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**Georgette Steffens**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Richard Rosen**  
CHAIRPERSON

**James Hart**  
VICE-CHAIRPERSON

**Daniel Fariello**  
TREASURER

**Jeffrey Gordon**  
SECRETARY

ATTENDANCE:

Richard A. Rosen  
Daniel Fariello  
James P. Hart  
Mark Aronowitz  
Hon. Darius Shahinfar  
Meghan Barkley  
Pamela Nichols  
Stephen M. Cleary  
Seth Meltzer  
David Sarraf  
Mark Yonally

ABSENT:

Jeffrey Gordon  
Tracy Metzger  
Louis Bannister  
Robert Sears  
George Penn  
Dominick Purnomo  
Hon. Daniel P. McCoy  
Hon. Kathy M. Sheehan

STAFF PRESENT:

Georgette Steffens  
Don Wilson  
Jason Bonafide  
Jenny Coye  
Veronica Medina-Matzner

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richard Rosen at 4:35 PM.

Mr. Rosen asked for approval of the September Board minutes | Motion by Mr. Cleary, Mr. Meltzer seconds | All approve.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**Dog Park**

Mr. Rosen updated the Board on the progress of the Dog Park. He said the area is now completely enclosed but some modifications are being done in the fencing to shorten the gap between the fence and the ground, to ensure small dogs cannot escape. He noted that, with the proximity to the road, we must take every measure to prevent any accidents from happening. He also shared that the park will no longer be offering potable water for the dogs, due to some unforeseen underground utilities, but instead we are adding a mural on the wall by the 787 ramp closest to Broadway. The BID anticipates the work will be complete by the end of the month, in time for the ribbon cutting.

Mr. Rosen noted that the Dog Park has been one of the most significant large investments the BID has done in Downtown as far as infrastructure goes, and there is a lot of excitement building up around it. The Olde English Pub is the naming sponsor of the park, which will be called Olde English Downtown Dog Park.

The ribbon cutting will be on Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, at 4:30 PM, with a celebration to follow at the Olde English Pub. All are invited to attend.

A question was asked about who will hold responsibility for the Park upon completion, and Ms. Steffens said that even though the BID is building the park, it will be handed over to the City of Albany, which will be responsible for its overall maintenance, including clean up, mowing of the lawn etc. She added that a sign will be put up outlining the basic dog park rules, which align with other cities' dog parks, and will include a phone number so any complaints or issues can be reported directly to the City.

**Board Nominations**

Mr. Rosen announced that a few members of the Board will be concluding their terms next year, so the BID will have five total positions open – three property owners, one office/retail tenant, and one residential tenant.

Ms. Steffens remarked that Jim Hart, Jeffrey Gordon and Dominick Purnomo are rolling off and Mr. Fariello is up for renewal. She also noted that Holly Brown's position will be changed from tenant to property owner in order to keep the right number for each category as per BID bylaws.

Mr. Rosen shared that the Nomination Committee includes himself, Jim Hart and Mark Yonally, but all members of the Board are welcome to nominate individuals. He said that the BID will be looking for candidates who would be a good addition to the team, considering industries that are not currently being represented and who could bring more diversity and new perspectives to the Board. He added that the BID must follow the procedures stated in its bylaws, which takes a few months, so he urged Board members to start considering nominees who are interested in joining the Board and fit the criteria of the available positions.

A suggestion was made for the BID to provide a blurb that Board members can forward to their tenants and other contacts in the District. Ms. Steffens said she will have a staff member working on that.

#### **Jim DiNapoli Award**

Mr. Rosen said that the BID is also looking for recommendations for the Jim Napoli Award that is presented every year at the Annual Meeting. He went through the list of past awardees, including last year's Anders Tomson and remarked that the BID should continue the tradition of honoring prestigious names. Mr. Rosen invited Board members to consider names of people in different careers and professional fields as well. He also said that the goal is to have a final name for the Board to approve in the next two weeks to allow more time for the BID staff to plan and fundraise for the event.

One of the proposed names was Gavin Donohue, President and CEO of the Independent Power Producers of New York (IPPNY), for his work with the Albany Capital Center, but Mr. Rosen said that the BID is still open to other suggestions. The Board was in agreement that Mr. Donohue was a great choice.

Ms. Steffens added that, in the past, there has been conversations about the BID offering a Small Business Award and she shared that the BID is working with Capitalize Albany Corporation to host an informational networking event in February to highlight the investments being made in Downtown and provide an update on the Impact Downtown Albany plan. She said this event would be the perfect opportunity to offer the Small Business Award and, since the next Board meeting won't happen until the end of January, she will be reaching out to the Board in the next few weeks to get suggestions for this nomination as well.

#### **2018 Meeting Dates**

Mr. Rosen reported that an email was sent to all Board members with the list of the proposed dates for the 2018 Board meetings. He said that BID staff looked at federal and Jewish holidays, as well as school breaks, when determining the dates and asked Board members to let Ms. Steffens know of any conflicts they may have with the scheduled dates.

Ms. Steffens proposed not to hold a Board Meeting before the Annual Meeting, as it tends to be a busy day for the BID staff, and there would still be seven meetings held throughout the year, one more than the minimum of six required in the BID bylaws.

Mr. Rosen reiterated that the BID will not be holding a December meeting, as originally planned, so Board members can be free to enjoy the Holidays.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

#### **Clean Team Contract Award**

Mr. Fariello updated the Board on the status of the Clean Team contract. He said that BID staff sent bid requests to three firms but only the current contractor submitted a proposal.

The agreement is for a 3-year contract, with annual compensation of \$130,928 for 2018, \$135,996 for 2019, and about \$141k for 2020. The first-year increase of \$8,660 is due to new wage laws, and the contract includes a 3.5% increase per year for the remaining two years.

Mr. Fariello reported that the Budget & Finance Committee has recommended doing a 1-year contract with two 1-year options. The BID believes that the quality of the work relies on the supervisor and if he were to leave, there is a concern about the service performance level, so this contracting option gives us the leverage to negotiate with ABM, if need be.

**Action:** Mr. Fariello made the motion to approve the Clean Team Contract | Mr. Cleary seconds | All approve.

#### **990 Review**

Mr. Fariello provided an update on the filing of the 990 Form, which is the federal tax return for nonprofits. He noted that the Board had received the 990 via email, but that extra copies of the form are available on the table for Board members to review. Mr. Fariello said the form was completed by the Accountant, Mr. Palmerino. Mr. Fariello and Ms. Steffens have reviewed the form. Mr. Fariello requested that Board members motion to approve the tax return form.

**Action:** Mr. Cleary made the motion to approve the 990 Form | Mr. Rosen seconds | All approve.

#### **2018 Budget Approval**

Mr. Fariello gave an overview of the 2018 Budget, and said that the Budget & Finance Committee has recommend keeping the tax rate steady for 2018. He stated there has been a slight decrease of about \$30k in the BID's assessment revenue from last year. He stated that this decrease was expected due to the anticipated correction from the Citywide reassessment conducted last year. The BID is under the 20% maximum cap.

Ms. Steffens added that a BID tax rate assessment chart is available in the Board's packet for their review, with a comparison of the previous years. She said the BID used to collect the maximum tax rate allowed, but since she joined the BID in 2009, the Board has voted for keeping it under the cap.

Ms. Steffens went through the 2018 budget and noted that the items highlighted in yellow are the final numbers that she is projecting for yearend in 2017.

Ms. Steffens said that the \$640k the BID was awarded this year in grants – National Grid and NY Main Street – will be realized in 2018 because they are both reimbursable grants. The NY Main Street grant must be spent by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018 and most of the projects for the National Grid Grant will happen by the Spring/Summer.

Payroll includes some pay raises for staff and the pension plan also has an increase as a couple staff members want to enroll in the retirement plan.

Under Office Equipment/Purchases, there is a \$17k budgeted for January that is for the new database system for the BID to help consolidate our management tools and streamline our communication process with Stakeholders. We decided to go with Salesforce, which will cost about \$12k. We are also getting a new phone system, as the current one needs some upgrading, and that will cost about \$4k.

Under Maintenance, there has been a decrease because in 2017 we migrated to the cloud and that raised our costs with computer services significantly, but this won't be necessary again in 2018.

The telephone charges also increased because after we migrated to the cloud earlier this year, we needed to upgrade our internet speed, and we also included a monthly stipend for two of our staff members who use their personal cell phone data for work-related activities, such as social media posts, Facebook live, reporting infrastructure and garbage issues, and so on.

Under Training/Development Staff we have added some funds for two BID employees to attend the International Downtown Association annual conference next year.

Under Clean Up/Sub Contracts we included the change in the ABM contract for next year.

Other changes in the budget on the Special Events/Initiatives category are: Bites, Camera, Action, as it combined two events from previous years, Deja View and Fork in the Road, and that is what the \$6,500 is for. The BID has also increased its commitment to Pearlpalooza from \$3,500 to \$4k, and the long-term goal is for the event to become a full weekend event in the next few years, and the BID's contribution is roughly 10% of the total event cost. The BID also does two neighborhood clean ups with SUNY Albany freshmen students every year, on Madison and South Pearl streets. And, in 2018, there are a couple events that we would like to continue, one is Hounds of Halloween, which was a big success this year, and the Holiday Market coming in December.

Under Visual Improvements, the BID will continue to work with the same flower grower and watering company since they did a great job this year, and the final number also includes the \$5,800 for hanging our Holiday decorations. There is an increase to add flower baskets back on State Street, but a decrease from the purchase of the additional 50 self-watering planters this year.

On the last page, under the Business Development budget for December, there is \$51,384 in expenses that correlates to the sponsorship dollars that we are projecting to raise over the course of the year, that can be used with no restrictions for any initiative we may develop in Downtown, and we currently still have roughly \$370k in that account. We also have about \$76k for Special Projects, which is generated from assessment revenues and hence can only be used towards public infrastructure or other public projects.

Ms. Steffens noted that the \$31,186 surplus shown in the Total Balance line refers to the grant money that the BID is spending in 2017 but will only be received in 2018, so in consultation with Mr. Palmerino, that amount is being shown as a surplus in 2018.

**Action:** Mr. Cleary made the motion to approve the 2018 Budget | Mr. Fariello seconds | All approve.

### **SCO Review**

Ms. Steffens reviewed the BID SCO list that was available in the Board's packet. She explained that, because of the Citywide reassessment, there were a significant number of challenges that amounted to roughly \$90k in settlements that the BID had to pay back in 2017. Ms. Steffens stated that we had budgeted \$93k for that and she doesn't anticipate any other challenges and settlements this year.

Ms. Steffens shared that the City is changing the residential appraisal rate from a \$100k flat fee per unit to a tiered system and she anticipates some of the residential buildings challenging their current assessments moving forward, for which we can utilize this remaining additional reserves.

### Special Projects

Ms. Steffens went through the Special Project Reserves sheet that was included in the Board's packet.

Under Business Development Restricted, Ms. Steffens shared she anticipates roughly \$48k remaining in the 2017 budget. All of the Special Projects money from 2016 has been spent. She reminded the Committee that any unspent money in this budget line must be spent within two years of the end of the budget year it was allocated in. She went on to state there is roughly \$85k in the BID Restricted line for 2018, allowing for a total of \$133k for reinvestment in the District for brick and mortar projects.

Ms. Steffens offered potential investment projects for 2018: new holiday lights on Pearl Street to match the ones on State St., and the expansion of the lights on State Street. Ms. Steffens said she will seek out some sponsors to help with this project. The demarcation of Fort Frederick with signs along the stockade explaining its historical relevance and tying it into the history of 48 Hudson as the first house built outside the Fort. A new wayfinding program to add stickers on the sidewalks around the District to direct people to businesses in the area. Ms. Steffens noted that because Downtown is already so sign heavy, these stickers would be a creative way to add information without over polluting the streets. A tree program on State and Pearl Streets, replacing the existing tree beds and stumps. Ms. Steffens said that the City has a program that pays for half of a new tree, so she will reach out to them to work on a partnership, and the BID will contact the grower for the trees in the SUNY Plaza about maintaining them as they need to be watered every day for a year in order for them to grow. Ms. Steffens added that the BID is under consideration for a grant that will be used towards the renovation of Tricentennial Park. Mr. Rosen remarked that the BID should also start looking into phasing out the construction work at Tricentennial Park, in case we don't get the grant.

Ms. Steffens noted that the total costs for these projects is just over \$400k, so we will need to reach out to some corporate sponsors, as well as partner with the City, to help with some of these initiatives, but the overall goal is to make investments to improve the infrastructure of Downtown in a meaningful and impactful way.

Mr. Rosen added that these projects are just a list of potential projects for 2018 and the Board will have the opportunity to review each proposal in detail and have a final vote on whether or not the BID should move forward with these projects or others not on the list. This was just a way to introduce a few ideas on what has been discussed by the staff and Committees.

A suggestion was made for the BID to create signs that read something like "Brought to you by the Downtown Albany BID," or "Provided by the Downtown Albany BID" adding a signature to its initiatives in Downtown, so as to show Stakeholders where their tax money is going into. It's also a good opportunity for the BID to become known among visitors, workers and residents in the District.

A question was asked about how the BID gauges the effectiveness of its programs and initiatives. Ms. Steffens said the BID has done surveys in previous years, inquiring about people's perceptions of Downtown. She added that now that Downtown has many more residents, there could be more opportunities for feedback on what type of amenities they would like to see developed as well as the investments that could be catalyst for the continuing revitalization of Downtown, like the Dog Park, which is being very well received by the residents.

Mr. Rosen suggested that the BID run a survey after the opening of the Dog Park to get some feedback. He also remarked that the BID is now focused on developing its core services, streetscape projects and the Committees could start brainstorming programs with specific target areas that need more immediate attention.

Ms. Steffens shared that the BID put together a small Working Group Committee for Madison Ave. and South Pearl Street, due to some recent business closures in the area, and several residential properties that are vacant. A

couple of the property owners expressed concerns about the current situation in the neighborhood and showed interest in acquiring more properties as a way to invest in the neighborhood and help with revitalization efforts. Ms. Steffens said that the BID has reached out to Capitalize Albany Corporation and is now identifying a few local banks that would be willing to offer special mortgage rates or other loan programs to help with these acquisitions, although, as Ms. Steffens noted, the BID is still researching and considering the viability of the initiative.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

#### **Special Events Review**

Ms. Steffens provided an overview of the latest BID events. She said that Hounds of Halloween, a dog Trick or Treating event, was a great success with close to 90 puppies and their owners participating, many of which were new to the BID and came from outside the District. The event was held at the Olde English Pub with a \$5 suggested donation, and over \$600 were raised and donated to the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society, which also helped promote the event. Ms. Steffens shared that about 20 retailers were opened that Saturday, some offering treats for dogs and menu specials for dog owners. She reported that there was one minor dog shaming issue on social media but that was quickly resolved and everyone who came really loved it, especially the puppy costume contest the BID held through Facebook, which caused major social media engagement. Ms. Steffens noted that all the winners who came to pick up their prize said the event was really fun and asked if the BID would host it again next year, so she believes that the event will grow. She also said that the BID made a minimal investment in the event, about \$100, and Upside Collective designed all the graphic material for free.

Ms. Steffens shared that the BID worked with Upside Collective to design the elevator wraps that are now in the Hudson Green Garage. The project was a partnership with the Albany Parking Authority, who paid to install the wraps, and the plan is to have them placed in all three garages Downtown.

Ms. Steffens showed pictures of the new murals in Downtown. She said that Albany Parking Authority added two murals in the Hudson Green Garage, and one on Water Street, by 787. Ms. Steffens met with the Mayor who said she would love to see more murals in buildings across the City. Ms. Steffens said the BID is working on a couple new murals in the District and remarked how a little bit of paint can help change the way people look at and feel about parking garages, walls and other concrete structures.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Steffens updated the Board on the new businesses in Downtown. Ria's Bistro, a family owned business, opened on State Street in October, and Urbane Brows and Beauty, which is located on the Steuben Alley just down from Pearl Street Pub, also recently opened in Downtown.

Next week, the BID is doing a ribbon cutting for Crazy for Greens Diecast, a new store also located on the Steuben Alley, selling farm country collectibles, John Deere, and other diecast replicas along with specialty services.

Ms. Steffens also shared that the Arena Football League is back to Albany, starting in the Spring 2018 and that is generating great buzz for the region.

Ms. Steffens announced that Louis Bannister, from The Enchanted Florist, is putting together another Handmade at The Hollow market, that will happen as part of the Small Business Saturday event, with the participation of numerous local artists and vendors. Ms. Steffens noted that more than 400 people have attended the event in the past and so the BID expects a great turn out this year as well. It is a great draw bringing additional shoppers to the District so Ms. Steffens thanked Mr. Bannister for all his work on this event.

The BID is also doing a Nipper version of the Jingle Elf, and will be asking businesses and retailers in Downtown to hide the statues in their buildings during the winter. The BID will host a contest to award the most creative Christmas decorated Nippers as a way to encourage our Stakeholders to dress up their Nipper dogs to participate.



New this year, the Fort Orange General Store is hosting a Holiday Market at the Arcade Building on Thursday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. The market is happening in conjunction with the City Hall tree lighting ceremony, which happens from 5:00 - 8:00 PM at ACCVB. Ms. Steffens said that the Holiday Market continues on for three consecutive Fridays, on December 8<sup>th</sup>, December 15<sup>th</sup>, and December 22<sup>nd</sup>, from 4:00 - 9:00 PM, and other retailers in Downtown, like Stack's, Albany Center Gallery, among others, will also be open making it a District-wide event. The BID is assisting with the live music performances and PR and general promotion of the event.

A suggestion was made that printing materials for the Holiday Market be made available to property and business owners in Downtown to help promoting the event and Ms. Steffens said the BID will make sure to send that to them.

A question was asked about the Trolley pilot program that CDTA put forth this year. Ms. Steffens said that the program started off slow, with most people using the service on Thursdays, after the Alive at Five events, but ridership improved on the course of the Summer. Ms. Steffens also shared that CDTA is planning to bring the initiative back next Spring, but they are redoing the route and it might not include the Warehouse District, focusing only on the Lark Street/Downtown route, which would allow us to capture the businesses on Madison Avenue. The BID is having conversations with CDTA that with the implementation of this new itinerary, the BID would consider making another investment in the program next year.

With no further business to be discussed, the meeting ended at 5:45 PM.

**NEXT MEETING**

**Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**4:30 PM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room**