

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
AMERICUS  
October 17, 2023**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 in Americus. President Fowler called the meeting to order at 11:05 am.

**The following Board Members were in attendance:** President Jeffrey Fowler, Vice-President Emily Hopkins, Secretary/Treasurer Aundi Lesley (virtual), Past President April Norton, Mr. Mathew Hill, Ms. Velinda Hardy, Ms. Tonya Parker, Ms. Kendrick Ward, Ms. Suzanne Roberts, Mr. Jason Ford (virtual), Mr. Qaijuan Willis, Ms. Kira Harris-Braggs, and Ms. Abigail Strickland.

**Absent:** Mr. Taylor Smith and Ms. Abbey McLaren

**The following Staff Members were in attendance:** Ms. Renée Coakley, Sharon Collins and Ms. Cindy Eidson

**The following Partners were in attendance:** Ms. Jessica Worthington (virtual) and Leigh Burns (virtual)

**Guest:** Jennifer Lee Smith, Vidalia, GA

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** The September minutes were reviewed. Ms. Norton motioned to approve. Mr. Hill seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**Review and Approval of the Financial Reports:** Ms. Coakley presented the August financial report. Mr. Willis motioned to approve with a second motion from Ms. Norton. All were in favor. Motion carried.

## **Committee Reports**

### **I. Executive Committee (Internal Operations)**

- a. *2024 Board Retreat:* It was decided to host the annual board retreat in Thomasville on January 16-18, 2024. Ms. Lesley motioned to reach out to Carrie Barnes with GA EMC first and Garrett Nudd second if Ms. Barnes is unavailable. Ms. Kira Harris-Braggs seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.
- b. *2023 Workplan Status Review:* Jeffrey reviewed the pullout section of the 2023 workplan to determine current statuses of all committees.
- c. *2024 GDA Board Meeting Dates and Locations:* The dates and locations were discussed and decided upon for 2024:
  - i. January 16-18, Thomasville Retreat
  - ii. February 27, Virtual
  - iii. March 26, GMA Office
  - iv. April 23, Virtual
  - v. May 21, Vidalia
  - vi. June 27, Virtual
  - vii. July 23, Thomasville
  - viii. August 27, Thomasville Conference
  - ix. September 24, Virtual
  - x. October 22, Macon
  - xi. November 26, Virtual
  - xii. December – No Meeting

### **II. Education and Training**

- a. *Regional Meetups*: Renée presented the flyer with the upcoming dates for the Spring Regional Meetups. There are as follows: Millen – April 3<sup>rd</sup>, Carrollton – April 9<sup>th</sup>, Cave Spring – April 25<sup>th</sup>, Valdosta – April 30<sup>th</sup> & St. Marys – May 17<sup>th</sup>.
- b. *CDP Sponsorships*: President Fowler is presented the sponsorship options. The form was approved with minimal changes by Mr. Hill who motioned to approve with a second from Ms. Hardy. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**III. Marketing & Membership**

- a. *Marketing*: currently have 2815 Facebook followers (up 34 since last meeting) and 908 Instagram followers (up 5 since last meeting)
- b. *Membership*: there are currently 206 paid members.
- c. *New Member Rates*: Invoices will be emailed on December 4<sup>th</sup> to reflect the new membership structure.

**IV. Legislative:**

- a. *Advocacy Agenda and Page on Website*: Mr. Ford reviewed the advocacy agenda prepared by the Legislative Committee and distributed previously by Mr. Smith. Mr. Hill motioned to approve the advocacy agenda with a second from Ms. Ward. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**V. Policy & Procedures:**

- a. *2024 Elections*: Mr. Hill reviewed the 2024 Elections Ballot. Ms. Strickland motioned to approve with the removal of District 12 and submit to membership. Ms. Parker seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.
- b. *Policy & Procedures Manual*: Mr. Hill will email a copy for review and the board will vote at the November meeting.

**VI. Other Business:**

- a. *2024 Budget Review*: There will be a special called virtual meeting to review the budget on October 24<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm.
- b. *Non-Dues Revenue*: this item was tabled and Sharon will present some new dues revenue options at the November board meeting.

**VII. Staff Updates:**

- a. Renée reported that Jeffrey will be speaking on the Tues, October 24<sup>th</sup> GMA Cities Connect Call about elevating your cities downtown development programs with GDA. Renée will email login info to everyone.

There being no further business, Ms. Hopkins made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Harris-Braggs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:37 pm.