

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
ATLANTA, GA
MAY 24, 2022**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. in the main conference room of the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). President Norton called the meeting to order at 11:06 a.m.

The following Board Members were in attendance: President April Norton, Vice-President Jeffrey Fowler, Secretary/Treasurer Christian Hamilton, Past President Mathew Hill, Ms. Aundi Lesley, Ms. Abigail Strickland, Mr. Qaijuan Willis, Ms. Emily Hopkins, Ms. Abbey McLaren, and Ms. Kendrick Ward. Ms. Tonya Parker was in attendance via teleconference. Ms. Velinda Hardy, Mr. Taylor Smith, Ms. Monica Rentfrow, and Mr. Ricky Clark were absent.

The following Staff Members were in attendance: Ms. Renée Coakley and Ms. Emily Davenport.

The following Partners were in attendance: Ms. Cindy Eidson, Ms. Sharon Collins, Mr. Chris Higdon, Ms. Sadie Krawczyk, Ms. Leigh Burns, Mr. Steve Foster, and Mr. Michael Cahill. Ms. Ellen Hill and Ms. Elizabeth Elliott were in attendance via teleconference.

A new item, "GDA/GMA Contract" was added to the Agenda under Committee Reports – Education and Conference.

Ms. Strickland stated that Mr. Clark's name was spelled as "Rick" instead of "Ricky" in the April 26, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes and needed to be corrected. Upon a motion made by Past President Hill and seconded by Ms. Strickland, the April 26, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved with the correction made.

Ms. Coakley provided the Financial Report. She stated that there were no major changes, but there was an increase in member dues, as well as a change to incorporate her own position. Vice-President Fowler inquired as to why the Travel & Entertainment line item was high. Ms. Davenport stated that she would inquire with finance, and Past President Hill stated that it was likely due to the Board Retreat in January. Ms. Davenport stated that she would note this and follow up with the GDA Board. Upon a motion made by Mr. Willis and seconded by Past President Hill, the March 2022 Financial Report was unanimously approved.

Committee Reports

I. Internal.

- a. **Welcome New Board Members.** President Norton welcomed Mrs. Coakley to the team as the new GDA Business Manager. She also welcomed Ms. McLaren, Mr. Smith, and Ms. Hardy as new members of the Board of Directors.
- b. **Bylaw Review Update.** Past President Hill stated that the Bylaw Review Committee had met to make changes, the predominance of which involved updating the language of the bylaws. He added that a clean copy of the changes would be sent to the board within the next few weeks and stated his hope that the board would vote on the new bylaws in June, which would allow them to be adopted by Membership at the Annual Meeting in August at the GDA Conference in Macon. President Norton asked the board to review the bylaws and provide any questions or suggestions to Past President Hill.
- c. **National Scholarship and Edge Scholarship Combined Application.** President Norton stated that the scholarships were combined to be called the "Downtown Edge Scholarship." She added that this newly combined scholarship form was edited by the Marketing Committee and sent to Internal Operations for approval. She said that the recommendations at the May 24, 2022 meeting came from both committees. Mr. Higdon stated that the new wording allowed for flexibility in training, and that they seemed acceptable. President Norton followed from this and stated that this new application allows individuals to apply for both state and national training opportunities. Ms. Coakley said that this new application would go live on the website as soon as the website language could be mirrored to reflect the language on the new application. With this, upon a motion from Vice-President Fowler and a second from Ms.

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Strickland, the adoption of the combined National Scholarship and Edge Scholarship into the Downtown Edge Scholarship was unanimously approved.

II. Education and Conference.

- a. **Regional Meet-Ups.** Vice-President Fowler stated that the Spring meet-ups were very successful and that the Fall meet-ups would be planned soon.
- b. **Mentoring Program.** Vice-President Fowler stated that two downtown managers were interested in the mentoring program, and that these individuals would move forward at the 2022 Annual Conference.
- c. **CDP/GDDP Contract.** President Norton stated that this contract has been signed. She added that Ms. Chrissy Marlowe at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) said that the timeline for next steps would begin soon, as outlined in the contract.
- d. **GDA/GMA Contract.** President Norton stated that this contract must be updated to include new contact information. She asked for a board vote on the addendum. Upon a motion by Vice-President Fowler and a second by Past President Hill, the board unanimously voted to approve President Norton signing the contract.
- e. **2022 Conference.** Ms. Hopkins stated that the 2022 Conference would take place from August 22 – August 25. She said that it was no longer taking place at the Convention Center, but would be hosted downtown in various venues, including the hub at Terminal Station, with concurrent sessions at the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame and Tubman Museum. She added that the welcome reception would take place at Fall Line Brewing Company, and that mobile workshops would be led by local partners, with most being downtown walking tours. Ms. Hopkins said that registration would launch on June 1st, and that Awards Applications and Sessions would be due June 15th. She continued by stating that the Award Ceremony would take place on Wednesday night at the Douglas Theatre.

III. Marketing and Membership.

- a. **Marketing.** Ms. Lesley stated that Ms. Coakley now had access to all social media platforms and the website. She provided an update of the likes/followers on multiple platforms and said that a Facebook event had been created for the 2022 Conference. She added that the brand refresh has been successful and that the membership form and brochure would be updated to incorporate the new branding. Ms. Lesley suggested that the board sell items at the conference and use the funds to update tablecloths, banners, and other promotion items. Vice-President Fowler said that the budget would perhaps need to be adjusted, and Ms. Davenport stated that, if necessary, a budget amendment could occur at the end of the fiscal year. The board agreed to having a booth to sell GDA items as a revenue stream. Ms. Lesley said that she is working on swag items and would provide an update to the board. President Norton thanked the CVIOG for their assistance in putting GDA's vision into play through branding.
- b. **Membership.** Ms. Lesley said that the website is now up to date with current membership.

IV. Legislative.

- a. **Update.** No report was provided. Ms. Burns stated that she and Mr. Clark would regroup after the elections to determine Fall advocacy needs.

Staff Updates

- I. **Update.** Ms. Collins stated that the Conference is progressing well. Mr. Higdon stated that the Renaissance and Starr Award Committee would be meeting soon to determine award winners, which would be presented at the upcoming GMA Conference. He added that the Georgia Cities Foundation has money available and needs projects for funding. He reminded GDA members that their rebate program is still open to provide assistance with energy-efficiency. He also said that GMA is now accepting applications for GICH. Mr. Higdon said that the first Small Cities Conference was very successful, that the Young Game Changers Kickoff in Dalton went well, and that the first Placemaking Retreat took place in Macon recently. President Norton said that the board would be glad to push out any items as necessary. Ms. Davenport thanked Ms. Coakley for coming on board so quickly and successfully.

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Partner Updates

- I. Fox Theatre Institute.** Ms. Burns said that the Fox-in-a-Box would be taking place in several Georgia libraries over the Summer. She stated that the first Archives Night at the Fox would begin in June, and that funds would go toward the Fox Archives. She reminded board members that the application deadline for FTI grants is coming up, and that the Application would go live on June 1. Workshops would take place in Athens, Atlanta, and virtually, and they would also include a presentation from Ms. Tina Lilly at the Georgia Council for the Arts. Ms. Burns stated that the FTI would be working with South Arts to promote their November Creative Placemaking Leadership Summit in Chapel Hill, NC.
- II. Electric Cities of Georgia.** Mr. Cahill thanked the board for allowing him to attend the meeting and stated that he had no update.
- III. Department of Community Affairs.** Ms. Elliott echoed Mr. Higdon and stated that the Small Cities Conference was very successful. She stated that the Office of Downtown Development would host a training on grant funding in October, and that it planned to offer Main Street 101 in-person at the August 2022 GDA Conference. She also welcomed Ms. Ebony Simpson to the DCA team and stated that the Rural Downtown Redevelopment Grant Program was available, and applications would be due on June 3. Ms. Elliott added that the National Main Street Conference went well.
- IV. Georgia Power.** Mr. Foster provided a brief update from the Urban Land Institute and stated that they are looking outside of the metro area for technical assistance. He stated that Georgia Power was potentially looking into assisting with a downtown lighting webinar and asked GDA members if any would be willing to participate in an information gathering phone call with him. Mr. Foster stated that the Georgia Power CREATE Program had been successful thus far. He added that he would be retiring the first of July and that he would be finding a replacement for him on the board. President Norton thanked him for his longstanding service to GDA, as well as his leadership, and provided him with a plaque and a gift from the Georgia Downtown Association.

Other Business

- I. Nonprofit 990 Form.** President Norton stated that the 2020 990 Form was accepted in November 2021, and that the completion of the 2021 Form is in progress, to be completed before November 15, 2022. She added that it would be appropriate to bring this to the board before November to have a record for the minutes.
- II. Future Work Sessions.** President Norton suggested that the GDA meet before or after their regular in-person meetings to discuss work plans, and that this would also allow for New Member Orientation. Secretary-Treasurer Hamilton stated that he would prefer an hour before the regular meeting. Ms. Lesley concurred, and Mr. Foster said that he believed this should happen. Ms. Elliott said that this used to happen, with the work session at 11am and the regular meeting at 12pm. President Norton said the board would adjust times and that she hoped this would begin in July.
- III. Award Congratulations.** President Norton congratulated Mr. Willis and Secretary-Treasurer Hamilton for being recognized at their respective Chambers of Commerce as award recipients, and for being active in their local communities. Ms. Lesley congratulated President Norton for her recent IDA Leadership Award.

There being no further business, upon a motion made by Vice-President Fowler and seconded by Ms. Lesley, the regular meeting of the Georgia Downtown Association Board of Directors was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.