

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2023, 3:00 p.m. | Community Room, Kalamazoo City Hall

PRESENT: Mayor David Anderson, Jeff Breneman, Carl Brown, Grant Fletcher, Matt Hollander, Susan Lindemann

ABSENT: Stephanie Hinman

STAFF: Rebekah Kik, Paul Thuringer, Steve Vicenzi, Jaime Marsman

A. CALL TO ORDER

DIRECTOR FLETCHER CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 3:00 P.M

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor David Anderson
Jeff Breneman
Carl Brown
Grant Fletcher
Matt Hollander
Susan Lindemann

ABSENT: Stephanie Hinman

EXCUSED: Stephanie Hinman

THE MARCH 20, 2023, ATTENDANCE INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES ARE RECORDED.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

DIRECTOR LINDEMANN MOVED TO ADOPT THE MARCH 20, 2023 AGENDA. DIRECTOR BROWN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DIRECTOR LINDEMANN MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 17, 2023 MINUTES. DIRECTOR BRENNEMAN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

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D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial Report

Mr. Vicenzi shared the Financial Reports from January. Additional notes have been added to the reports, as requested, for further explanation.

It was noted that a Budget Breakdown by Contract was also included in the packet. Mr. Vicenzi stated that the Block by Block contract is up for renewal and numbers may vary depending on renewal rates.

The Events Report was discussed. It was noted that this report is broken down by event and includes all known events.

The Board thanked Mr. Vicenzi for the financial reports.

MAYOR ANDERSON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT AS PRESENTED. DIRECTOR HOLLANDER SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Authorize Events & Marketing Committee to recommend contractor to manage events and marketing.

Director Fletcher stated this motion is intended to support the Marketing & Events Committee that was created in January. This group was tasked with coordinating experts in the field and those who are active in the downtown space to ensure that the work is executed well, incorporating as many voices as possible in that work.

Director Brown stated that this work includes several members of the community including Kim Guess, Jennifer Hudson-Prenkert, and Clarence Lloyd. It was noted that there needs to be a central point of contact for events downtown. It is also important to be able to break the events up into smaller budgets in order to allow specialized events to happen.

This is a budgetary request at this point, as it is unlikely that there is a singular contractor who is the correct solution. The committee can then identify individual contractors that best fit the individual event. Director Breneman noted that this cannot be delayed another month as much of the planning for events needs to begin in the very near future.

Director Fletcher noted the costs that the DEGA has already spent on events and asked if the Committee had a recommendation. It was agreed that, for Spring/Summer events, the range would be: \$55,000-\$60,000. The conversation would be ongoing in looking at holiday events and obtaining sponsorships for those as well.

MAYOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO AUTHORIZE THE MARKETING COMMITTEE TO SPEND UP TO \$60,000 TO CARRY OUT THE TRADITIONAL SUMMER EVENTS. DIRECTOR LINDEMANN SECONDED.

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Grant applications would go through the City. Sponsorships could be done in partnership with a vendor and are expected to be part of the agreement. Ms. Kik stated that the City would apply for grants on behalf of the DEGA, which is what the funders are expecting as the City is the contracted entity. Contracts will be carried out through City processes.

Mayor Anderson questioned how we can ensure that everyone is being engaged appropriately.

Director Breneman stated that the group has agreed that the historical events will continue this year with re-evaluation and planning for future events in 2024.

NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. Recommendation of DEGA Board Member Nomination to Mayor/City Commission

- i. Curt Aardema**
- ii. Clarence Lloyd**
- iii. Reappointment of Jeff Breneman**

Director Fletcher shared information regarding both nominees for the two vacant board seats. Both are very active and engaged participants in the downtown area and were also very active in the planning work with Yard & Co last year. The Appointee Nomination report was included with the packet.

DIRECTOR HOLLANDER MOTIONED TO RECOMMEND THE DEGA BOARD APPOINTMENT OF CURT AARDEMA AND CLARENCE LLOYD AND THE REAPPOINTMENT OF JEFF BRENEMAN TO THE MAYOR/CITY COMMISSION. DIRECTOR BROWN SECONDED.

Director Fletcher noted that this leaves no vacant seats. There are 9 seats on the board at the present. Director Fletcher noted that Mr. Brown is serving until his seat is filled, but that seat must be filled by a downtown resident.

Director Breneman abstained from the recommendation.

NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED. ONE ABSTENTION: DIRECTOR BRENEMAN.

3. Committee Updates

Projects and Finance

Director Fletcher noted that a meeting will be held soon with the Kalamazoo Valley Horticulture program and they will explore options regarding design and planting on the mall with the hope that they will be able to develop plans. Ms. Kik stated that the City has a new landscape coordinator as well and will be assisting with the plantings once the plan is obtained.

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Events & Marketing

Director Brown stated that they are excited to get to work.

Policy

Director Fletcher stated that they received the first recommended changes from the attorneys. Development Plan recommendations have also been received. The hope is to have Attorney Woods present next month to share the draft plan.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Heather Holmer, Rocket Fizz: Ms. Holmer emphasized the importance of a central point of contact in regard to events and plans for the summer. She expressed concern that communication with businesses has decreased and stated that businesses would welcome the opportunity to participate in communication. It was clarified for Ms. Holmer that Maestro is in charge of the website. Director Fletcher stated that anyone who would like to participate in the Events & Marketing Committee should contact Director Brown or Director Breneman.

Jennifer Hudson-Prenkert: Ms. Hudson-Prenkert is a member of the Marketing & Events Committee. She affirmed that the communication work is ongoing and expressed her willingness to be a representative to communicate with the business community.

G. DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

1. Director Breneman noted that the reason for authorizing the spending for the Events & Marketing Committee at this time is to have a person/organization that can assist with the desired communication as reflected in the public comments.
2. Director Brown thanked everyone for the community support and for participating in the meeting today. He noted that the DEGA Board is still in the learning curve of how to manage this due to the recent transition.

H. ADJOURNMENT

DIRECTOR FLETCHER ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 3:39 P.M.