

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

Present: James Runkle, Edyta Espasa, Pratik Patel, Hany Ahmed, Jennifer Gonzalez, Mario Fini, Dave Jacey, Mark Stehli, Catherine Willhoit, Anthony Pino, Jenny Davis

Absent: Chris Mazzola, Phil Cohen

Also Present: Roxanne Earley, Daniel Ackerman, Rose Marie Markle, Ted Geier

Call to order - 4:32 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 September 13th meeting were reviewed. **Motion to approve the September 13th minutes: E. Espasa. Second by A. Pino. All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

Treasurer's Report

P. Patel reported that there is a bank account balance of \$745,496.94 as of August 31st. The Statement of Financial Position (balance sheet) shows a balance of \$718,269.44 which accounts for uncleared transactions of \$27,214.25. The reconciliation report shows a register balance of \$718,269.44 as of 9/01 which accounts for additional uncleared transactions after 8/31 of \$13.25. **Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report: J. Davis. Second by: M. Fini – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

Executive Director's Report

J. Runkle shared that he is excited for a first step in moving from a working board to a governing board and, to that end, he is happy to turn over the presentation to our Executive Director, Roxanne Earley.

R. Earley shared a presentation updating the board on how she is getting to know the HBA, getting to know Hoboken and getting to know the board. At each board meeting, **R. Earley** will use this time to tell the board what has been going on, what is coming up soon, and what is on the horizon. October is a big month with the 11th Street Island and citywide planters in transition, Propelify tech event, 1st Street Sundays are being enhanced with additional vendors and the HBA free plant giveaway, and the Garage B mural will start later this month. A little further out on the schedule, the HBA is planning to host a mixer for small businesses at Mission 50, working with GLM to produce a holiday shopping guide, working on the holiday tree lighting and decoration plans, working with Main Street Pops on a vision for the Holiday Extravaganza, and soliciting a proposal for activating public space in the winter.

R. Earley introduced **Ted Geier** from the Support Center for Non-Profit Management, **R. Earley** solicited a proposal from the Support Center to help setup the organization for success with a focus on governance and taking a systematic approach to board development and building a culture of success. **Ted Geier** shared that the process will begin with a self-assessment resulting in a report of ten areas of strength and ten areas that need further development. This would be followed by a board retreat with a deep training on important areas and planning.

Motion to approve the Support Center for Non-Profit Management for \$11,700: E. Espasa. Second by: J. Runkel – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

R. Earley reviewed the updated and amended budget included in the packet to allow for the leasing of office space and staffing of the organization. Regarding office space, **J. Runkle, M. Fini** and **R. Earley** viewed a number of spaces and two of them seemed appropriate for the future of the HBA. **R. Earley** described her vision for the office space with flexible space to host board meetings, room for a staff of 3 plus interns and guests, private meeting and office space, as well as a storage closet for event tents etc. **R. Earley** requested that the Board authorize the HBA to enter into a lease agreement to start on November 1st or 15th at 70 Hudson Place Suite 6C.

Motion to approve entering into a lease agreement at 70 Hudson Place, Suite 6C for a not-to-exceed amount of \$50,000 as well as a budget of \$20,000 for office furnishing and build-out: E. Espasa. Second by: J. Runkel. – None opposed. M. Fini abstained.

R. Earley reviewed the staffing memo that was included in the packet. To properly staff the organization for success we need to adjust the budget to reflect an increase in the wages and taxes to be paid. Total funds for the management line will go from \$275,000 to \$315,000 and be reallocated by program category under the existing formula. The additional staffing change would re-allocate \$100,000 under the marketing budget to provide for full-time in-house staff. These changes would provide the flexibility for a staff of three full-time workers to drive the agenda and success of the HBA. **H. Ahmed** asked about the timing of our annual budget approval and if it was possible to hold off on these amendments. **D. Ackerman** shared that we just made the FY change and approved our new budget, so any changes over 10% in a budget line would require City Council approval. **R. Earley** shared that in order for the HBA to be as successful as we want it to be, we are going to need the additional hands to get the job done. **D. Jacey** asked specifically about the marketing and events person noting that it would be helpful to have someone focused on this. **R. Earley** responded that this proposal is specifically targeting someone for this role.

Motion to approve the amended FY23 budget included in the packets, which provides for increases to accommodate personnel lines, an increase in office rent budget and the creation of a one-time budget line of \$20,000 for costs associated with moving and build-out: J. Runkel. Second by: P. Patel. – None opposed. M. Fini abstained.

Staff Update

Visual/Capital

D. Ackerman reviewed the tree trimming and removal proposal that was included in the meeting packets. Two bids were received and Almstead was the lower bidder and has plenty of

experience working in Hoboken. Letters will be mailed to the property owners prior to any work being done.

Motion to approve the Almstead proposal for \$3,050: H. Ahmed. Second by: M. Fini – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

D. Ackerman reviewed the proposal from Z's Ironworks to repair the iron work on the Hudson Place fence noting that the HBA had repaired the footings earlier this year and completed a new paint job. Two bids were received and the quote from Z's was significantly lower, so we suggest moving forward with the proposal for \$3,700.

Motion to approve the Z's Ironworks proposal for \$3,700: H. Ahmed. Second by: D. Jacey – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

D. Ackerman discussed the holiday lighting and programming plans for 2022 after it was discussed in new business last meeting. The HBA has received a proposal from Cliffhanger Productions for a Holiday Float with a band, a real beard Santa, a sleigh, elves and a collection of additional characters. Based on the press coverage in previous years, it seems like this is a welcome tradition in Hoboken. **D. Ackerman** and **R. Earley** will meet with Cliffhanger and integrate the Holiday Float into the full holiday plan. The cost remains the same as the previous two years.

Motion to approve the Cliffhanger Productions Holiday Float proposal at a cost of \$7,500: M. Fini. Second by P. Patel – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.

Art Mural

D. Ackerman updated the board on the proposed mural installation by Michelle Hoogveld on Garage B. There are some final logistics and details to be worked out, however the current schedule has equipment arriving around the 14th/15th with Michelle Hoogveld to start painting on the 21st/22nd. We are in discussions to have Michelle housed in Hoboken and having a cocktail reception to celebrate the completion of the project.

Old Business

M. Fini asked about the plan for fall and/or winter plants to replace the existing plantings. **R. Earley** shared that the landscaper will be out this week replacing the existing stock with a fall arrangement and then will also transition to a winter planting with white branches and spray decorations.

New Business

H. Ahmed shared a few concerns about asphalt patches, missing bricks and other sidewalk issues on Washington St suggesting that the HBA can start to track who is doing work where and make sure that in-kind repairs get made by utilities. **R. Earley** replied that this is certainly something that we can start to track using our intern and new staff and develop a policy approach to getting repairs made. **H. Ahmed** raise the idea of adding lighting along the southern waterfront walkways, landscaping and benches. The area is currently undergoing work for landscaping and irrigation and now might be the time to discuss some lighting. **M Fini** noted that there is a waterfront budget between the entities involved including Port Authority, Ironstate and

SJP. **E. Espasa** mentioned that there is an oversight group that manages the public improvement fund.

D. Jacey asked about the status of the rodent control program. **D. Ackerman** shared that the citywide program is in effect and there is continued coordination from all of the various entities, streateries, construction sites, etc. that are responsible for baiting at individual sites.

H. Ahmed asked about the potential to wrap more utility boxes with artwork and also about doing a springtime marketing campaign and working with other institutions like Stevens, NJ Transit and Port Authority. **R. Earley** responded that these are great ideas and reasons why we need someone on the staff to focus on marketing projects for Hoboken as a whole. **D. Jacey** mentioned that a focused campaign would be a great way to bring everything together. **H. Ahmed** mentioned that Rutgers football does a good cross-marketing campaign.

M. Fini shared an update on the Hudson Place design taskforce noting that there are 4 current proposed designs, and the taskforce will share their comments and then present the ideas to the public for their input. **M. Fini** noted that the plans look great and try to strike a balance between pedestrian walkways, bike lanes and street uses.

Public Session

Rose Markle asked about the Garage B mural and the discussion about the useful life of the garages. **D. Ackerman** noted that the HBA Board and Council both discussed this point, and the general feeling was that any development is still a few years away. **Rose Markle** noted that sangria closed down on October 1st and there is not much being done in this area, perhaps the HBA could look into this. Also, there are 2 businesses that are trying to open and are dealing with the bureaucratic nature of the city council, 1 of the businesses is in court and 1 is giving up. **H. Ahmed** shared that **Rose Markle** is 100% correct and the HBA needs to do more to push the city for clearer guidelines and approval processes. We need to copy what successful cities are doing and cut through the red tape. **R. Earley** shared that the HBA can help businesses through the process and also work on policy changes. **R. Earley** asked **Rose Markle** if she could connect her with the businesses she mentioned. **R. Earley** noted that we need to discuss a Retail Market Analysis and look at our uses. **H. Ahmed** mentioned that a planner to go through and review the Hoboken guidelines and approvals to recommend some clean up and changes would be very helpful. **M. Fini** noted that when the HBA was established there was a goal to have a one stop shop to assist businesses with opening and operating and help clean up the existing rules.

Rose Markle asked about the budget reallocation and asked where the money is coming from. **R. Earley** responded that the money is coming from the existing program lines and out of the reserve, at this time we do not envision a budget increase in the coming year. **Rose Markle** asked what the increase in rent would be. **R. Earley** responded that the rent would increase from \$15,000 a year to roughly \$50,000. **R. Markle** shared that she doesn't like the discussion of reducing the monthly meetings and wants the public to be more involved. **R. Earley** noted this concern and shared that she wants to develop an approach that works for and involves everyone, a lot of time is spent preparing for and executing monthly meetings and this is time when we could be accomplishing more programs.

Motion to adjourn **E. Espasa**. Second: **H. Ahmed**. 6:01 pm - Approved

Next Board Meeting November 1, 2022