

**GEORGIA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 25, 2022**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Monday, October 25, 2022, at 11:00 AM in the GMA Conference room and via Zoom for those who could not attend. President Norton called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM.

The following Board Members were in attendance in person: President Mrs. April Norton, Ms. Abbey McLaren, Mr. Taylor Smith, Past President Mathew Hill, Ms. Abigail Strickland, Ms. Emily Hopkins, and Ms. Velinda Hardy

The following Board Members were in attendance virtually: Mr. Ricky Clark, Mr. Qaijuan Willis, Vice President Mr. Jeffrey Fowler, Ms. Aundi Lesley, Ms. Tonya Parker, and Ms. Monica Rentfrow

Absent: Ms. Kendrick Ward

The following Staff Members were in attendance: Mrs. Renée Coakley

The following Partners were in attendance: Mrs. Sharon Collins, Ms. Leigh Burns, Mrs. Cindy Eidson, Ms. Ellen Hill, Ms. Nicole Brown, Mrs. Jessica Worthington, Mr. Scott Purvis and Mrs. Sadie Krawczyk

Opening remarks from President April Norton: Ms. Norton welcomed GMA Staff Member Nicole Brown and asked Mrs. Coakley to introduce Ms. Brown to the board. Mrs. Coakley stated that Ms. Brown is the newest member of the team and is part-time with her department and with another department at GMA. Ms. Brown is in attendance filling in as secretary for today's meeting.

Mrs. Norton introduced from Georgia Power, Mr. Scott Purvis, who will be serving as a partner since Steve's retirement. He is a big part of the Georgia Power community through economic development and has been serving as manager of the Southwest region of Georgia. He is a big part of Georgia's economic impact leaders and has served as City Manager of Hahira, Georgia. Mr. Purvis stated that he looks forward to working with the board.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Upon a motion made by Ms. Strickland and seconded by Mr. Hill, the September 27, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

Review and Approval of Financial Report: Mrs. Coakley provided the Financial Report for August, including the GDA Conference. Under Revenue, there was an increase in silent auction and revenue received from the swag sold before the conference.

Mr. Fowler asked if the award items placed under office supplies should be included under gifts and awards. Mrs. Coakley will verify with finance why it was placed under office supplies. Mrs. Norton asked Mrs. Coakley to look into moving the charge if it is miscoded.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Rentfrow and seconded by Ms. Parker, the August 2022 financials were unanimously approved.

Committee Reports

I. Internal Operations – April Norton

- a. **Board Retreat** - Mrs. Coakley provided a draft agenda from last year's retreat and is looking to nail down the agenda as January approaches. She and Mrs. Collins were able to scope out some areas during the regional meeting in Canton. Mrs. Coakley reminded the board that the Carl Vincent Institute would facilitate the retreat.
- b. **Board Terms & Nominations** – Mrs. Norton stated that Christian Hamilton had accepted a new position, and he has presented his resignation from continuing to serve on the board. Mrs. Norton mentioned that per our bylaws, the nominating committee should consist of a minimum of three past presidents; it shall be chaired by the immediate past president, Mathew Hill. Other past presidents to serve on this committee are Sadie Krawczyk and Ellen Hill. The board reserves the right to make appointments when necessary.

Mr. Hill stated that several board members' terms are expiring, and as long as they are willing to continue to serve, they would be sent to the membership to be voted on. Mr. Hamilton's position will need to be filled, and it has been asked that Jason Ford from Hartwell and Suzanne Roberts from Calhoun, who are willing, be placed on the ballot before the next board meeting. Mr. Hill asked the board if they had any others they would like to suggest.

Mr. Hill mentioned that since Mr. Hamilton had resigned, the nominating committee proposed Emily Hopkins to be Vice President, and Monica Rentfrow for Secretary-Treasurer for 2023.

Mr. Hill asked if any board members would like to make any nominations from the floor.

An official ballot for the GDA 2023 Board of Directors will be sent out to the membership for vote.

II. Education & Training – Jeffrey Fowler

- a. **Regional Meetups** – Mr. Fowler stated that the meetup in Hartwell was impressive. It was informative; there were tours, and they had lunch with the group. Mr. Fowler mentioned he had a great experience with SBDC and welcomed others in the meeting to speak about their meetup experiences. Mrs. Coakley said she attended all except Moultrie, in which Chris Higdon was able to participate in her place. Mrs. Coakley mentioned that the regional meetups were very well attended, and the conversations were beneficial.
- b. **Mentoring Program** - All the mentors, have been notified of their mentees, and everyone has been paired. Some last-minute ones have even gotten in, and the program is on track. It was asked for all the mentors to contact their mentees within the first two weeks of them receiving their emails.

- c. **CDP** – No updates at this time; however, the planning meeting is scheduled in January. Mrs. Norton mentioned that all board members do not need to attend. Only those on the education committee and the internal operations are required.

III. **Marketing & Membership**

- a. **Marketing** – Abigail reported that currently, there are 2,334 Facebook and 782 Instagram followers. For Facebook, in the last 28 days, post engagement was over 13,000, and the post engagement was 2,100, with 17 new page likes and 64 new page followers. Mrs. Norton added that from the Georgia Downton Conference and the promotions behind that, they had received several magazines and publications reaching out for interviews and more information on Georgia Downtown Association. An interview was conducted by James Magazine that will be featured in their November/December issue under their Georgia Main Street feature about Georgia Downtown Association and City of Moultrie as Downtown of the Year will be the cover of the magazine. The city of Smyrna and Fitzgerald will be highlighted as well. Also, Restaurant Informer magazine reached out. They will be doing a GDA feature representing Georgia’s downtown areas revitalization, how restaurants have played a part in coming through and out of COVID, and the information shared at the conference on how retail looks different now. Mr. Fowler mentioned that a TV network in South Georgia is interested in working with the City of Warrenton and GDA and heard his name through the conference.
- b. **Membership** – There were zero new memberships in September and 11 new members in October. Past-due payments have been coming in, and new invoices will be emailed in mid-November. GDA now has a dedicated finance person who will follow up with late payments directly. Both Renée and Kim will be working on securing dues promptly and moving forward.

- IV. **Legislative** - Ms. Krawczyk stated she is trying to get us on the legislative update email from GMA to get items beyond downtown or anything that triggers downtown and receive a copy. One was done on the study committees that are meeting pre-legislative sessions, development authorities that may or may not be affecting downtown authorities and talks around housing to remove the power of local cities and stop developers.

Other Business

- a. **Budget Discussion** - Renée Coakley & Sharon Collins
Mrs. Coakley presented the annual conference portion of the budget that was emailed to the board. The report gave a breakdown of the expenses after the conference. Under revenue, credit card fees assessed were higher in August and September due to registration for the conference. Expenses under travel entertainment included the Chick-fil-A Committee lunch. Office supplies, a small charge for certificate frames. Commercial printing costs, lanyards, badge holders, and credit and charge for the step and repeat. Professional Services, payment for DCS, Main Street 101, and Rock Candy. The cost of historic preservation was placed under another category, and a funding line item had to be added to cover the large balance. Meeting Meal Expenses, the cost for

conference catering and lunch at Vibes, and the Thursday morning breakfast at Hotel 45. Facility rentals include the Terminal Station and Douglas for the used spaces and a portion for DDA rental. Speakers line item covered the cost for the speakers, hotels, and flights. The balance of the paid HPC training was also placed there. Under contingency, the additional cost for purchasing swag was placed.

Mrs. Collins noted an expense that was not tracked, the conference app. She will include it once finance makes its recommendations.

Mrs. Coakley mentioned it looks as if there is a large profit but what needs to be remembered is that coming into the budget each time, a board portion is always at a lower amount than our expenses for conference.

Mrs. Collins stated that credit card fees are high. However, finance mentioned that the market drives that processing percentage, and they agreed to do a flat fee per credit card transaction moving forward.

Mrs. Collins gave kudos to Emily Hopkins. Because of her relationships with local businesses, this immensely helped stay on budget for catering.

Mrs. Worthington posed a question regarding expenses that there is no category for the conference and why is there none? Mrs. Collins is not sure, and they present it individually as highlighted on the last two pages.

Mrs. Collins charged the board to think about some non-dues revenue opportunities as part of a general budget but the real focus is where can we get some of that non-dues revenue. Mrs. Norton mentioned that this could be a retreat topic. Mrs. Collins mentioned that a budget adoption will be done before the retreat and can be part of the 2024 budget.

Mrs. Coakley stated that invoices will be going out in mid-November. Mrs. Norton mentioned since the next meeting is November 15th a discussion needs to be had. Along with a discussion on increasing dues and add-on features were discussed. A goal was set to move forward with rates as they are with invoices going out mid-November, but to make this a topic of discussion and planning at retreat and implementation in February or March. Comparables will be needed upon review at retreat.

Staff Updates – No updates at this time.

Partner Updates – Ms. Burns stated they are getting ready to announce the current cycle of grants for Fox Theatre Institute for theaters and performing arts centers in the amount of half a million dollars for 11 projects. They are currently working on strategic planning since July and will end in December and mentioned ways that FTI can be involved in communities. Ms. Burns also requested assistance in getting the word out about the Fox in a Box program, especially in rural communities. The goal is to have it in 159 counties, and it was asked to have a GDA presence and to post on Instagram and or Facebook. This

will help get the numbers and money from the Georgia Council for the Arts and from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mrs. Eidson stated that the Georgia Cities Foundation website is being revamped. Technical assistance teams are being made available to communities and they look forward to the Council for the Arts and the Arts Council in Thomasville.

Ms. Krawczyk stated the Georgia Economic Placemaking collaborative applications are available online for new cities. It can be found on the Georgia Cities Foundation website by going to the main page and the link is on the front page. It is a two-year program, and three new cities will be added to the next cohort. It's a thousand dollars over the two years, so \$500 a year. But we have now rolled out a grant program for our Placemaking cities. That's up to \$2,500 you can get back everything you put in to implement placemaking projects. She thanked Georgia Power for helping secure the speaker for the open plenary session from the fall retreat who talked about placemaking after dark. The recording is online and can be found on Georgia Cities Foundation website. The YoungGameChangers applications are online for anybody 25 to 40 years old in your network that would like to be part of this eight-month program from April - October. The featured city is Columbus and applications are due in November.

Ms. Worthington announced her team is firming up the calendar for next year with plans to roll it out next month. The new standard switch to six with the new six standards will be utilized for upcoming presenting cities. We've had our first meeting with our beta group, and we have a second one coming up. There is a new training platform we are currently working on and converting from old platforms to new and finalizing Main Street 101 to the new version. Contracts are out for new videos and hopes to make them live in December.

There being no further business, upon a motion made by Mr. Hill and seconded by Mr. Fowler, the regular meeting of the Georgia Downtown Association Board of Directors was adjourned at 12:11 PM.