

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
VIRTUAL
November 21, 2023**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, November 21, 2023, via Zoom. President Fowler called the meeting to order at 11:04am.

The following Board Members were in attendance: President Jeffrey Fowler, Vice-President Emily Hopkins, Secretary/Treasurer Aundi Lesley, Past President April Norton, Mr. Mathew Hill, Ms. Velinda Hardy, Ms. Tonya Parker, Ms. Kira Harris-Braggs, Mr. Taylor Smith, Ms. Abbey McLaren, and Ms. Abigail Strickland.

Absent: Mr. Qaijuan Willis, Ms. Suzanne Roberts, Mr. Jason Ford, and Ms. Kendrick Ward.

The following Staff Members were in attendance: Ms. Renée Coakley and Ms. Cindy Eidson

The following Partners were in attendance: Ms. Jessica Worthington and Mr. Jon McBrayer

Review and Approval of Minutes: The October 17th minutes were reviewed. Ms. Strickland motioned to approve with CDP edits. Ms. Parker seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

The October 24th Special Called Meeting minutes were reviewed. Mr. Smith made a motion to approve with a second from Mr. Hill. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Review and Approval of the Financial Reports: The September financial report was not available and will be reviewed at the January meeting.

Committee Reports

I. Executive Committee (Internal Operations)

- a. *Annual Contracts Review:* President Fowler reviewed the timelines of the current contracts. The GMA contract will be reviewed in August. The CDP contract UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government will be reviewed by the Education Committee at the retreat in January and again around July when it is time to renew. The contract with GA CVB will be renewed soon before Jay leaves his role with GA CVB.
- b. *2024 GDA Board Retreat:* Terri Smiley with the Walton County Chamber will be facilitating the board retreat with a focus on teambuilding. The retreat will be held January 16-18. The first day will be a half day in the afternoon, the second day will be a full day, and the third day will end around lunchtime. Ms. Norton is checking on a room block at Courtyard. President Fowler suggested securing a facilitator as soon as the 2025 location is announced.

II. Education and Training

- a. *CDP:* The first classes in Americus were very positive and everyone passed. There was a good mix of roles present including city leadership and elected officials. The revenue for those classes was \$13750. Profit was over \$10,000 but does not include credit card fees and UGA's portion.

III. Marketing & Membership

- a. *Marketing:* Facebook followers are at 2840, up 25 from last month. Instagram followers are 940. The new GDA LinkedIn is live and will be a great tool to advertise the CDP classes. The Twitter account is still in the process of being deleted.
- b. *Membership:* The new membership letter was sent out and some payments have come in the mail. The online portal will be set up on December 4th for online payments.

IV. Legislative:

- a. *Advocacy Agenda and Page on Website*: Mr. Smith shared that the webpage is live and a rack card for advocacy is being created with a QR code linking to the website and important statistics about the impact of downtowns. Cities United will be held in Atlanta January 26-29. We will be requesting a GDA booth.

V. Policy & Procedures:

- a. *2024 Elections Results*: Mr. Hill reviewed the 2024 Elections results. Cassidi Kendrick in Tybee Island will be replacing Mr. Hill's position.
- b. *Policy & Procedures Manual*: Mr. Hill emailed a copy of the Policy & Procedures Manual with the edits based on the board's feedback. Ms. Strickland motioned to adopt the manual with a second from Ms. Hopkins. All were in favor. Motion carried.

VI. Other Business:

- a. There was discussion about whether or not to continue a Founders Circle option for those that helped form the Georgia Downtown Association. It was decided that while we are not carrying that option forward with the new membership structure, we will honor them in some way at the awards ceremony at the 2024 conference in Thomasville.
- b. Everyone thanked Mathew Hill for his years of service and dedication to GDA. He will be greatly missed.

VII. Staff Updates: Ms. Eidson shared that the Placemaking Summit will be held in Atlanta in March for those that would like to attend. Applications to the Young Gamechangers program are still open and will close in December.

There being no further business, Mr. Hill made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:55 am.