

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2024, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

PRESENT: Mayor Anderson, Curt Aardema, Kwame Gyimah, Stephanie Hinman, Susan Lindemann

ABSENT: Jeff Breneman, Matt Hollander, Clarence Lloyd, Jessica Thompson

STAFF: Erin Hahn, Meghan Behymer, Chelsie Downs-Hubbarth, Jerrid Burdue

OTHER: Jessica Wood

A. CALL TO ORDER

DIRECTOR LINDEMANN CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 3:12 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Anderson, Curt Aardema, Kwame Gyimah, Stephanie Hinman, Susan Lindemann

ABSENT: Jeff Breneman, Matt Hollander, Jessica Thompson

EXCUSED: Clarence Lloyd

THE DECEMBER 16, 2024, ATTENDANCE INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES ARE RECORDED.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

DIRECTOR AARDEMA MOVED TO ADOPT THE DECEMBER 16, 2024 AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

DIRECTOR GYIMAH SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DIRECTOR AARDEMA MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 18, 2024 MINUTES. DIRECTOR ANDERSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation of the Financial Report - Meghan Behymer

Meghan Behymer, Downtown Coordinator, presented the October 2024 financial report, noting that there was no revenue reported in October, leaving the year-to-date revenue at \$666,200. The expenses for October totaled to negative \$9,181, largely due to a reimbursement from Block by Block for overpayment. Community Promotion expenses were \$5,000, supporting the Summer Sidewalk Sales sponsorship. Legal services and fees amounted to \$5,553, while the garbage disposal costs were \$407. Year-to-date expenses accumulated to \$495,613. Ms. Behymer noted that the Board is expected to be over budget

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from what was approved, so there would be a budget amendment action item later in the meeting.

DIRECTOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE OCTOBER 2024 DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY FINANCIAL REPORT AS PRESENTED. DIRECTOR AARDEMA SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. City of Kalamazoo Economic Development Strategy Presentation – Jerrid Burdue

Jerrid Burdue presented to the Board about the City of Kalamazoo's new Economic Development Strategy – its first in more than a decade. Mr. Burdue explained that the strategy is not just for the City, but for the ecosystem as a whole, requiring buy-in from partners like Discover Kalamazoo, Southwest Michigan First, Can Do Kalamazoo, and DDA/DEGA. Mr. Burdue stated that the City has engaged with stakeholders at numerous times throughout the process of developing the strategy and continues to do so in the implementation stage.

Mr. Burdue shared the four goals of the strategy, highlighting goal number four, which is to improve the downtown experience, recognizing downtown as an important driver for economic growth in the city and the region. Mr. Burdue shared that some of the metrics that will be used to measure the success of this goal are the number of events happening downtown and increased visitor spending. Mr. Burdue stated that with regards to downtown, the plan specifically calls for attracting diverse retail and entertainment options, increased mixed-use housing, expansion of family-friendly attractions downtown, and redevelopment of properties into productive uses.

Ms. Behymer stated that she is looking forward to working with the Board on reviewing the DDA/DEGA strategic plan and creating a work plan to guide the Board's work for the next 1 to 3 years. Ms. Behymer stated that this work comes at a good time with several board members rolling off in March. Ms. Behymer noted that the same consultant who is working with the City's Economic Development team to create a work plan for the Economic Development Strategy has been contracted to work with the Board on their own work plan, hopefully bringing synergy across the two plans.

Director Aardema asked about how the Economic Development Strategy ties in to the Imagine Kalamazoo effort. Mr. Burdue answered that the Economic Development Strategy will inform sections of Imagine Kalamazoo, such as shared prosperity initiatives within the strategic vision of the city as well as some of the master plan.

Director Aardema asked where the plan is located for the public to view. Mr. Burdue answered that it is on the City's website, and can be found by Googling "Economic Development Strategy Kalamazoo," but that City staff can send out the link to the Board as well.

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3. Committee Reports

i. Events and Marketing

Ms. Behymer stated that the Events and Marketing Committee met on December 2nd, approved the sponsorship of the 2025 Chili Cook-Off, and recommended to the board chair the renewal of the web hosting and maintenance agreement with Maestro for 2025. Looking ahead, the committee also discussed dedicating time in the coming year to evaluate and identify future needs and goals for the organization's website and digital presence.

ii. Ambassador Program

Ms. Behymer stated that the Ambassador Program Committee met December 5th to review the draft RFP alongside a memo that outlined the outreach efforts and changes made to the program scope based on stakeholder feedback. The draft and memo were also reviewed by a downtown business council stakeholder group. The final draft RFP will be sent to City of Kalamazoo procurement staff for review and creation of the complete RFP package.

iii. Executive Committee

Ms. Behymer stated that the Executive Committee met on December 9th to review key topics, including the agenda items for the December board meeting and the proposed 2025 Board and Committee meeting schedule, which is being presented for approval at today's meeting.

iv. Finance Committee

Ms. Behymer stated that the Finance Committee met on December 3rd, discussing three items that are coming before the board for approval at today's meeting: (1) City of Kalamazoo debt agreements; (2) budget amendments for 2024, and (3) acceptance of a donation in support of enhanced waste and recycling management in downtown.

v. Business Recruitment and Retention Committee

Ms. Behymer stated that the Business Recruitment and Retention Committee met on December 10 to discuss the draft marketing packet and how to engage prospective businesses through a welcome experience. Director Aardema added that the committee is starting to see some interest in its initiatives and is excited to get some materials out into the community soon.

4. Downtown Report

Ms. Behymer noted that the final open house for the Michigan Avenue redesign has been moved to January 16, 2025 in-person at 315 W Michigan Avenue, with a virtual option available on January 23.

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Ms. Behymer noted that Rob Bacigalupi is working with Director Lloyd on a downtown business town hall update to discuss parking.

Ms. Behymer noted that she is working on coordinating a meeting with board members to discuss the Gud Marketing approach for Streets for All in 2025.

Ms. Behymer stated that the WMU Economic Development Study has shared its first quarter data, and the information could be helpful in informing the work the Board is doing.

Ms. Behymer stated that \$21,840 has been purchased this year in Downtown Dollars, with \$19,560 redeemed and \$135,180 in circulation. The Downtown Dollars program saw more growth with the re-addition of The Spirit of Kalamazoo to the program.

The Downtown Report also highlights several seasonal events happening now in downtown, including Santa's Workshop and the Holly Jolly Trolley.

Ms. Behymer shared that the Ambassador program report encompasses the ambassador's work on leaf pick-up throughout downtown, as well as parade route preparation for the holiday parade, and the removal of damaged green trash bins throughout downtown. She stated that although several businesses have asked about the trash bins, the ambassadors have not seen an increase in litter throughout downtown because of their removal.

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Motion to approve the Consolidated Loan Agreement between the Downtown Economic Growth Authority and the City of Kalamazoo in substantially the form presented at this meeting and to authorize the Board Chair to finalize and sign the agreement.

DIRECTOR HINMAN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE CONSOLIDATED LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY AND THE CITY OF KALAMAZOO IN SUBSTANTIALLY THE FORM PRESENTED AT THIS MEETING AND TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD CHAIR TO FINALIZE AND SIGN THE AGREEMENT. DIRECTOR AARDEMA SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. Motion to approve the acceptance of a \$20,000 donation from the Hall Foundation to support the waste and recycling program in downtown Kalamazoo.

DIRECTOR AARDEMA MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE ACCEPTANCE OF A \$20,000 DONATION FROM THE HALL FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT THE WASTE AND RECYCLING PROGRAM IN DOWNTOWN KALAMAZOO. DIRECTOR GYIMAH SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

3. Motion to approve a budget amendment to increase the 2024 Downtown Economic Growth Authority budget by \$40,853.12.

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Ms. Behymer stated that the budget amendment encompasses \$20,000 that would be due in interest on the loans from the City if the debt service agreement was not approved by the City Commission that evening. If the agreement was approved, the unused \$20,000 would drop back down to the fund balance at the end of the year.

DIRECTOR HINMAN MOTIONED TO APPROVE A BUDGET AMENDMENT TO INCREASE THE 2024 DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY BUDGET BY \$40,853.12. DIRECTOR AARDEMA SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION PASSED.

4. Motion to approve the Downtown Economic Growth Authority 2025 Board and Committee meeting calendar.

Director Aardema pointed out that several of the Board meeting dates were listed as 2024, and should be corrected to say 2025.

DIRECTOR GYIMAH MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY 2025 BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR AS AMENDED. DIRECTOR HINMAN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no members of the public present.

G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

There were no director comments made.

H. STAFF COMMENTS

There were no staff comments made.

I. ADJOURNMENT

DIRECTOR LINDEMANN ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 4:05 P.M.