

**Georgia Downtown Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Virtual
May 21st, 2024**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, May 21st, 2024. The board met in Vidalia, Georgia. President Hopkins called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Emily Hopkins, Aundi Lesley, Suzanne Roberts (virtual), Jason Ford, Velinda Hardy, Abigail Strickland, Taylor Smith, Kendrick Ward, Jeffrey Fowler, Qaijuan Willis, April Norton (virtual), Cassidi Kendrick, Tonya Parker

The following GMA/GDA Staff Members were in attendance: Ms. Renée Coakley, Ms. Sharon Collins (Virtual), Ms. Sadie Krawczyk (Virtual)

The following GDA Partners were in attendance: Jessica Worthington (Virtual), Scott Purvis

Review and Approval of Minutes: The April 2024 minutes were reviewed. Aundi motioned and Cassidy seconded to approve. All in favor.

Review and Approval of the January and February 2024 Financial Reports: Renée started with January financials. The first item was revenue. A mug was sold. Travel and Entertainment and the board retreat was discussed, as well as expenditures for professional services, and for the facilitator and the D&O insurance. CDP financials - certificate program exam fees should not be there. Just a different classification. Abigail motioned to approve. Taylor seconded. All in favor.

February financials. Office supplies - \$69.80 in error should be in gifts and awards. Conference - \$25 credit which was a refund for someone who cancelled the blue ridge conference and a train ride. CDP – certificate and exam fees needs to be reclassified. Jeffrey moved to approve, Qaijuan seconded, and all voted to approve.

Action Items: - Edge Scholarship Criteria and Eligibility Reviews – Emily Hopkins

Emily explained the changes to the benefit. There was discussion about when to apply, and having language about what is required to be reimbursed. Renée added they must submit a W9. Jeffrey added that we need a reimbursement form. The reason to use a review committee of partners is to create fairness if board members apply. Tonya made motion to approve with changes that include reimbursement submittals. Taylor seconded. All voted in favor.

Committee Reports

I. Executive Committee (Internal Operations) – Emily Hopkins

- a. Board Positions:** New Board member –Lequrica Gaskins won the election. Lequrica has accepted and will join in June.
- b. CDP Contract –** The biggest change is the UGA fee has been reduced from \$38,000 to \$24,402. The biggest benefit of the program is participants get a certificate through the University of Georgia. It is an attractive incentive. Jason

moved to do an electronic vote for approval of the contract. Qaijuan seconded. All voted in favor.

Emily thanked the board for brainstorming on the education foundation classes and submitting sessions. It helped us be more selective.

II. Education and Training – Jeffrey Fowler

- a. **Committee Update** – Meeting and education survey completed.
- b. **CDP Update:** Working on getting sponsors for CDP for August to next July. June class participation updated See spreadsheet. Actual revenue is \$44,275 – estimate \$48,275 or 30% 53,382. Potential budget provided for 2024-2025.

III. Marketing and Membership – Abigail Strickland

- a. **Social Media Update:** Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn are all doing well.
- b. **Membership Invoices:** We are over income goal for membership.
- c. **GDA Booth at Main Street Now:** Great example of teamwork at conference in working the booth. Tonya mentioned it was worth it especially when we talked about CDP. There were no other state booths. Georgia was the only one.
- d. **Swag for Conference:** Looking to do a swag purchase. There is also an opportunity to work with a new partner. There has been a large request for umbrellas, and we will also do power bank for phones, hippo mug, bags, buttons, fans. A company called Loyalty Patch sells custom patches for hats, bags, etc. We may do a giveaway of a GDA Patch but people would have to purchase the hat. We also discussed a t-shirt vendor.

IV. Legislative – Taylor Smith

- a. **Committee Update:** Legislative advocacy training at conference. Emily made connection with Beer Guild (at a Regional Meetup). Kendrick updated on Rural Zone and updated on a plan to bring the rural zone back up. Communities will be able to reapply as an internal change at DCA.

- V. Policy & Procedures – Aundi** – working on a new onboarding process to include a phone script for the President, a welcome email, and formal orientation agenda. We discussed creating a buddy system for new board members, as well as updating general board member agreements including time and financial requirements. Renée added an interest form to website. There is a Dropbox for institutional knowledge. Going forward we will have committees bring work to board for a full board vote before implementing. Education proposals coming soon will vote online. Tonya motioned and Taylor seconded to do so. All in favor.

VI. Conference Committee – April Norton –

- a. Theme is Advancing Together – 25 years of Impact
- b. Schedule of Events – Exhibitor and Sponsors up on website, Sponsor showcase mixer is new this year. Listing on GDA mobile app, July 15th for adding, Signage at each session, Sponsor logo on badges and screens and stations, GMA newsletter and recognition at award ceremony.
- c. Will need to “flip” the room between sessions, Renée updated who sponsors are for the conference – 2 new platinum sponsors – Georgia Power and the City of

Thomasville, Gold – Georgia Cities Foundation, Silver – still need, Bronze – ECG, Holiday Designs, Liberty County CPB, City of Americus

d. The schedule was discussed and is available to review on the website.

VII. Other Business: Regional Meetups – St. Mary’s was amazing because of all the projects they are working on. Pictures posted of examples of the work being done.

VIII. Staff Updates: None

IX. Partner Updates Scott Purvis – The CREATE Program will be held again except it will be a 2-day program and a community visit. Georgia Power is excepting nominations through the end of May. Communities do have to be a Georgia power franchise community, Jessica – no update, Sadie – no new update.

Emily thanked everyone for their hard work – note that in person meetings tend to go a little longer than zoom meetings.

Qaijuan and Taylor will be speaking at the GMA Convention.

X. Adjourn: There being no further business, Jeffrey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Qaijuan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned.