

ATTENDANCE:

Elizabeth Young Jojo  
Lena Hart  
Frank O'Connor, III  
Darius Shahinfar  
Frank Zeoli  
Leyla Kiosse (Zoom)  
Josh Wainman (Zoom)  
Lucas Rogers (Zoom)  
Ken Countermine (Zoom)  
Lisa Reddy Farrell (Zoom)  
Benn MacDonald (Zoom)  
Neil McGreevy (Zoom)

ABSENT:

Mohamed Hemmid  
Leola Edelin  
Angelo Maddox

STAFF PRESENT:

Georgette Steffens  
Don Wilson  
Jevan Dollard  
Molly Eadie

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Georgette Steffens  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elizabeth Young Jojo  
PRESIDENT

Lisa Reddy Farrell  
VICE-PRESIDENT

Ken Countermine  
TREASURER

Neil McGreevy  
SECRETARY

**The meeting was called to order by Board President Elizabeth Young Jojo at 4:05 PM.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Jojo called for a motion to approve the October 2023 meeting Minutes | Mr. Shahinfar motions | Mr. Countermine seconds | All approve.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**Resident Position**

Ms. Jojo reported that Riley Ackley, the Board's residential member, is no longer able to serve in that position as he has moved just outside of the District. Ms. Jojo recommended Amanda Rózsavölgyi to complete the remainder of Mr. Ackley's term which expires in June 2026. Ms. Rózsavölgyi is a Research Scientist for the Center for Human Services Research at The Research Foundation for SUNY. She also serves on the Executive Committee for the Downtown Neighborhood Association. Board vote | Mr. O'Connor motions | Mr. Countermine Seconds | All approve.

**Staffing**

Ms. Jojo announced that Ms. Eadie will be leaving her position as Marketing & Events Coordinator at the BID at the end of the year to pursue her master's degree in library science. Staff will be meeting with one of the previous candidates who is still interested in the position and hope to have her start in January.

**Cannabis**

Ms. Jojo reported that Ms. Steffens has recently received two New York State Office of Cannabis Management Application Notifications and is aware of an additional forthcoming application. The BID has the opportunity to weigh in and provide feedback on both known locations, 25 N Pearl Street and 300 Broadway. A discussion was held where concerns were expressed regarding security at and around proposed dispensaries, as well as having multiple dispensaries within the District. Some members shared their experience with the high level of security and how they run. Other members expressed that they will be a destination and drive foot traffic into the District. Mr. Zeoli stated he would speak with the mayor about if they are limiting the number of dispensaries allowed in a neighborhood.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

**Pioneer Bank Account**

Mr. Countermine reported that the Budget & Finance Committee authorized Ms. Steffens to open a new bank account at Pioneer several months ago, as our deposit amounts at Community Bank were over the FDIC insured level of \$250,000. Mr. Countermine stated that the bank requires an official Board resolution to allow Georgette to open the account. Mr. Countermine called for a motion. Mr. Zeoli motions | Ms. Jojo seconds | All approve.

### Contract Awards

Mr. Countermine reported that Mr. Wilson advertised two RFPs last month—one for the Clean Team and one for the hanging and deinstallation of holiday lights. Each RFP received one response.

Mr. Countermine stated ABM, the BID's current Clean Team Provider came in at:

- 2024 \$16,963.58 (\$413 more than 2023)
- 2025 \$17,472.48
- 2026 \$17,996.67
- This does not include a street vac. They are offering a few options:
  - Club Car - \$1,217.65 per month
  - Truck - \$1,417.62 per month
  - ATLV – TBD but probably around \$3,334 per month

Mr. Countermine stated that after speaking with the staff and Budget & Finance Committee, it seemed best to use those funds for a BID vehicle that could be used for special events and Clean & Safe initiatives rather than pay ABM to have their own vehicle. Mr. Countermine reported that the Budget & Finance Committee recommended a one-year contract with two one-year renewal options, which would allow for flexibility should staffing or quality change.

Mr. Countermine stated that Denofrio, the BID's current light installation company, put in a bid at \$8,400 for all three years, which is \$1,400 higher than last year, but the price will hold steady for three years, and that the Budget & Finance Committee recommends approving Denofrio for the full three years.

Mr. Countermine reported that the holiday light span that goes across State Street is currently at the fabricator working on a lighting issue and there may be an expense associated with the repair. Mr. Countermine stated the Board will be emailed if there is a need to approve the expense.

Mr. Countermine reported that four individuals/companies responded to the BID's request for bids for accounting services:

- One company came in at \$6,500 per month.
- Ms. Steffens interviewed the remaining three companies, BST (our current provider), Accounting for All, and Jennifer O'Neil. These prices were between \$1,500 and \$1,650 per month.
- Ms. Steffens recommended awarding the contract starting January 1, 2024 to Jennifer O'Neil for \$1,500 per month.
- Ms. O'Neil has worked in local large accounting firms and over the past 20 years has been providing accounting services to several local nonprofits including the National Heritage Trust.
- Ms. O'Neil will be the sole staff member and will come in once per week and conduct the accounting services from the BID office.

Mr. Countermine called for a motion to approve all three contract awards as described | Mr. O'Connor motions | Ms. Jojo seconds | all approve.

### 2024 Budget Discussion

Mr. Countermine reported that based on this year's changes in property assessments, there will be an estimated \$12,000 decrease in the annual budget. Mr. Countermine stated that the Budget & Finance Committee is proposing the BID go to the maximum allowable levy, which would make the budget decrease \$1,000 rather than \$12,000. Mr. Countermine explained that since the Mayor's 2024 budget includes a tax rate decrease for commercial properties, so even with a slight increase in the BID levy, property owners in the District would still see a savings of 58 cents per \$1,000.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Economic Development Committee**

Ms. Jojo reported on the Economic Development Committee meeting:

- There was a discussion of the affording housing legislation. The City is reporting that since its passing they have not received any market rate residential projects and expect this to be the case until the legislation is changed.
- The Committee discussed conducting a market study with the consultants used by Capitalized Albany when looking at financial incentives for the IDA.
- There was also a discussion about holding roundtables on various topics ranging from safety to development opportunities with our Downtown stakeholders.
- Return to office updates were provided. According to Placer, as of mid-summer, 93% of our Downtown employees have returned to the office with an average of 3.4 days a week. According to the Parking Authority, that is playing out with the on-street parking meters and public garages.
- The Committee will explore developing a new strategic plan for the District.

### **990**

Ms. Jojo stated Ms. Steffens had sent everyone a copy of the draft 990. It was prepared by our CPA, Bob Palmerino. All of the information was pulled from our audited financial statements that were approved at our last meeting. Ms. Jojo called for approval of the 990. Mr. Counterline motions | Mr. O'Connor seconds | All approve.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Branding**

Ms. Steffens updated the Board on the progress of the new branding rollout, and presented some of the branded products including stickers, pins, and notebooks. Ms. Steffens reported that BID staff will be tabling at residential buildings to engage residents with the new brand. Swag was also handed out at the final Farmers Market to great reception.

### **Recent & Upcoming Events**

Ms. Steffens reported that Hounds of Halloween and Yappy Hour have been postponed until October 28 due to possible rain in the forecast on the original date of October 21. She also reported that the Holiday Market and Hot Chocolate Stroll are scheduled for December 2. This year the Hot Chocolate Stroll hours have been adjusted from 12:00 PM-4:00 PM to 11:00 AM-3:00 PM, and Pioneer Bank has come in as a sponsor of the event.

### **New Business**

A brief discussion was held regarding the increase of police presence in the District. A Board member suggested Ms. Steffens send a letter thanking APD for all of their efforts.

A brief discussion was held regarding the bus station and its current conditions—no sidewalks, crosswalks, and seating at the new trailer.

With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 5:21 PM.

### **Next Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at 4:00 PM**  
**21 Lodge St., Second Floor Conference Room**