

# **Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes**

February 16, 2026, 3 p.m. | City Hall, 241 W. South Street

**PRESENT:** Curt Aardema, Mayor David Anderson, Jeff Breneman, Trisha Kidd, Rick Searing, Jessica Thompson, Harmun Sandhu, Harvin Sandhu

**STAFF:** Meghan Behymer (Downtown Coordinator), Maria Smith (Community Investment Administrative Assistant), Jessica Wood (Attorney), Bobby Boyd (Economic Development Supervisor)

## **A. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**PRESENT:** Curt Aardema, Mayor David Anderson, Jeff Breneman, Trisha Kidd, Rick Searing, Jessica Thompson

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** Clarence Lloyd, Stanley Steppes, Cheng Kidd Sun

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCE:** None

**THE FEBRUARY 16, 2026, ATTENDANCE, INCLUDING EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, IS RECORDED.**

## **B. ADOPTION OF FORMAL AGENDA**

Director Aardema made a recommendation to amend the agenda to add item E.4; a motion to accept the resignation of Jessica Thompson.

**MAYOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO ADOPT THE FEBRUARY 16, 2026, DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY AGENDA AS AMENDED. DIRECTOR SEARING SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

## **C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 12, 2026, DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY MEETING. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

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## **D. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

### **1. Financial Report – December 2025 (Meghan Behymer, Downtown Coordinator)**

Behymer reviewed the December 2025 financial report: In December, the Downtown Economic Growth Authority (DEGA) received a total of \$97,000 revenue from the City of Kalamazoo’s Solid Waste Fund (\$32,000) and Contributions from Grants (\$65,000) for holiday lighting (\$15,000) and Irving S. Gilmore Foundation Ambassador Program Contribution (\$50,000). 2025 year-to-date revenues total \$1,025,887. There is a nominal budget to actual variance in 2025 revenue, with DEGA receiving just \$1,413 short of its budgeted revenue. December expenses totaled \$232,695. Key expense categories included: Operating Supplies (\$141) for Portland Loo supplies; Professional and Contractual Services (\$105,158) for Bigbelly (\$8,158) and November-December Ambassador Services (\$97,000); Solid Waste (\$1,130); Consulting Services and Fees (\$7,175) for a5 Branding & Digital agreement; Legal Services (\$2,967); Administrative Fees (\$31,250) for Q4 City Service Agreement; Contribution to General Fund (\$25,000) for the holiday lighting contribution to the City of Kalamazoo; Community Promotion (\$7,500) for 2025 Event and Marketing Sponsorships for Chili Cook Off and Black Arts Festival; Notes Payable – Principle (\$45,129) for the Mavcon agreement; and Notes Payable – Interest (\$7,245) for the Mavcon agreement. 2025 year-to-date expenses total \$872,872. DEGA expended \$43,980 less than budgeted in 2025.

**DIRECTOR SEARING MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE DECEMBER 2025 DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY FINANCIAL REPORT. DIRECTOR KIDD SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

### **2. Downtown Report – February 2026**

Behymer gave updates about Downtown including the Downtown Brand launch which was successfully launched with strong attendance at the event. The brand rollout is ongoing with banners, truck wraps, and waste bin decals. She will be meeting with A5 to recalibrate the 2025 budget and determine priorities for the duration of the year.

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Behymer provided a Business Recruitment & Retention update regarding the consideration of a retail consultation proposal to assess downtown retail conditions and provide direction.

Behymer's Downtown Dollars overview consisted of a total of almost \$32,000 Downtown Dollars sold in 2025 (+4.5% YoY); \$20,000 redeemed at 47 participating merchants.

Behymer's other updates include the Clean & Green Committee making progress on Food Service Packaging Institute MOU and recycling signage. Operations & Maintenance is a new monthly coordination meeting with City departments to discuss downtown issues, projects and long-term needs beginning this month.

Behymer shared that the Ambassador Program has focused heavily on snow removal and winter maintenance. The Portland Loo had weather related operational challenges and repairs are pending.

The Board participated in an extensive discussion regarding the Festival Place construction timeline, economic impacts on events, and potential interim solutions. The Board was at a consensus about requesting a near-term meeting with City leadership to clarify plans and explore alternatives.

Behymer explained that the way finding Draft RFP is in development. She also conducted a discussion about street & parking updates to review construction timelines, parking changes and outline communications plans.

Behymer informed the Board that the Events & Marketing committee has received three or four sponsorship applications that will be reviewed and approved at the March meeting. She also highlighted the upcoming Kalamazoo Restaurant Week. There has been a focus on hiring a Downtown support position so the Board will vote on the job description draft at this meeting.

Behymer's Executive Committee update informed of the completion of interviews for the Board member vacancies, and candidate votes that took place at this meeting. Behymer highlighted the recent ribbon cutting for the Old Skool Bar's opening.

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## **E. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

### **1. 2026 Holiday Lighting**

**MAYOR ANDERSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE \$30,000 TO THE CITY OF KALAMAZOO TO SUPPORT 2026 HOLIDAY LIGHTING. SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR BRENEMAN. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION APPROVED.**

### **2. Downtown Projects Coordinator Job Description**

**MAYOR ANDERSON MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE DOWNTOWN PROJECTS COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION, AFFIRMING THE BOARD'S ALIGNMENT ON THE FOCUS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POSITION, AND AUTHORIZE SUBMISSION TO CITY OF KALAMAZOO HUMAN RESOURCES FOR REVIEW. ANY MATERIAL CHANGES TO SCOPE OR DUTIES WILL RETURN TO THE BOARD FOR APPROVAL. SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR BRENEMAN. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION APPROVED.**

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

**DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE NOMINATION OF HARVIN SANDHU AND CONNOR SAMPSON FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC GROWTH AUTHORITY BOARD AND FORWARD THE RECOMMENDATION TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION. DIRECTOR THOMPSON SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION APPROVED.**

### **4. Motion to Accept Resignation of Jessica Thompson**

**MAYOR ANDERSON MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF JESSICA THOMPSON EFFECTIVE UPON APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR, WITH APPRECIATION FOR SERVICE. DIRECTOR BRENEMAN SECONDED. NO OBJECTIONS. MOTION CARRIED.**

Board members expressed gratitude for Jessica Thompson's leadership, advocacy for downtown businesses, and lasting contributions.

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## **F. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Harvin Sandhu thanked the Board for the opportunity.

## **G. DIRECTOR COMMENTS**

None.

## **H. ADJOURNMENT**

**DIRECTOR BRENEMAN MOTIONED TO ADJOURN, SUPPORTED BY DIRECTOR SEARING. MOTION APPROVED WITH NOONE OPPOSED.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 P.M.**