2023, 5/2/2023. The first board meeting of FY24, 7/11/2023, the board will review and vote on whether to move forward with bi-weekly or quarterly meetings. Board meetings are anticipated to be hybrid once the new office tech is fully operational.

Motion to approve proposed FY23 meeting schedule cancelling Dec 6 board meeting and scheduling bi-monthly meetings through July 2023: E. Espasa. Second by: J. Runkle – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

R. Earley presented a request to increase the total daily spent limit to \$5000 to better allow staff to meet organizational goals and needs with greater flexibility given extended time between meetings and often fast-paced nature of HBA work.

H. Ahmed recommended a framework whereby the board can provide feedback on and guide expenditures that represent support or partnership with other organizations. **R. Earley** suggested that for expenditures between \$2500 and \$5000 for other nonprofits/neighborhood groups/or otherwise charitable local causes will require notification to the Board for review. If no board member raises concerns, staff can proceed. **J. Runkle** underscored the value of institutional Board knowledge on local politics and history. **D. Ackerman** noted that a formal and very clear procurement policy can be developed and adopted in the coming months which will provide a framework for how HBA undertakes sponsorship and partnership with local causes.

Motion to approve an increase to \$5,000 for total daily spend, with a report and review by the board for sponsorship or non-profit spend between \$2,500 and \$5,000: H. Ahmed. Second by: J. Runkle – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

2023 Planning

R. Earley presented a revised proposal from Main Street Pops to produce a car show. The board has expressed interest in bringing a car show to Sinatra Drive as a draw for visitors and interest in Hoboken. The events committee reviewed this proposal during the August committee meetings. At that time, the events committee thought the \$40,000 cost made sense, because it allows additional sponsors who are more closely related to car shows and will help bring participants. The lower section of Sinatra Drive was discussed but will most likely be under construction for next spring so we are looking at doing uptown from 11th to 15th Street.

Because the project is a number of months away and unexpected changes may occur, **R. Earley** is requesting the board approve a maximum budget for this event of \$50,000.

Motion to approve moving forward with Main Street Pops to produce a car show June 10/11 with HBA as the presenting sponsor for \$50,000: J. Runkle. Second by: J. Gonzalez – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

R. Earley presented a proposal for a 6-month extension of services with CDS for sanitation and maintenance. The HBA current contract with CDS for supplemental sanitation services ends on

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Dec 31st, 2022. HBA will begin negotiating a new contract for FY24 in the spring, but in the meantime, CDS has proposed an extension of our existing services through June 30 for \$152,929.92.

This proposal reflects increases to hourly billing rates for supervisor and clean team staff because of adjustments for inflation and increase to the state minimum wage effective Jan 1. **R. Earley** further noted that as a reminder the HBA can expect to see increases of this nature in subsequent years as the full \$15 minimum wage comes into effect in 2024.

H. Ahmed asked how these costs compare to the previous three months. **R. Earley** noted that the cost for CDS services for July – Dec 2023 is \$138,783.84, an increase of 10.2%.

Motion to approve an extension of the CDS contract at the same level of service for a cost of \$152,929.92: J. Gonzalez. Second by: H. Ahmed – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

R. Earley presented a proposal from Main Street Pops to produce an enhanced Earth Day event on April 23rd from 11-4. Last year's event was considered successful – both in terms of a location in the Hybrid district and featuring several on-brand Hoboken community activities, local partnerships, and business features. This year MSP proposes adding a music component to create additional buzz and regional draw.

H. Ahmed asked for more information on last year's event about the benefit to local businesses and suggested adding a health and wellness component to the 2023 event to tie more physical fitness and healthy lifestyle businesses in as well as involving local senior centers. **D. Ackerman** noted that several Monroe center businesses participated and loved the event. **R. Earley** suggested that the events committee meet to discuss and work closely with Main Street Pops to refine the proposal.

The cost for 2023 Earth Day and music festival is \$30,000, a \$5,000 increase over last year reflecting costs for production of a music event.

Because the project is several months away, and due to the opportunity to aggressively market regionally and produce promotional materials that get our name and brand out in the wider NJ and NYC community, **R. Earley** is requesting the board approve a maximum budget for this event of \$40,000.

Motion to approve moving forward with MSP to produce an expanded Earth Day Event to include a folk/bluegrass music festival component & health and wellness component for a total not to exceed cost of \$40,000: J. Runkle Second by: H. Ahmed– All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

R. Earley presented an early plan for the 2023 Hoboken Art Walk – considered our marquis event. This year's proposal includes a longer engagement that allows the art walk to capitalize on the potential Car Show – Art Walk would run for seven weeks, starting in early May and closing after the conclusion of car Show.

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The proposal includes a base cost of \$42,500 with optional add-ons for an additional cost. Because the project is a number of months away and unexpected changes may occur, **R. Earley** is requesting the board approve a maximum budget for this event of \$50,000. This also allows the Events committee to meet and discuss in detail with the vendor about the add on event options while providing the necessary review and approval to begin planning the event in January.

Motion to approve moving forward with MSP to produce an expanded seven-week Art Walk engagement for a total not to exceed \$50,000: J. Runkle. Second by: J. Gonzalez – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

Old Business

D. Jacey asked for an update about bringing JazzFest to Hoboken. **R. Earley** noted that she remains in conversation with JazzFest organizers, and after a positive first meeting with City Hall the group are exploring a small concert series on the pier for 2023 to build relationships, good-will, and test ideas in advance of a larger festival in 2024.

New Business

H. Ahmed requested HBA begin to develop resources for landlords to use to market apartments to demonstrate value add by HBA to residential rental property owners – IE ‘look at how great it is to live in Hoboken’ as well as a quarterly or biannual report. **R. Earley** agreed that a suite of collateral for different stakeholders to demonstrate value, ways to get involved, and how to provide feedback are important goals for staff in the coming year. She also noted that the HBA can ensure the Annual Report is representative of this kind of information.

H. Ahmed stressed the need to fundraise – and create cash positive events that help offset costs. **R. Earley** recommended that this be a part of HBA conversations with Ted and Support Center, to find the right level of priority and begin developing a long-term fundraising/development plan for the HBA.

Public Session

Motion to adjourn **H. Ahmed** Second: **E. Espasa**. 6:43 pm - Approved

Next Board Meeting January 10, 2022 @ 4:30 PM