

**Georgia Downtown Association
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes Virtual
July 23rd, 2024**

The GDA Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Tuesday, July 23rd, 2024. The board met in Thomasville, 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 (virtual), Velinda Hardy (virtual), Abigail Strickland (virtual), Taylor Smith, Kendrick Ward, Jeffrey Fowler, Qaijuan Willis, April Norton, Abbey McLaren, Cassidi Kendrick (virtual), Tonya Parker, Lequrica Gaskins

The following GMA/GDA Staff Members were in attendance: Ms. Renée Coakley, Ms. Cindy Eidson (virtual), Carla Albright, Ms. Sharon Collins

The following GDA Partners were in attendance: Mr. Jon VanBrunt, Ms. Leigh Burns (virtual), and Mr. Jon McBrayer, Ms. Ellen Hill, Mr. Scott Purvis, Mr. Clark Stancil (virtual)

Review and Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Qaijuan and Jeffery seconded to approve the June 2024 minutes. All voted in favor of adopting the June 2024 minutes.

Review and Approval of the GDA Financial Reports

- **March 2024** – Several areas of the March 2024 financial report were highlighted. The actual document is available upon request. **Motion to approve Taylor, Seconded Kendrick – All in favor**
- **April 2024** – Several areas of the April 2024 financial report were highlighted. The actual document is available upon request. **Tonya motion to approve, Lequrica seconded – all in favor**
- **May 2024** – Several areas of the May 2024 financial report were highlighted. The actual document is available upon request. **Jeffery motioned to approve the May financials, seconded by April, all in favor.**

Sharon and Renée have a spreadsheet that they manage from a day-to-day perspective. That document was also reviewed and highlights were discussed. The report is available upon request.

Scott Purvis asked about instructor fees for CDP classes. Renée explained which charged fees and at what level.

Discussion Items

- **GDA Financials** – Emily updated on the need to have a discussion for financials with GMA. She prefaced the conversation by saying nothing nefarious is going on, it is just a matter of getting the information in a timely manner. Financial updates have been delayed with several managed programs of GMA and they are working to update procedures to get reports in a timely manner.

Aundi spoke about the need to get timely input and the need to be good stewards so that we can mitigate risk and liability. Ultimately it is hard to vote to approve reports when we don't have a clear picture of financials.

Abigail asked if financials can be reviewed a couple of weeks ahead of time so corrections can be made prior to the meeting.

Taylor thanked Sharon and Renée for keeping a workable spreadsheet.

Tonya talked about having a meeting with the financial director so that we can adjust schedules based on a realistic delivery expectation for financial reports.

Jeffery added that it looks like a lot of components are automated. It seems that given the number of transactions, it shouldn't take that long to update.

Emily would like to ask to receive financials no more than a month behind and at least an explanation as to why if that timeline can't be kept.

Taylor added as we grow, we need to understand this so we don't have challenges in the future.

Emily asked if the scholarship fund can be a restricted item and that it would be good to put a timeline on meetings and resolution.

Abigail would like to have some information before we sign a contract again. Emily said a plan might be more realistic rather than a resolution by the next contract.

Tonya pointed out that some progress has been made and Jeffery added that where we are with this month's update is where we should be.

Emily summarized the discussion saying that our ask is a plan to move forward with meetings and a plan by contract time and hopefully a resolution by the end of the year. She thanked GMA for all the work that they do for us.

- 2025 Location for Conference – the site selection committee will meet and the recommendation will go out hopefully by the time to announce it before conference. We would also like to move forward with approving the location for 2026. Rome, Carrollton, Perry, Gainesville, and Tybee Island are up for consideration.

Tonya mentioned the development of a rubric to have a tool for the selection process.

Aundi mentioned that hotel space is a key selection criterion. We can potentially update the regional meetups and CDP to showcase downtowns. We have outgrown hundreds of locations because our conference has gained more participants.

Abigail mentioned mobile workshops to nearby locations may be a method to showcase other small communities.

We also have to be mindful of what is realistic because of the conference growth.

Action Items

- Bylaws Update – The policy and procedure committee recommended several changes to the bylaws. Many of them were formatting issues, although some updates and a new area was read to the board. This document must be voted on by the membership and we will present these recommended changes at the Georgia Downtown Conference.

Emily asked for a motion to recommend approval of the bylaw's changes – Taylor motioned and Tonya seconded, Renée suggested showing where the changes are in the bylaws for the

membership at the meeting in August. All voted in favor and the bylaws will be presented to full membership.

Committee Reports

- I. Executive Committee (Internal Operations) – Emily Hopkins**
 - a. Annual Meeting During Conference – changing format of the board meeting from a working meeting to more of an annual update so that it is not just the board sitting at the table conducting business.
- II. Education and Training – Jeffery Fowler**
 - a. Committee Update – August class registration looking good so far. Developing next year’s budget based on actuals from this year. Tonya asked about recognition for graduates. Jeffery updated that we will have to seek guidance from UGA.
- III. Marketing and Membership – Abigail Strickland**
 - a. Social Media Update: - 3008 Facebook followers, Instagram is just under 1000, increase in LinkedIn 269, GDA membership is 157 paid members
 - b. City Showcase Boxes: 17 boxes sold
 - c. Abigail updated the board about signups for working at the GDA conference.
- IV. Legislative – Taylor Smith**
 - a. Committee Update: Following up with brewery association so that we may create a partnership, rural zone discussion, catching up with Noah at conference to bring back breakfast at cities conference will be a priority.
- V. Policy & Procedures – Abbey McLaren**
 - a. Committee Update – the committee created a phone and email script to provide information to potential and new board members about expectations of serving on the board.
- VI. Conference Committee – April Norton**
 - a. Committee Update – Hotels are filling up and the rate is only through the 25th to get the group rate. Conference Registration – 235 people registered for conference
- VII. Other Business:** Thomasville is providing sunglasses for everyone in the swag bags. April asked everyone to bring merch for the attendee bags.
- VIII. Partner Updates:** Scott Purvis – CREATE Program – the new CREATE communities were announced. He also updated the board about the Georgia Chamber Rural Prosperity Summit in Tifton. There are new rural awards for person or organization of the year, and for outstanding community. The local chamber has to make the nominations.
Jon McBrayer – The rural zone application is closing August 16th.
Cindy Eidson thought the team is doing a great job for conference and will help set up meetings about the financials.
Clark Stancil discussed that his department at UGA is continuing to do design work in cities around the state.
Ellen Hill updated about Mobilize Main Street coming up. They are working on planning for 2025-26.

Leigh Burns is excited about the conference, The Fox has a Coke Summer Film Festival coming up. They just started a new fiscal year and grant program applications will be opening soon.

IX. Adjourn: There being no further business, Lequica made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Abbey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:36 pm.

Upcoming 2024 Board Meeting Dates:

- August – Conference Thomasville
- September – Virtual
- October – Macon
- November – Virtual
- December – No Meeting