

Hoboken Business Alliance, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Video Conference – May 3, 2022 4:30pm

Present: James Runkle, Edyta Espasa, Pratik Patel, Hany Ahmed, Jennifer Gonzalez, Mario Fini, Catherine Willhoit, Anthony Pino, Chris Mazzola, Phil Cohen, Jenny Davis

Absent: Dave Jacey, Mark Stehli

Also Present: Daniel Ackerman, Chris Bernardo, Rose Marie Markle

Call to order - 4:37 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 April 5th, 2022, meeting were approved. **Motion: M. Fini. Second by P. Patel. All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

President's Report

J. Runkle noted that the Conflict of Interest forms are due and an email was sent out as a reminder. **J.Runkle** reported on the formal resignation of John Nastasi due to time commitments and his offer to remain helpful to the HBA. **Motion to accept resignation: E. Espasa. Second by P. Cohen. All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

J.Runkle updated the board on the FY change discussion. The HBA met with the City and spoke with our Auditors and Legal Counsel regarding the change to make sure everything is done as smoothly as possible. **J. Runkle** suggests we move forward with this change and requested a motion to change the FY. **P. Cohen** noted that this seems like a fairly routine change and will improve the current billing process. **J. Gonzalez** agreed that this change is helpful and was recommended by the tax collector. It is a procedural and administrative benefit to the tax collection process. **Motion to change FY: M. Fini. Second by P. Cohen. All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

J. Runkle presented a draft 2023 budget that, as part of the FY change, will need to be submitted, reviewed and approved by the City Council with a hearing in June. The draft budget mirrors our current 2022 budget with an assessment of 3.4% on assessed value and the same subsection multipliers as 2022, with only a few minor changes. The changes are: 1) the overall SID Assessment Revenue increased \$127,173.80 due to changes in assessed value as well as adding properties to the assessment roll for the first time. The property at 221 River Street is being added for the first time and will contribute \$120,378.50. 2) The budget includes an increase in the carryover/reserve line from \$100,000 to \$500,000. A growing reserve is necessary as we need at least 3 months of an operating reserve due to the timing of receipt of our assessment funds. 3) Given the activity and discussion regarding events, the budget moved

\$200,000 from marketing to events. Marketing and events will often go hand in hand, but this change will better reflect the planning for the next 12 months. **P. Cohen** commented that we should get as much info as possible to the City Council and be as transparent as possible on what we are trying to accomplish. **M. Fini** asked about the recent addition of 221 River Street noting the vacancies in these buildings and that we have to focus on business attraction to get these buildings filled with people to shop and eat. **Motion to approve FY 23 budget: M. Fini. Second by P Patel. All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

J. Runkle gave a presentation with program updates regarding spring plantings, a report about the successful Wild and Scenic Film Festival with attendance estimated at 2000 people, and an update on the June “Through The Windows” campaign linking art and small businesses.

E. Espasa updated the board on the Executive Director search process and an upcoming meeting with Waverly Partners.

Treasurers Report

P. Patel reported that there is a bank account balance of \$1,041,213.28 as of March 31st. The Statement of Financial Position (balance sheet) shows a balance of \$970,556.34 which accounts for uncleared transactions of \$70,656.94. The reconciliation report shows a register balance of \$869,976.46 on 4/21/22 which accounts for additional uncleared transactions after 3/31 of \$100,579.88. **Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report: J. Davis. Second by: J. Gonzalez – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

Committee Reports

Events

M. Fini updated the board on the work of the Events Committee. The committee has discussed several short-term and long-term ideas with a focus on building programs over time, the tie-in of marketing and promotions to make events impactful, and cross promoting existing events like the Latin Music Festival. The committee has discussed fireworks, car shows, sidewalk sales and restaurant week like promotions for the short-term and music events, Irish heritage week culminating with a parade, as well as food and wine/dining festivals as long-term goals. **J. Gonzalez** suggested a walkthrough for the discussed fireworks proposal with Director Ferrante and additional agency department heads. **C. Bernardo** updated the board on his discussions with Hoboken Cruisers about the possibility of a July car show. The committee requested board approval for a budget not to exceed \$25,000 for a fireworks show. **Motion to approve a fireworks budget not to exceed \$25,000: M. Fini. Second by: P. Patel – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

Visual/Capital

E. Espasa asked **D. Ackerman** to deliver the visual and capital update. **D. Ackerman** shared that the committee will be meeting in May to review the full holiday light program for 2022. In the meantime, the committee asks for approval on the new purchase of holiday lights. The proposal from Downtown Decorations was the best price and came with good options. **Motion to approve the purchase of new holiday lights at a cost of \$37,050: E. Espasa. Second by: J. Davis – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

Art/Mural

D. Ackerman updated the board on the goals for the 2022 program of 10 new murals. We are currently working on identifying property owners for our target locations and matching artists. The consultant, Brooke Hansson, has been a lynchpin for this program and based on Brooke's experience in Jersey City she is uniquely qualified to support the HBA's program. **M. Fini** offered support for Brooke and the mural program noting that Brooke's work has been great. **C. Mazzola** shared that Brooke is incredible at her job, and we are able to leverage her work in Jersey City to bring additional benefit to Hoboken. **D. Ackerman** asked for a motion to approve Brooke's contract at an amount not to exceed \$17,000. **Motion to approve consulting contract for Brooke Hansson at a cost not to exceed \$17,000: C. Mazzola. Second by: H. Ahmed – All approved with no opposed or abstentions.**

Parking

No committee report

Old Business

M. Fini asked for an update on the planter roll-out in the gateway districts as well as an update on the Hudson Place fence. **D. Ackerman** responded that the new planters would be out in the coming weeks and that he is in touch with Challenger Fence regarding the stabilization of the fence. **M. Fini** asked about the rodent issue downtown and what is being done to deal with it. **J. Gonzalez** noted that the city is doing baiting and the HBA should meet with Director Pellegrini. **M. Fini** noted that maybe the HBA could expand the efforts.

New Business

P. Cohen raised an ongoing discussion regarding e-bikes on sidewalks and shared that the PD will be doing outreach and education on this issue. **P. Cohen** asked if there is more the HBA could do to build support and awareness within the restaurant community in a good citizen shared space kind of message. **D. Ackerman** said that the HBA can pay more attention to the issue and discuss an outreach campaign.

H. Ahmed shared that the Arts and Music Festival was very crowded from start to finish and asked whether now is the right time to survey businesses about the impact on their business. There was additional discussion regarding why the festival doesn't go to the waterfront and perhaps there is potential in future to shorten the Washington Street component and expand it onto the waterfront. **P. Cohen** mentioned that we should talk to Stan's Sporting Goods regarding their experience with the festival.

Public Session

Public Guest Rose Marie Markle raised concerns about the new planters and the space they take up on the sidewalk asking the HBA to not overcrowd some already tight sidewalks. Rose also mentioned the e-bikes and that we should work to find a good solution for them. In regard to murals, Rose asked if we will seek residents input on the murals to be installed. Rose is located near the ACME and would want the opportunity for input before something goes up there. Rose shared that her view of the old St. Patrick's Day Parade is that it was a disaster. **M. Fini**

mentioned that the intention with bringing it back is to make it a more family friendly schedule of events ending with a parade. Rose shared that the garbage after is a big issue.

Motion to adjourn E. Espasa, Second by P. Cohen: 5:45 pm – Approved.

Next Board Meeting June 7, 2022