

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
April 10, 2024
Meeting Minutes**

The DSSD Board of Commissioners Meeting took place at the offices of the Bridgeport DSSD, 938 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604.

In attendance:

Commissioners

Phil Pires, C & W Associates II, Chair
Eric Gross, John Broadcannon, Treasurer
Bob Schneider, Jimmy's A & N, Secretary (Ex Officio)
Javier Ceja, Downtown Strategic Group
Jason Cohen, Bordentown DB, LLC
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation
Callie Gale Heilmann, Made in Bridgeport, LLC
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation

Staff

Lauren Coakley Vincent, DSSD President
Charles Suarez-Penn, DSSD/SMG

Guests

Jason Chandersingh, City of Bridgeport
Alicia Cobb, Art Simplificated
Bill Coleman, City of Bridgeport
Chris DeAngelis, Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers
Jonathan Delgado, City of Bridgeport
Reinaldo D. González Rodriguez, Fairfield University
Ira Jacoby, Felner Corporation
Kathy Maher, The Barnum Museum
Sue Purefoy
Ed Schneider

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Jason Chandersingh, Bill Coleman, and Jonathan Delgado from the City of Bridgeport; Alicia Cobb of Art Simplificated; Chris DeAngelis of Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers; Reinaldo D. González Rodriguez from Fairfield University's Center for Social Impact; Ira Jacoby from the Felner Corporation; Kathy Maher from The Barnum Museum; Sue Purefoy; and Ed Schneider.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Kuchma made a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 13, 2023, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Egbert seconded the motion. Mr. Pires and Commissioner Ceja abstained, and the motion was unanimously approved.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

Treasurer Gross provided an explanation of the February 2024 financial report as provided by the bookkeeper. The Bridgeport DSSD ended the month of February 2024 with \$195,358 in assets, of which \$167,303 was cash spread across two bank accounts. Liabilities totaled \$102,249. Net Assets at the end of the month totaled \$93,1098. The accrued revenue was \$784,349 in revenue during the fiscal year, of this \$736,413 was accrued from City of Bridgeport tax and contract payments. Expenses for the same period totaled \$831,808 – primarily related to streetscape maintenance and creative placemaking public art projects (\$650,883). Accrued expenses exceeded revenue for the period by \$47,459. Mr. Ceja made a motion to approve the February 2024 financial report. Ms. Egbert seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent presented the draft budget and companion narrative for board discussion, which will be presented for vote and approval by the membership at the 2024 annual meeting on May 8, 2024.

V. REPORT FROM THE CITY

Mr. Toledo was not in attendance to present a report from the City, but he did provide a series of updates via email regarding the State Street blinking light letter to CT DOT, the timeline to construction on the Congress Street Bridge and Lafayette Circle realignment projects, and the suit that the City filed against the Connecticut Siting Council's UI monopole location recommendations.

Further, Bill Coleman and Jonathan Delgado from the City's Office of Planning and Economic Development provided updates on recently awarded grants to complete construction at the Sliver by the River and soccer stadium at the former AGI site, timeline to install wayfinding at the train station, and the future of Resilient Bridgeport projects.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of March 2024, which reflected a moderate increase (5%) from the previous month and moderate decrease (6%) from the same time the previous year in sanitation instances due to fluctuations in the amounts of alcohol containers and trash bags picked up. The team saw a significant increase in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month (100%) and from the same time period in the previous year (1,160%) due to hours dedicated to weeding and installing mulch. The Public Safety category reflected an increase (56%) from the previous month and a decrease (31%) from the same month in the previous year due to fluctuations in the instances of reported panhandling. Finally, there was a slight decrease (4%) in the number of interactions in the Public Engagement category from the previous month, and a slight increase (8%) from the same month in the previous year.

Ms. Coakley Vincent shared the series of upcoming DSSD events in April and May:

- Spotlight on Main with CT Main Street Center and the City's Office of Planning & Economic Development on April 18, 2024 at the Stress Factory Comedy Club
- Jane's Walk Bridgeport on May 4, 2024 leaving from the Bridgeport DSSD office and featuring the Bridgeport Pride Center
- Bridgeport DSSD's annual meeting on May 8, 2024 at the Stress Factory Comedy Club

She also encouraged attendees to share information about the Colorful Crew spring planting and public art painting volunteering opportunities.

VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Executive and Finance

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive and Finance Committee meeting that was held on April 3, 2024. The Committees reviewed and revised the draft fiscal year 2025 budget in preparation for presentation at this meeting. The Committees also set the date for a special meeting regarding board composition to prepare recommendations for the Board of Commissioners to deliberate. Lastly, the Committees finalized the agenda for this month's board meeting.

Further, members of the Executive Committee met with Bridgeport City Council Member and Budget Committee co-chair Scott Burns on April 5, 2024, to discuss

the request for a financial contribution submitted by the DSSD to be included in the upcoming operating budget. Council Member Burns recommended that the DSSD gather letters of support from key Downtown businesses, and that the DSSD may want to present at an upcoming budget meeting. Commissioner Heilmann encouraged the group to attend the City Council's Budget Hearing for the General Fund on May 2, 2024, to voice support for the inclusion of the DSSD's request in the upcoming fiscal year budget.

B. Physical Conditions

Mr. DeAngelis reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on March 29, 2024. The Committee walked the district identifying locations where the spring plantings will be installed, and areas in need of additional detailed cleaning. The Committee also discussed the impact of the NOAA Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant awarded to the City and Trust for Public Land to implement construction of an outdoor open space at the Sliver by the River.

C. Public Safety

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported on the Public Safety Committee meeting that was held on March 29, 2024. The Committee met with Bridgeport Police Chief Porter to discuss recent public safety and quality of life issues in the Downtown, including a series of car accidents and break-ins impacting the district. The Committee also discussed coordination between the Amphitheater and Arena with area parking garages related to planned events in the spring and summer.

D. Special Events and Marketing

Ms. Cobb reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on April 2, 2024. The Committee welcomed new member Valerie Richardson, General Manager of WPKN. The Committee then reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content for the past month, including the Women's History video series collaboration with the Cultural Alliance of Fairfield County, and made recommendations for content in upcoming months. Finally, the Committee discussed the community event partnership requests submitted for inclusion in the fiscal year 2025 budget.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Maher shared that a group of local cultural and heritage institutions were meeting to plan events connected to the United States' 250th anniversary in 2026. She recommended that the DSSD join the planning efforts.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 5:08 p.m.