



**DOWNTOWN ALBANY**  
Business Improvement District

**Downtown Albany Business Improvement District**  
**Board of Directors' Meeting**  
**April 13, 2022**  
**21 Lodge St & Zoom**

21 Lodge Street  
Albany, NY 12207  
p 518.465.2143  
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www.downtownalbany.org

**Georgette Steffens**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Frank O'Connor, III**  
PRESIDENT

**Elizabeth Young Jojo**  
VICE-PRESIDENT

**Lisa Reddy Farrell**  
TREASURER

**David Sarraf**  
SECRETARY

ATTENDANCE:

Frank O'Connor, III  
Elizabeth Young Jojo  
Lisa Reddy Farrell  
Riley Ackley  
Ken Countermine  
Leola Edelin  
Lena Hart  
Leyla Kiosse  
Angelo Maddox  
Tracy Metzger  
Lucas Rogers  
Hon. Darius Shahinfar

ABSENT:

David Sarraf  
Mohamed Hemmid  
Neil McGreevy  
Pamela Nichols  
Frank Zeoli

STAFF PRESENT:

Georgette Steffens  
Kate Medhus  
Rebecca Hughes  
Jason Bonafide  
Don Wilson

The meeting was called to order by Board President Frank O'Connor at 4:02 PM.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Mr. O'Connor asks for objections to the Consent Agenda and hearing none adopts the Consent Agenda on behalf of the Board.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. O'Connor congratulated Ms. Jojo and Redburn Development on the awards they received from the Albany Business Review for Developer of the Year and Project of the Year, as well as on being selected as the 2022 Jim DiNapoli award recipient.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

**Contracts**

Ms. Farrell outlined the contracts that have recently gone out to bid:

- The lease on the postage machine runs out in July. The current machine costs \$27/month, or \$324/year. We obtained two quotes on new machines.
  - Sendtek, our current provider, was the low bidder at \$32.95/month and offered us 3 months free to stay with them which amounts to \$296.55 for the first year.
  - The Budget & Finance Committee recommends staying with Sendtek and signing a 4-year lease with them starting now so that the postage machine and printer/copier leases will have the same length and timeframe.
  - This will result in a savings of \$27 per year.
- The current lease on the printer/copier runs out this month. We obtained 3 quotes on new machines. Two of the companies matched one another's pricing resulting in the following prices:
  - A 4-year lease at \$149.94/month plus services at \$73.65/month for a total cost of \$223.59/month.
  - Both companies offer removal of the old machine and wiping of data included in the above pricing.
  - We recommend staying with NBT as we have an existing relationship with them that has worked well, and they had the best color printout.
  - This will result in a savings of \$328 per year.
- Our current IT Services provider, NorDutch, will no longer be offering the current IT services package we have with them, resulting in a significant jump in price from \$84/month (\$1,008/year) to \$477.50/month (\$5,730/year).
  - We obtained 3 quotes for IT Services and the most cost-effective option was to hire Intelligent Technology Solutions, which Capitalize Albany also uses.
  - I.T.S. proposed putting us onto Capitalize Albany's net work to provide costs savings to both organizations.
  - Staff will move away from using desktop computers as they are older and extremely slow and will just use their newly purchased laptops along with docking stations that will need to be purchased. The cost of 5 docking stations

will be a one-time cost of approximately \$2,000 but will save us \$915/year in service charges with being able to go from 10 supported computers down to 5.

- There is a charge for the migration of services to transfer from NorDutch to I.T.S. which was quoted at a maximum of \$697.50 for 5 devices.
- Once we have been migrated to I.T.S. and can be put on Capitalize Albany's network, the cost will go down to approximately \$252/month for 5 devices, which is ultimately \$3,024/year.
- This will result in an initial cost increase of \$2,016/year but was an unavoidable increase and is the lowers increase of the three bids.
- Staff is obtaining a quote for cyber insurance as well and will bring that to the Board for approval at the May Board meeting.
- The total savings for all the contracts is \$2,017.

Ms. Farrell calls for a motion to approve the above-recommended contracts | Ms. Metzger motions | Mr. Shahinfar seconds | All approve.

#### **Restricted Funds Requests**

Ms. Farrell presented a few funding requests from Staff:

- Up to 10 new street trees.
- 5 computer docking stations and the cost of changing IT Service providers as outlined above.
- Additional funding for the outdoor movie nights.
- Downtown Albany Gift card donations for fundraising events.
- Employee Appreciation Week during lunch hour May 16<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Steffens reviewed the Assessment Revenue and noted that this is remaining revenue from years when we were very lenient with our Budget. This money can only be spent on public projects. We budgeted about \$31,000 for 2021 and we spent around \$96,000. We did not budget any extra revenue for this year but have spent about \$1,000 so far. Ms. Steffens showed the projects that the Board has already approved which total up to about \$23,000. An additional \$17,000 is being requested for the items Ms. Farrell mentioned. This would leave \$134,000 in our Reserves for other projects.

Ms. Farrell calls for a motion to approve the above-listed funding requests in the amount of \$17,000 | Mr. Shahinfar motions | Mr. Maddox seconds | All approve.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **Clean & Safe**

Ms. Hart noted that:

- The Clean & Safe Committee walked through the District and cataloged crosswalk and pedestrian crossings. They made it through half of the District and will walk the remaining half next month.
- Generally, the District was well-lit and felt safe.
- The Committee identified some places for fence art and Ms. Steffens contacted Capitalize Albany about putting some up at E-Comm Square, and while they liked the project they asked us to approach them about it again after the summer when they will have more time for an initiative like this.
- Ideas for lighting in parks were discussed as the plan for this year's placemaking project.
- The Earth Day cleanup is schedule for Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> in both the Olde English dog park and at the African American Cultural Center.
- The Albany Police Department has agreed to compile statistics on crime in the District for us to review.

### Marketing

Ms. Metzger noted that:

- The new website will launch in mid-May. Please send in headshots to Ms. Medhus by April 20<sup>th</sup>.
- The committee discussed misconceptions at the last meeting. The biggest ones were:
  - *There's nothing to do.* The event calendar on the BID's website is the 4<sup>th</sup> most visited page, posts are shared on social media daily and weekly and there were 160 events in Downtown in March. The Committee discussed doing a Google ad linking to the event calendar, creating posts showing successful events, highlighting shopping and mural tours and doing blog posts showing ideas for date nights, family nights, etc.
  - *There's no parking available.* Parking studies show that a reasonable distance to walk to a destination is 2 blocks for retail and 5 blocks for an event. There is no lack of parking in Downtown, but there's a perception that there is no close parking. Traffic becomes very congested on event nights, so perhaps advertising different ways to get into Downtown could help, as well as pointing out where parking is and how to access it. It was suggested to do some marketing for getting to Downtown earlier and staying for a while when you will be attending an event here at night. The Parking Authority is willing to collaborate with social media posts, event parking and parking validation amongst other things.

A brief discussion was held regarding the traffic and parking issues, and it was suggested that the parking garages may need to have police officers directing traffic out front on event nights as well as having the arenas and venues sending out parking info the week before an event.

### Special Events

Ms. Kiosse noted that:

- The Committee focused on placemaking at their last meeting. They decided to move ahead with lighting in the parks throughout the District. Some of the lighting would be temporary while others would be permanent installations. The lighting will also help rectify the misconception of Downtown being dark at night. Costs could be offset by having sponsors for each park. DGS has agreed to partner with us and help us find electricity wherever needed for the installations.
- There will be an Employee Appreciation Week May 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> throughout Downtown at lunchtime. There will be live music, giveaways and vendors and an Albany I Spy scavenger hunt in partnership with Discover Albany. CDTA will have a mobility day on May 20<sup>th</sup> where they will bring bikes, scooters and their new vehicles for people to see and try.

### Governance

Ms. Jojo noted that:

- There are 5 open seats on the Board that need to be filled: 4 Property Owners and 1 Commercial Tenant.
- There were 2 nominees to the Commercial Tenant seat, but neither of them returned a Statement of Interest form and therefore will not be placed on the ballot.
- We received 2 nominations for Property Owners: Josh Wainman from Wainschaf Associates, who is now one of the owners of the Meginnis Flats on Broadway, and Benn MacDonald, owner of Far Shot at 69 North Pearl. Both returned their Statement of Interest forms and will be placed on the ballot.
- There is no need to hold interviews since we have fewer nominees than open seats.
- The nominees will be announced to the membership within the next day or two.
- People will then have two weeks to petition to be added to the election ballot, which requires them to obtain 20 signatures from BID members.

Mr. O'Connor calls for a motion to place Josh Wainman and Benn MacDonald on the ballot | Ms. Metzger motions | Mr. Shahinfar seconds | All approve.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Strategic Plan Update**

Ms. Steffens provided an update on items from the Strategic Plan:

- Under Clean & Safe the first project will be the murals towards the South End of the District. More details will be provided at the next Board meeting.
- The park lighting will be the first placemaking project for the Special Events Committee. There will be a Garden Party event to celebrate the launch of that in the fall.
- The wayfinding ambassador program has been included in one of our applications for the ARPA funds.
- William Street will be complete in time for our Annual Meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup> and then we will host a ribbon cutting and grand opening on June 16<sup>th</sup>. The mural will be complete, and furniture has been ordered.
- Staff are staying in contact with the City regarding all of their park developments and seeing how the BID can help.
- The branding RFP has been written and will be released May 1.
- There will be stakeholder meetings for restaurant and retail business owners and then for commercial property owners next month.
- Staff has had meetings regarding a possible Farmer's Market now that there is no longer one on Thursdays at SUNY. We are looking into doing a weekend market with food and craft vendors monthly for the first year and then potentially a weekly market for the following year.

### **Events**

Mr. Bonafide outlined the upcoming events:

- Resident Trivia is happening on May 4<sup>th</sup> at Parish Public House.
- The Bites, Camera, Action outdoor movie series will begin on Friday, May 6<sup>th</sup> with a Star Wars movie. There will be a movie on the first Friday of every month from May to October.

Ms. Steffens added that we should be hearing back about our grant applications for the City's ARPA funds later this week.

Mr. Shahinfar brought the charter amendments that the Council recently proposed to the Board's attention. One is the right to fire department heads every four years and the other is to take away the police powers from the Mayor and put them into the hands of a 9-member body, 5 members of whom are appointed by the council and 4 of whom will be appointed by the Mayor. He encouraged everyone to speak to their council members with any concerns about these amendments.

Ms. Steffens noted that the NYS Business Council spoke at a recent CIREB meeting about the new environmental building code standards with the goal being to be carbon neutral by 2050. Some of the new requirements are very strong and expensive. The standards have been included in today's packet for the Board's reference. Ms. Medhus agreed to email them to all Zoom participants.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:23PM.

### **Next Meeting**

**Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 4:00 PM**

**21 Lodge St., Second Floor Conference Room and Zoom**