

Agenda

Downtown Economic Growth Authority

Board of Directors



City of Kalamazoo

Monday, February 17, 2025

3:00 PM

Main Conference Room at Community Planning and Economic Development

A. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

1. Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this Downtown Development Authority is to halt property value deterioration and promote economic growth within its business district, to increase property value.

The purpose of this Downtown Economic Growth Authority is to correct and prevent deterioration in residential, commercial, and industrial areas, to authorize the acquisition and disposal of interests in real and personal property; to authorize the creation and implementation of development plans and development areas.

The Kalamazoo DDA and DEGA, acting in concert, have set forth the strategic objective of focusing its resources on improving “The First 16 Feet”, a three-dimensional volume of space including buildings ground floor façade, the frontage that exists between the façade and the common space, and the common space that provides access to and through the district.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of the minutes from the regular meeting of the Downtown Economic Growth Authority Board on January 27th, 2025. (**Action: Motion to approve**)
2. Approval of the minutes from the special meeting of the Downtown Economic Growth Authority Board on January 24th, 2025. (**Action: Motion to approve**)

D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Financial Report - December 2024

2. Committee Reports

3. Downtown Report

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Approval of Director Curt Aardema as Secretary of the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (**Action: Motion to Approve**)

2. Authorize Board Chair to execute legal services extension agreement with Dickinson Wright PLLC through February 2028

3. Recommendation of DEGA Board Member Nomination to Mayor and City Commission.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

H. ADJOURNMENT

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2025, 3 p.m. | Community Planning & Economic Development, 245 N Rose Street

PRESENT: Susan Lindemann, Matt Hollander, Jeff Breneman, Clarence Lloyd, Curt Aardema, Mayor David Anderson, Stephanie Hinman

ABSENT: Kwame Gyimah, Jessica Thompson

STAFF: Meghan Behymer, Erin Hahn

A. CALL TO ORDER

DIRECTOR LINDEMANN CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 3:03 P.M.

PRESENT: Susan Lindemann, Matt Hollander, Jeff Breneman, Clarence Lloyd, Curt Aardema, Mayor Anderson, Stephanie Hinman

ABSENT: Kwame Gyimah, Jessica Thompson

EXCUSED:

THE JANUARY 27, 2025 ATTENDANCE INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES ARE RECORDED.

B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA

MAYOR ANDERSON MOVED TO ADOPT THE JANUARY 27, 2025 AGENDA AS PRESENTED.

DIRECTOR AARDEMA SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DIRECTOR LLOYD MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 16, 2024 MINUTES. DIRECTOR HINMAN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Presentation of the November 2024 Financial Report – Meghan Behymer

Meghan Behymer, Downtown Coordinator presented the November 2024 Financial Report, noting that there was no revenue in November, leaving the year-to-date revenue at

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\$666,200. Expenses for November totaled \$31,795 for the Ambassador Program and Bigbelly Services. Year-to-date expenses through November 2024 accumulated to \$527,409. Ms. Behymer clarified a December 2024 inquiry regarding tax revenue for the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA). She explained that DEGA tax revenue requires a County settlement, resulting in a lump-sum payment to DEGA for taxes collected in the previous year. In 2025, DEGA is receiving 2023 taxes collected in 2024. Conversely, the DDA receives millage tax revenue throughout the current year, as reflected in monthly financial reports. Both entities may also receive delinquent tax payments.

DIRECTOR AARDEMA MOVED TO ACCEPT THE NOVEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT.

DIRECTOR HINMAN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. Committee Reports

- a. **Events and Marketing Committee:** Ms. Behymer stated that the Events and Marketing Committee met on January 6 and provided feedback on a presentation from Gud Marketing on the 2025 Streets for All marketing and communication efforts. It was also noted that members of the committee met with Gud Marketing separately to discuss opportunities for partnerships during events. She noted that the marketing RFP evaluation process is currently underway and a recommendation will be coming before the Board.
- b. **Business Recruitment and Retention Committee:** Ms. Behymer stated that the Business Recruitment and Retention Committee met on January 7 and discussed the draft marketing packet, engaging prospective businesses through a welcome experience, and strategies to understand the state of downtown businesses in 2024 and the holiday season particularly.
- c. **Executive and Finance Committee:** Ms. Behymer stated that the Executive and Finance Committee met on January 13 to review key topics, including the agenda items for the January board meeting and next steps on downtown waste

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management solutions. The committee also reviewed Board member applications and have scheduled interviews with four applicants for three available board seats in March 2025.

- d. **Clean and Green Committee:** Ms. Behymer noted that the Clean and Green Committee will meet on January 29, and the focus of the meeting will be determining the membership of the Ambassador Program RFP Evaluation Committee.

3. Downtown Reports

Ms. Behymer presented the downtown report, highlighting several ongoing city initiatives as well as the Downtown Dollars program, stating that the amount of downtown dollars purchased is up from last year, but redemptions are lower. She added that she and other City staff are collaborating to better market the program and are looking into potential sponsorship opportunities.

Director Lloyd highlighted the Annual Chili Cook-Off, which took place on January 25, noting that participation was up this year from last year, and the transition to a fully digital format for maps and voting was successful. Director Lloyd also shared that Winter Restaurant Week will return on an even bigger scale this year, with all of Kalamazoo County being invited to participate. The event will take place from February 20 through March 1.

Ms. Behymer presented the Ambassador Program report for December, 2024, highlighting the ambassadors' focus on snow removal. She stated that she would be asking Adam Charette to present to the Board soon.

E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. DEGA FY2025 Budget Amendment

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Ms. Behymer stated that the DEGA needs to approve a budget amendment to finalize the acceptance of the donation from the Hall Foundation, as well as the City's contribution from the general fund. It was discussed that these funds will be allocated to the expansion of the downtown waste and recycling program.

DIRECTOR HINMAN MOVED TO APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY'S FY2025 BUDGET TO REFLECT AN INCREASE OF \$60,000, CONSISTING OF \$20,000 IN REVENUE FROM THE HALL FOUNDATION AND \$40,000 FROM THE CITY'S GENERAL FUND, AND AN INCREASE OF \$60,000 IN EXPENDITURES TO THE PROFESSIONAL AND CONTRACTUAL SERVICES LINE ITEM TO SUPPORT THE DOWNTOWN WASTE AND RECYCLING PROGRAM. DIRECTOR LLOYD SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no members of the public present.

3. DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Director Lindemann stated that there are ongoing discussions about the placement of a new Portland Loo, with a potential location near the Epic Center being considered. Maintenance for the facility will be addressed in February, with a proposal to incorporate it into the Ambassador Program.

Director Lindemann stated that the Strategic Planning Retreat was held on Friday, focusing on reexamining the DDA/DEGA's strategic plan. It was noted that discussions at the retreat brought forth a desire to revisit the vision and mission statements. Ms. Behymer stated that the next steps include meeting with the facilitator to refine the plan and more opportunities are forthcoming for board member engagement in the process.

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It was discussed that leadership transitions are underway as Director Hollander will be stepping down, and Directors Hinman and Lindemann's terms will end in March. The board plans to fill all three positions. Director Lloyd expressed concern for having the Board's recruitment processes down in writing, emphasizing the need for having diverse voices at the table.

Director Breneman departed at 3:45 p.m.

Director Lloyd expressed gratitude to board members for attending downtown townhalls and noted ongoing website issues with the downtown Kalamazoo website. Ms. Behymer stated that efforts are underway to resolve root causes with the platform. Director Lloyd also highlighted the misalignment with Park Kalamazoo's mission to generate revenue with the needs of downtown. He recommended not ticketing cars during downtown events and creating a more welcoming environment with regards to parking downtown. Director Aardema echoed these concerns, stating that although not part of the DDA/DEGA's responsibilities, parking has a significant impact on visitors' downtown experience.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Director Lindemann adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Board of Directors Special Meeting Minutes: DDA/DEGA Strategic Planning Retreat

January 24, 2025, 8 a.m. | Kalamazoo Nature Center Carver House, 2343 Angling Road

PRESENT: Susan Lindemann, Curt Aardema, Mayor Anderson, Clarence Lloyd

ABSENT: Jessica Thompson, Stephanie Hinman, Matt Hollander, Jeff Breneman, Kwame Gyimah

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

OTHER: Jessica Wood, Meg Blinkiewicz

Meeting was called to order at 8:20 a.m.

The meeting began with introductions, where participants shared their names, roles, and goals for the day. The objectives of the day included building community, aligning with the city's Economic Development strategic plan, updating the DDA/DEGA work plan, and confirming next steps.

A grounding session focused on DDA/DEGA's position relative to the city's Economic Development plan, emphasizing the importance of a walkable downtown that is vibrant, welcoming, clean, and safe. Alignment with the city's downtown efforts and refining the vision and mission were central topics.

The vision was updated to "thriving and welcoming downtown," aiming for long-term inspiration. The mission focused on supporting and sustaining roles, activating public spaces, and enhancing downtown's unique character through placemaking and dedicated resources.

Board members worked as a group to align the current DDA/DEGA plan with the city's downtown strategy. This included developing year-one measures of success and strategies, followed by a group discussion. Next steps involve enhancing the year-one work plan, assigning priorities to committees, and finalizing the theory of change. The meeting concluded with reflections and adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.

Downtown Economic Growth Authority
Statement of Activity
12/31/2024

Total Available Cash 289,248

	2024 Adopted Budget	December	2024 YTD Actuals	Budget to Actual Variance
Revenues				
Taxes	615,000		626,200	11,200
Other Revenue	-		-	-
Contributions and Sponsorships	102,000	122,000	122,000	20,000
Transfers	40,000		40,000	-
Charges For Services	5,000		-	(5,000)
Interest And Rentals	-		-	-
Total Revenues	762,000	122,000	788,200	26,200
Expenses				
Professional And Contractual Services	353,600	60,067	343,831	9,769
Consulting Services and Fees	5,000		4,960	-
Legal Services And Fees	50,853	5,339	49,576	1,277
Insurance Services			-	-
Operating Supplies			1,660	(1,660)
Garbage Disposal		1,214	5,701	(5,701)
Repairs			-	-
Utilities			-	-
Community Promotion	103,000	25,000	103,650	(650)
Audit Fees	13,400		13,400	-
Tax Appeal Refunds			-	-
Administrative Fees	125,000	31,250	125,000	-
Restricted For Debt Service	-		-	-
Total Expenses	650,853	122,870	647,778.43	3,035
Revenues Less Expenses	111,147	(870)	140,422	29,275

Notes:

Long Term Debt:

Mavcon Agreement TBD
City of Kalamazoo 1,060,000

Professional And Contractual Services:

	December	2024 YTD Totals
Recycling Services - BIG BELLY SOLAR LLC	3,575	42,900
Ambassador Services - BLOCK BY BLOCK	56,441	300,677
Liquid Web LLC		188
Websit eDomain Renewal - WHOIS.COM		15
Domain Reimbursement - SOUTHWEST MI FIRST	51	51
TOTAL	60,067	343,831

Community Promotion:

Skeletour Spooktacular		5,000
Beats on Bates Events - LUXURY ESCAPES LLC		44,500
Workout Wed & Caribbean Fest - XPERIENCE INC		10,000
Canadiana Fest - Eclectic Events		2,650
Black Arts Festival - BLACK ARTS & CULTURAL CNTR		4,000
Sounds of the Zoo		5,000
Restaurant Week – SOUTHWEST MI FIRST	5,000	5,000
Chili Cook Off – SOUTHWEST MI FIRST		2,500
Summer Sidewalk Sales		5,000
Holiday Lighting Contribution	20,000	20,000
TOTAL	25,000	103,650

**Downtown Economic Growth Authority
December 2024 Financial Summary**

In December, the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) received \$122,000 in revenue, comprised of the City of Kalamazoo Solid Waste Fund contribution to the Ambassador Program (\$32,000), Parking System contribution (\$20,000), Irving S. Gilmore Foundation grant for the Ambassador Program (\$50,000), and the Hall Foundation contribution to the Downtown Waste and Recycling Program (\$20,000). This brought year-to-date revenues to \$788,200, which is \$26,200 over budget.

December expenses totaled \$122,870. Key expense categories included: **Professional and Contractual Services (\$60,067)** encompassing November and December Ambassador Program costs with Block by Block (\$56,441), Bigbelly waste management fees (\$3,575), and a domain renewal reimbursement (\$51); **Legal Services and Fees (\$5,331)**; **Garbage Disposal (\$1,214)**; **Community Promotion (\$25,000)**, supporting the Restaurant Week sponsorship (\$5,000) and a Holiday Lighting contribution (\$20,000); and the **Quarterly City Service Agreement (\$31,250)**.

Year-to-date expenses totaled \$647,778, under revenues by \$140,422.

**Downtown Economic Growth Authority & Downtown Development Authority
February 2025 Committee Reports**

The **Events and Marketing Committee** on February 3 was repurposed as a meeting of the Marketing RFP Evaluation Committee to discuss and review four proposals. The committee invited two of the proposers for interviews.

The **Business Recruitment and Retention Committee** are paused until after March to align with key developments. During this interim period, we will continue important initiatives, including finalizing the marketing piece, developing an outreach list of regional brokers, and conducting outreach with downtown retailers to gather valuable insights.

The **Clean and Green Committee** met January 29 and discussed the timeline of the Ambassador Program RFP and the membership of the RFP Evaluation Committee.

The **Executive and Finance Committee** met on February 10 to review the February Agenda Packets and to address key action items, including the 2025 audit approach and legal services agreement. The committee also interviewed prospective board members and is recommending the nominations and reappointments listed on today's agenda.



FEBRUARY 2024 UPDATE

Downtown Kalamazoo

Kalamazoo Streets for All Projects

Kalamazoo Streets For All is a lane conversion project that will transform downtown Kalamazoo into a welcoming, inclusive and vibrant destination that offers safe travel for all modes of transportation.

Projects led by: Christina Anderson (Planning); James Baker (Engineering); Rebekah Kik (City Manager's Office Liaison)

Consultant team is: Progressive AE, C2D, and Wightman Engineering.

Updates can be found at <https://www.kalamazoocity.org/Community/Projects/Streets-for-All>

Sign up here: <https://kalamazoocity.us3.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=ab294794047fd50bdfbb847e8&id=cbae2f83cf>

Michigan Avenue Planning and Design

The City of Kalamazoo is inviting residents to help shape the redesign of Michigan Avenue by attending a series of meetings. These meetings will gather input for the two-way street redesign, with design work expected to begin this winter as part of the broader "Streets For All" initiative.

- Feedback from the design engagement process and initial Michigan Avenue design alternatives (presented at the January open houses) will inform the creation of preliminary engineering plans.
- Early Summer 2025: A more refined set of plans will be presented to the community for additional feedback.
- Required revisions will be made based on community input, and plan sets will be finalized for final review.
- Finalized plans will be prepared for construction bids.
- Michigan Avenue construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2027

2022 Parking Plan Implementation

The Parking Blueprint is organized into four sections defined by the following shared strategic objectives: (1) expanding parking supply/capacity; (2) managing parking demand; (3) improving/expanding mobility options; and (4) improving parking operations.

Parking Team: Led by Rob Bacigalupi (Mission North Consulting) with City staff Christina Anderson (Planning); Dennis Randolph and George Waring (Public Services); Rebekah Kik (City Manager's Office Liaison).

Parking Blueprint can be found at [parking-downtown-parking-management-blueprint-2023-update.pdf](#)

2023 GUD Marketing Consulting for Streets and Parking

The GUD Marketing Consulting for Streets and Parking is to support the communication, marketing and branding of the City's Streets for All project.

Communications + Marketing Committee: Led by Manny Garcia and Brooke Gieber (GUD Marketing) with City staff Christina Anderson (Planning); Neal Conway and Michael Smith (Communications); Dennis Randolph (Public Services); Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator); and Rebekah Kik (City Manager's Office Liaison).

2024 WMU Economic Development Study

Awareness of impacts on local businesses as street conversion projects evolve throughout the Streets for All projects

Study led by: Center for Transportation and Livability at Western Michigan University – Dr. Jun Oh with City staff Christina Anderson (Planning); Dennis Randolph (Public Services); Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator); and Rebekah Kik (City Manager’s Office Liaison).

- Second quarterly downtown business-focused survey launched to gather feedback on economic activities and the accessibility of downtown.

Imagine Kalamazoo 2035

Imagine Kalamazoo 2035 (IK2035) is all about engagement: engagement with citizens, community groups, businesses, developers, investors, philanthropists, government and YOU. We’re imagining a vision for Kalamazoo’s future – discussing it, planning it, designing it, and acting on it.

Project led by: Rebekah Kik, Assistant City Manager and Christina Anderson, City Planner and Deputy Director of Community Planning and Economic Development

Updates can be found at [kalamazoocity.org/IK2035](https://www.kalamazoocity.org/IK2035)

Meetings on the Go

Want to get involved but can't attend a public meeting? The Meeting on the Go “kit” has everything you need to host your own discussion at your convenience and be part of Imagine Kalamazoo. It includes instruction sheets, discussion questions, participant worksheets, feedback questionnaires, and directions for recording and returning responses.

<https://www.kalamazoocity.org/Government/Programs-Initiatives/Imagine-Kalamazoo/Imagine-Kalamazoo-Meeting-on-the-Go>

Imagine It! Survey

Want to share your input in a quick survey? Let us know your thoughts on happy and healthy cities and what Kalamazoo has been doing well, and what our community needs to focus on to achieve your vision.

<https://www.kalamazoocity.org/Government/Programs-Initiatives/Imagine-Kalamazoo/Imagine-It-Survey>

Downtown Placemaking Projects

2024 Projects from Notre Dame Public Realm Study

The Downtown Placemaking project seeks to add to the vibrancy with another alley activation, plaza redesigns that act as connectors, and enhancing the experience of the Kalamazoo Mall as a more active and engaging place. The city has identified 5 key public places downtown that are candidates for improvement.

Projects led by: Rebekah Kik (City Manager’s Office); Christina Anderson (Planning); Patrick McVerry (Parks and Recreation); Dennis Randolph (Public Services); PJ Thuringer (Economic Development).

- Consultant team is Smith Group – Allison Marusic and Bob Doyle
 - Surveys of all placemaking areas have taken place. Two construction projects and one public art project have been chosen to move forward with the current budgets. Construction documents should be complete by the end of the year; bidding for the project let by January – construction to take place in April/May pending weather. Mural will be completed during September Brush the Block mural festival.
- Placemaking – North Mall
 - Construction project – pending federal grant approval.
- Placemaking – Exchange Place
 - Mural project - Pending property owner approval.

- Placemaking – Farmer’s Alley
 - Project is moving forward with construction documents to improve the concrete plaza, lighting, and landscaping.
- Placemaking – Rose Street Plaza
 - Project is moving forward with construction documents to improve the concrete plaza with furniture and landscaping.
 - Coordination meetings are currently happening with adjacent property owners to partner on improvements on the public/private areas.
- Placemaking – S. Burdick between Lovell and Cedar
 - Currently on hold awaiting budget or grant opportunity.

Updates can be found at [Kalamazoo Placemaking \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

2024 Arcadia Creek Festival Place

Renovation effort for the Arcadia Creek Festival Place to include improvements of items like electrical and landscape, among other things.

Project led by: Rebekah Kik (City Manager’s Office); Patrick McVerry (Parks and Recreation); James Baker (Engineering)

- Received \$2 Million grant from Redevelopment and Placemaking Fund MEDC – approved by Commission 11/12
 - Received \$1.6 Million grant from City Commission
 - Applying for future grants to cover the estimated \$14 Million project
 - MEDC Technical Assistance for survey and market study
-

Event Center Coordination

City Planning and Design team members include: Jim Ritsema and Rebekah Kik (City Manager’s Office); Christina Anderson (Planning); James Baker (Engineering); Dennis Randolph (Public Services)

- Weekly meeting for utilities (Christina, Dennis, and James)
 - Monthly design meetings (Christina and Rebekah)
 - Annual meetings (Jim and Bill Johnson)
 - Special meetings as necessary
-

2024 PROTECT Grant for Arcadia Creek along Stadium Drive and Michikal (Levy Project)

Led by: Christina Anderson (Planning) and James Baker (Engineering).

- Consultant RFP is being developed; Project may begin in 2025

Downtown Dollars Program

The Downtown Dollars program is designed to promote economic growth in the downtown area by encouraging local spending. Customers purchase Downtown Dollars to be redeemed at participating businesses, fostering a vibrant and thriving downtown community.

Program administered by: City of Kalamazoo, Community Planning and Economic Development

2025 METRICS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
# of Businesses	53											
DT\$ Purchased	\$935											
DT\$ Redeemed	\$1,785											

TOTAL JANUARY 2024

Downtown Dollars Purchased = \$935

Downtown Dollars Redeemed = \$1,785

Total Downtown Dollars in Circulation = \$137,645

TOTAL Program Life (09/2019 – 01/2025)

Downtown Dollars Purchased = \$511,000

Downtown Dollars Redeemed = \$356,865

Information can be found at [Shop local with Downtown Dollars - Kalamazoo Downtown \(downtownkalamazoo.org\)](https://downtownkalamazoo.org)

Downtown News

- [Kalamazoo mourns loss of Michigan News Agency owner, community icon Dean Margaret Hauck](#) (WWMT)
- [Samson's Barbershop in Kalamazoo navigates challenges amid possible tariff increases](#) (WWMT)
- [Chili Cook-Off packs downtown Kalamazoo](#) (WOODTV)
- [3 new developments considered by Kalamazoo-area planners in January](#) (Mlive)
- [New parking garage coming to downtown Kalamazoo](#) (Mlive)
- ["Happy Cities" author on the journey to transform Kalamazoo](#) (Second Wave)
- [Brush the Block Mural Festival aims to paint the town vibrant in Kalamazoo](#) (Second Wave)
- [Kalamazoo Candle Co. invests \\$1M to double downtown space](#) (Crain's Grand Rapids Business)
- [From Crock-Pot candles to success: Kzoo company expanding in historic building](#) (WOODTV)
- [Shuttered upscale Italian restaurant returns to Kalamazoo — with a twist](#) (Mlive)



AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

DECEMBER 2024



DOWNTOWN
KALAMAZOO



Around Downtown in December



Let It Snow



Snow Removal

As the snow flies our team will be out on the streets keeping sidewalk aprons clean, clearing around bus stops and looking for trouble spots that we can assist with. We work to keep Bates Alley clear as well. While we don't take responsibility for keeping all sidewalks clear if a block is clearly neglected and is a hazard we will give it our attention.

DECEMBER 2024 STATISTICS

CLEANING

Abandoned Property	60
Biohazardous Material	12
Graffiti - Removed	19
Snow Removal (hours)	61
Lawn Care (hours)	
Weed Abatement (block faces)	
Power Washing (hours)	
Flower Watering (gallons)	
Trash (lbs)	8,100

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality Assistance	25
Business Contact	19

SAFETY

Drinking in Public	9
Needles Found	3
Panhandling - Aggressive	
Panhandling - Passive	3
Public Defecation/Urination	1
Safety Escorts	1
Visible Drug Use	

OUTREACH

Transient	36
Unhoused/Sleeping	112

2024 STATISTICS													
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
CLEANING													
Abandoned Property	23	24	64	109	80	154	98	140	70	132	158	60	1112
Biohazardous Material	29	26	42	50	22	16	20	20	12	13	17	12	279
Graffiti - Removed	20	108	64	106	71	141	32	43	50	87	75	19	816
Lawn Care (hours)				8	9		1	2	2				22
Power Washing (hours)		3		13	6	19	10	15	6	11	1		84
Snow Removal (hours)											7	61	68
Trash (lbs)	6825	8975	10775	10900	12825	14725	11570	14800	12325	14150	10200	8100	136170
Flower Watering (gallons)						963	688	305	372				2328
Weed Abatement (block faces)				5	6		5	11		2	1		30
HOSPITALITY													
Business Contact		19	8	5	27	16	13	5	6	2	24	19	144
Hospitality Assistance	16	47	33	45	48	53	38	53	46	35	47	25	486
SAFETY													
Drinking in Public	2	8	8	22	3	6	4	3	2	2	6	9	75
Needles Found		3	3	3	4	6	2	9	5	9	5	3	52
Panhandling - Aggressive			3	2		2	6	0					13
Panhandling - Passive		2	21	11	6	5	3	5		2	4	3	62
Public Defecation/Urination		2	2	1	6		5	3		1	2	1	23
Safety Escorts	2	4	3	3	6			3	1	1	3	1	27
Visible Drug Use	2	6	37	29	1	3	1	1		3	3		86
OUTREACH													
Transient		15	25	10	0	1	4	4	5	15	17	36	132
Unhoused/Sleeping	32	89	195	470	292	85	72	101	77	45	82	112	1652

TO: Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Economic Growth Authority Board of Directors
FROM: Downtown Development Authority and Downtown Economic Growth Authority Executive Committee
DATE: February 17, 2025
SUBJECT: Recommendation to Continue with Current Legal Counsel

Purpose

This memo serves to recommend that we continue with our current legal counsel, Dickinson Wright PLLC, for the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) while updating the existing agreements.

Background

Our current legal counsel agreement for both DDA and DEGA was entered into in 2019 and has not been revisited since. The contract formally ended in June 2022 but has continued on an informal basis. Dickinson-Wright has recently requested an hourly rate increase from \$190 to \$230, rates that remain well below standard industry rates. Given the lapse in a formal agreement and the reasonable request for a rate adjustment, now is an appropriate time to update the terms to ensure continued high-quality legal support for both authorities.

Assessment

Continuing with our current legal counsel, Dickinson-Wright, offers several significant advantages that make it a sound choice for our organization. Their deep institutional knowledge of both the Kalamazoo Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) enables them to provide insightful, targeted advice that reflects our history, strategic objectives, and past legal matters. This expertise has been demonstrated time and again as they have reliably supported key initiatives and guided us through complex legal situations, ensuring that our actions align with legal frameworks and strategic goals.

Moreover, maintaining continuity with Dickinson-Wright avoids the disruption and time investment that would come with onboarding a new legal team. The firm's familiarity with our operations and past decisions streamlines their ability to deliver sound counsel without the need for a steep learning curve.

Dickinson-Wright's specialization in economic development law further sets them apart, particularly with their extensive experience representing numerous DDAs, corridor improvement authorities, and similar entities across Michigan. Their broad knowledge base includes a comprehensive understanding of statutes, legal mechanisms, and best practices related to financing, tax capture, levies, bonds, and the daily implementation of these structures. Their work with a wide range of economic development entities has provided them with a robust library of working documents, which they bring to bear in support of our efforts. This specialized expertise, coupled with very reasonable rates, makes Dickinson-Wright a far more effective and cost-efficient choice than a local general practitioner who may lack this level of focused knowledge.

Fiscal Impact

The proposed hourly rate increase from \$190 to \$230 will result in a moderate increase in legal expenses. Legal services are currently funded through the existing operating budgets of both the DDA and DEGA. Funds for legal counsel are already budgeted for the current fiscal year (\$30,000 for DEGA and \$20,000 for DDA) and can accommodate the proposed rate adjustment. No immediate budget amendment is required but continued monitoring of legal expenditures will ensure alignment with budgeted allocations. If legal expenses exceed projections, staff will return to the board to propose any necessary budget adjustments.

Recommendation

The joint DDA/DEGA Executive Committee recommends that the DDA and DEGA continue with current legal counsel through Dickinson Wright at the increased hourly rate of \$230 and authorize the Board Chair to execute legal services agreement with Dickinson Wright PLLC for a period of three years.



Advisory Boards and Commissions Appointee Nomination Report

City of Kalamazoo

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Commission approve the following appointments (and/or reappointments) to the Downtown Economic Growth Authority:

Full Term Appointment

- Rick Searing for a full term expiring on March 31, 2029
- Trisha Kidd for a full term expiring on March 31, 2029

Partial Term Appointment

- Stanley Steppes for a partial term expiring on March 31, 2028

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS POSITION

At least 5 members of the 9-person board must have an interest in property located in the downtown district. At least one of the members must be a resident of the downtown district.

SELECTION PROCESS

The DDA/DEGA Executive Committee held three interviews to gauge interest of candidates and select those whose professional expertise and lives experience help to diversify the board makeup

Applicants Considered

- Rick Searing
- Trisha Kidd
- Stanley Steppes

Interview Process and Final Recommendation

- Rick Searing
- Trisha Kidd
- Stanley Steppes

NOMINEE QUALIFICATIONS

Dual Board Memberships

- Rick Searing is not a member of any other City boards, commissions or committees.
- Trisha Kidd is a board member of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Michigan. Trisha is not a member of any other City boards, commissions or committees.
- Stanley Steppes is not a member of any other City boards, commissions or committees.

Residency

- Rick Searing resides in downtown Kalamazoo.
- Trisha Kidd resides in Oshtemo and is an employee of PlazaCorp, a downtown business.
- Stanley Steppes resides and works in downtown Kalamazoo.

Term Limits

- This would be Rick Searing's first full term on the DDA board. He would be eligible for reappointment for a second full term at the conclusion of this term.
- This would be Trisha Kidd's first full term on the DDA board. She would be eligible for reappointment for a second full term at the conclusion of this term.
- This would be Stanley Steppes' first partial term on the DDA board. He would be eligible for reappointment for a first full term at the conclusion of this term.

Training, Experience, Education And Skills

- Rick Searing brings board governance experience as a former Trustee of the Portage Rotary Club and current Treasurer of the IB Schools of Michigan. A longtime educator with a Master's in Educational Leadership, he has been a high school teacher and administrator since 1997, specializing in government, economics, and history. Deeply invested in downtown Kalamazoo, he has served on zoning and downtown partnership committees and actively engages in leadership development through Southwest Michigan First. Living on the Kalamazoo Mall, he and his wife are passionate about the community's growth and development.
- With over 20 years in real estate development, management, brokerage, banking, and law, Trisha Kidd is the Principal Associate Broker at PlazaCorp Realty Advisors, Inc. and Director of Project Management. She holds an Executive Certificate from Notre Dame, a Paralegal Certificate, and a B.A. from Western Michigan University. A CCIM candidate and active in multiple real estate organizations, she also serves on the Board of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Michigan. Deeply engaged in West Michigan, she has been involved in downtown Kalamazoo's business and nonprofit communities for over a decade.
- With a background in marketing for a nonprofit serving Kalamazoo County, Stanley Steppes has a deep understanding of community needs and regional dynamics. As an entrepreneur in finance and video production, he brings strategic thinking and creative problem-solving to complex projects. His experience and entrepreneurial mindset position him to contribute meaningfully to community growth and development.

Contribution To Diversity

- Rick Searing is a white male in the 45 to 54 age bracket.
- Trisha Kidd is a white female.
- Stanley Steppes is a black male in the 35 to 44 age bracket.

NOMINATION RATIONALE

We are nominating these individuals for board seats because of the unique skills, diverse experiences, and valuable perspectives they bring to the table. Their backgrounds, expertise, and passion for community engagement will provide fresh insights and strengthen the board's ability to make informed, impactful decisions. We believe their contributions will help further our mission and support the continued growth and vibrancy of downtown.

CITY CLERK'S CERTIFICATION

The nominee's qualifications regarding dual board memberships, residency, and term limits have been reviewed and verified by the City Clerk's Office.

Scott A. Borling, City Clerk