

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
CANTON  
August 22, 2023**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, July 25<sup>th</sup> during the GDA Conference in Canton. President Fowler called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm.

**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, Mr. Taylor Smith, Ms. Tonya Parker, Ms. Abbey McLaren, Ms. Kendrick Ward, Ms. Kira Harris-Braggs, Ms. Suzanne Roberts, Mr. Jason Ford, and Mr. Qaijuan Willis.

General attendance from GDA Membership who attended the Conference.

**Absent:** Ms. Abigail Strickland

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

**The following Partners were in attendance:** Mr. Clark Stancil, Mr. Scott Purvis, Ms. Leigh Burns, Ms. Jessica Worthington, Mr. Jon McBrayer, Ms. Ellen Hill, and Ms. Elizabeth Elliot.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** The July 25<sup>th</sup> Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting minutes were reviewed. Ms. Norton motioned to approve. Ms. Braggs seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

The August 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Called Board Meeting minutes were reviewed. Mr. Ford motioned to approve. Ms. Roberts seconded. All were in favor. Motion carried.

**Review and Approval of the Financial Reports:** Ms. Coakley presented the YTD financial report, which was presented in a new format to reflect expenses for GDA Conference. President Fowler pointed out the increase in membership revenue at \$3,700. Mr. Hill pointed out the conference expenses were under budget and thanked Ms. Hardy for all her efforts to stay within budget. Ms. Norton motioned to approve with a second motion from Mr. Willis. All were in favor. Motion carried.

## **Committee Reports**

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

- a. *GMA Ethics and Civility:* President Fowler explained the GMA Organization of Civility programs and presented the information to the GDA Board to adopt the programs as an organization. Mr. Willis motioned to adopt the policy of Civility with a second from Ms. Ward. All were in favor. Motion carried. President Fowler presented the GMA Organization of Ethics information. Ms. Parker motioned to adopt the policy of Ethics with a second from Mr. Ford. All were in favor. Motion carried.

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

- a. *CDP Update:* President Fowler reported that the inaugural CDP class was held yesterday, Monday, August 21<sup>st</sup> at conference. GDA is looking for sponsors for the program. All information regarding CDP will be on the GDA website within a week. Ms. Lesley thanked UGA Carl Vinson Institute and Georgia Power for sharing the cost with GDA to develop the program.

- b. *Regional Meetups*: President Fowler reported the fall regional meetups are kicking off soon. All registration info is in the conference gift bags.
- c. *Mentoring Program*: Happy Hour is tonight for those interested in participating as a mentor or mentee. Ms. Parker encouraged everyone to come.

### III. **Marketing & Membership**

- a. *Marketing*: President Fowler reported that the social platforms currently have 2664 Facebook Followers and 856 Instagram Followers. He encouraged everyone to follow the pages and get the Instagram page to 1000 by the end of conference. He also reminded everyone to use #gadowntowns.
- b. *Membership*: There are 203 paid members. President Fowler explained the new membership structure that will roll out in 2024. Ms. Coakley will send the emails with the new structure at the end of the year. Board Members are encouraged to become members of GDA.

IV. **Legislative**: Mr. Smith explained the efforts of the Legislative Committee and expanding our advocacy efforts for GDA. He explained the GA Cities United Summit in January and the opportunity to have our collective voices heard at the state level. He reported on the bills that have been considered or passed in the last couple of years that directly affect the work we do in downtowns: local control for short-term rentals, local control for alcohol sales and distances, CDBG support, and truck weights (which GMA and GDA are advocating against). He encouraged everyone to pay attention, get involved, and let him know what other topics the committee should consider.

V. **Conference Committee**: Ms. Hardy thanked everyone for coming to the conference and encouraged everyone to attend Terrific Tuesday. President Fowler thanked the sponsors and exhibitors.

VI. **Policy & Procedures**: Mr. Hill reminded everyone that we revised the Bylaws last year in Macon. The board qualifications were changed to two years, new board member orientation, no regional requirements (though GDA will make every effort to have broad representation across the state). This year we introduced Board Member Agreements, with information about vacancies, removals, and attendance, teleconference, Robert's Rules of Order, and successions for the Executive Committee. Leigh Ann Aldridge from Monroe made a motion to approve. Jasmine Billings from Lawrenceville seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

### VII. **Other Business**:

- a. President Fowler reminded everyone to get their passports stamped, purchase swag, visit the silent auction, and drop their business card in the committee interest buckets.

### **Staff Updates:**

- Ms. Eidson shared about the upcoming training on November 15<sup>th</sup> in Bainbridge, loan money is available, and explained the SSBCI program through DCA.

### **Partner Updates:**

- Ms. Worthington thanked everyone and recognized the DCA representatives in attendance.
- Mr. McBrayer introduced himself and shared about the ECG offerings.

There being no further business, Mr. Willis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Ford seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:37 pm.