

ATTENDANCE:

Leola Edelin
Lisa Reddy Farrell
Elizabeth Young Jojo
Benn MacDonald
Neil McGreevy
Amanda Rozsavolgyi
Cameron Sagan
Adam Sanders
Hon. Darius Shahinfar
Josh Wainman

ABSENT:

Jim Hart
Mohamed Hemmid
Leyla Kiosse
Angelo Maddox
Frank Zeoli

STAFF PRESENT:

Jevan Dollard
Caroline Murray
Georgette Steffens
Don Wilson

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Georgette Steffens
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elizabeth Young Jojo
PRESIDENT

Lisa Reddy Farrell
VICE-PRESIDENT

Angelo Maddox
TREASURER

Neil McGreevy
SECRETARY

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Young Jojo at 4:024 PM.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Young Jojo calls for a motion to approve the February 2025 meeting minutes | Mr. Wainman motions | Mr. Sagan seconded | All approved and the motion passed.

Presidents Report

Governor's \$400 Million Investment

Ms. Young Jojo there has been significant movement on the Governor's proposed \$400 million investment as the state is moving forward quickly with this initiative. She turned it over to Georgette Steffens to provide the most current updates.

Ms. Steffens reported the presentation the BID hosted where OGS Commissioner Jeanette Moy spoke regarding the Governor's priorities for 2025, along with the \$400 million slated for downtown Albany went well with over 25 people in attendance.

Ms. Steffens stated she attends a bi-weekly meeting with the Mayor, NYS Empire State Development (ESD) staff, Capitalize Albany, and the two BIDs. ESD is currently reviewing the responses they received from the RFP for a consulting team for this project. They anticipate having a team on board by the middle to end of May. In the meantime, the above organizations have been providing data, previous plans and studies, and the like to ESD. Ms. Steffens provided a map of potential development sites/buildings in the District.

As the consulting team begins their public engagement with the public, Ms. Steffens will make sure to promote those opportunities widely to our numerous stakeholders.

Treasurer's Report

Content Creator Contract Award

Ms. Steffens reminded the Board with the decrease in our budget in 2025 they approved hiring a part-time, contracted content creator to handle pieces of our social media, crowds email, and bi-weekly e-newsletter instead of a full-time staff person. Ms. Murray created an RFP for those services and received 6 responses. Prices ranged from roughly \$21,000 to \$124,000. All staff reviewed and rated the responses and invited 4 for an interview.

The staff is recommending entering into a contract with Tumble Weed Social until the end of the year at a price not to exceed \$17,100. The owner of Tumble Weed recently moved to Albany and had previously provided the same services to two BIDs in California. Tumble Weed was the lowest bidder as well as most qualified.

Funding Requests

Ms. Steffens stated the staff have two additional funding requests:

- Movie Under the Stars for \$525 – Downtown will be one of several locations for movies throughout the city as part of Christ Church Albany's free movie series. Ours will be held at Clinton Market Collective and we will be showing Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire. The movies where the BID partners with Christ Church Albany have always been our highest attended movie events. They have broad reach and are very family friendly.
- Live Score Movies (series of 3) for \$8,600 – these are movies that will be shown with subtitles and local artists will be creating and performing an original live music score during the movie.

Ms. Steffens recommended releasing the money set aside for a mural project as DOT has not yet developed guidelines for mural projects on their property, which has been over 2 years that we have been waiting and use the funds for initiatives and projects for this year, especially with the impact of our budget decrease. We have \$40,000 in assessment revenue that's been identified for projects. With the movies listed above that would bring us to have \$30,000 remaining for the Board to approve additional initiatives that were not included in the 2025 budget.

Ms. Young Jojo motioned to award the content creator contract and approve the funds requested for the two movie initiatives. | Mr. Sagan seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Committee Report

Clean & Safe Committee

Mr. Wilson reported Interim Albany Police Chief Brendan Cox was invited to give an APD update. Chief Cox spoke of the importance of community policing and continuing to build relationships with businesses and the community. APD received a million-dollar state grant that will be spent on additional non officer resources. This includes crisis worker position within the department, updating APD infrastructure, software & hardware upgrades for their Resource Analysis Center, license plate readers, etc. Chief Cox also mentioned looking at additional resources for quality-of-life issues like dog waste stations. The Chief also offered to provide members of the Committee and Board with a tour of APD's Resource Analysis Center.

Ms. Wilson discussed this year's Ambassadors program. He met with the Schenectady Rescue Mission, who also runs an Ambassador program, to better understand how they operate. Staff is discussing ways to enhance our current program to better serve our Stakeholders and visitors.

Mr. Wilson stated 11 of the 26 crosswalks that the Committee identified during their original walkthrough had been restriped. Those crosswalks include heavily pedestrian trafficked intersections such as State & Broadway, Pine & Broadway, and Columbia at Broadway. He has submitted the remaining crosswalks to the Traffic Safety and Engineering department.

Board members discussed the increased human urination and defecation in the District. A few hot spots were identified and Mr. Wilson said he would talk with our beat officers and CDTA staff about increased attention to these areas.

Executive Director's Report

Advocacy Items

Ms. Steffens stated there are two items for the Board to discuss:

- 1) **Compelled Care** – the Governor has proposed in her budget a change to the law/definition of harm to oneself and expanding it to include not being able to provide basic needs for oneself – food, shelter, clothing. BIDs across NY state have shown support for this change as ones who have seen those who don't get the care they truly need continue to deteriorate on our streets both physically and mentally.

The Board asked Ms. Steffens to provide them with the specific language the Governor is proposing to gain a better understanding of what is being proposed.

- 2) **County Buildings** – Ms. Steffens requested a few Board members volunteer to join her in a meeting with the County Executive to discuss his plans for moving of County staff out of Downtown and the sale of the County's portfolio of buildings in the BID District.

Ms. Sagan stated there are no current plans to move the County staff, which the majority are not hybrid, up to the St. Rose campus. He said they would not move without a purchaser of the County headquarters building located at 112 State Street.

Wayfinding

Ms. Steffens stated signs are slated to be installed the first or second week of May. Staff is coordinating a press event unveiling the signage program.

Tricentennial Park Update

Ms. Steffens reported the contract for the reconstruction of Tricentennial Park has been awarded and is anticipated being complete by the end of June. She shared renderings and concept photos with the Board and expressed gratitude to the city for taking on such an important project for Downtown. The renovations will create more usable space and allow for a variety of events to be held at the Park.

Events Update

Ms. Steffens congratulated the Downtown Neighborhood Association on their win at our Resident Trivia. The event was held at Hill Street Café and drew residents from that area of our District specifically because they wanted to support their neighborhood, while introducing many of the attendees to the Hill Street for the first time.

Earth Day is scheduled for Tuesday, April 22. We have over 125 individuals signed up to participate. Staff believe that holding the event during the week allowed more companies and community groups to participate. Coulson's has graciously provided lunch for the event.

The BID will be hosting our Downtown Living Open House on Thursday, May 8. People can tour five residential buildings either during lunch or in the evening, or both. All buildings are pet friendly which sets Downtown apart from most rentals.

Other Business

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:16 PM.



**Downtown Albany Business Improvement District
Board of Directors Meeting
March 19, 2025**

**Next Meeting
Wednesday, April 30, at 4:00 PM
21 Lodge Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room**