

Downtown Boone Development Association
January Board Meeting – February 27, 2024
8:30 am – The Jones House Community Center

Board Members Present: Kendra Sink, Suzanne Livesay, Fulton Lovin, Vanessa White, Mike Forrester, Austin Northern, Michelle Novacek, Renee Boughman, Wayne Miller and Megan Kevorkian

Ex-Officio's Present: Lindsay Miller and Edie Tugman.

MSD Members/Guests present: Amber Bateman, Bob Sneed, Charlotte Baxter Alyssa Hasty, and Monica Caruso

Town Staff Present: Lane Moody, Mark Freed, Brad Farthing, and Guy Miller

Call to Order

Kendra called the meeting to order at 8:32.

Request for Approval of February Agenda

Michelle made a motion to approve the February agenda. Renee seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of January Meeting Minutes

Michelle made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes. Renee seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval of Financial Statements

Fulton inquired about what "PBID" was on the financial statements. Lane stated that it is an online platform that houses all the information about the downtown properties, businesses and building owners. After a brief discussion regarding PBID, Suzanne made a motion to approve the financial statements. The motion was seconded by Fulton and had a unanimous vote.

Request for Approval for Additional Boonerang Funding

Mark opened the discussion by stating that due to rising costs he was coming before the Board today to request an additional \$10,000 in funding for a total of \$20,000 from DBDA for a Boonerang sponsorship. He noted that he is committed to keeping this event downtown and added that the costs for the festival continue to increase. Mark finished up by noting that he would be switching up the way alcohol sales would be done to make for a smoother process and reviewed some of the other logistical changes to the event. Kendra noted that she was grateful for Boonerang. She recalled that for many years the DBDA had requested a festival downtown and Boonerang was the answer to that call. After a brief discussion, Kendra made a motion to approve the additional \$10,000 in funding for Boonerang. Mike seconded the motion and it had a unanimous vote.

Request for Funding for Watauga County Public Library for Downtown Shred Event

Watauga County librarian Monica Caruso opened the discussion by reviewing the shred event planned for April, noting that she was thankful for the Board's support of this event for the past few years. After a short discussion of the event details, Michelle made a motion to approve the \$447.50 requested by

the Library. The motion was seconded by Renee and had a unanimous vote.

Discussion and Review of Sales Tax Rate

Lane opened by reviewing the changes to the tax rate that had occurred over the past year. She noted that currently the Town is waiting on the tax estimations, and without those estimations is not able to answer many questions. After some discussion among the Board, there was consensus to table the agenda item until the tax estimations came in, with the understanding that to set our budget it would be safe to work within the same budget amount as last year.

Review of Current Fiscal Year Budget and Review of 2024 Action Items from Main Street Work Plan Discussion

Lane opened the discussion by reviewing the individual lines within the DBDA budget, line balances and items that are still budgeted but have not been invoiced. After a few moments of reviewing Lane suggested that instead of going over each line twice she would review the current budget balances and the proposed budget amounts. She noted that for the proposed budget she had added in the items that needed funding from the Main Street Work Plan. Here is a summary of each line:

Professional Services- Lane stated that she anticipated an additional \$8,000 to come out of the line to cover website upgrades leaving an anticipated balance of \$1600. Lane proposed keeping this line amount the same for the next budget year and noted that she had added included in the proposed budget \$3000 for event and website photography and \$1800 for OverMountain website analytics for fiscal year 2024-2025.

Meeting Expenses-Lane stated that the line currently had a balance of \$439.33. Lane proposed increasing this line for the next year's budget to \$1200 to accommodate the need for additional supplies for hosting downtown training, the budget retreat and the annual meeting.

Office Supplies- Lane noted that the remaining balance was \$396.66 and proposed that this line amount stay the same for the next fiscal year budget.

Office Equipment- Lane noted that there is a remaining balance of \$299.12 and proposed that this line amount stay the same for the next fiscal year budget.

Miscellaneous Supplies-Lane noted that the miscellaneous supplies line has a remaining balance of \$426.89. Lane stated that she proposed that this line be increased to \$1000 to accommodate additional supplies and noted that she included funding or volunteer recruitment items for \$200, DBDA Booth items \$300, and new business guide supplies for \$200 in the line.

Travel and Training- Lane noted that the current balance was \$913.02 and proposed that this line remain the same for the next fiscal year budget. She noted that attendance at the International Town and Gown Conference was suggested in the Main Street work plan. However, Lane stated that she looked into the costs of the conference and the event registration was \$850 per person. She noted that she would look for other cheaper opportunities, potentially virtual workshops, to learn more about the International Town and Gown group.

Traveling and Training Public Officials- Lane noted that the current balance was \$640.20 and proposed that the budget line stay the same for the next fiscal year budget.

Telephone Services- Lane noted that the current balance was \$1090.36. Lane proposed that this line be decreased to \$1000 due to the removal of an unused line.

Postage- Lane stated that this line is currently unused and proposed that in the next fiscal year budget the line be decreased to \$200. She did note that postage has been used in the past to mail social media giveaway items.

Printing- Lane stated that the remaining balance was \$2774.50 and proposed that the line amount stay the same for the proposed budget for the next fiscal year.

Community Appearance- Lane noted that currently, the line is unused but she still is holding funds for one façade grant at \$5,000, \$3,000 for Public Art, \$8,300 to cover the Blue Ridge Conservancy/Rivers Park grant match, and \$2,000 to repaint the Wayne Trapp sculpture. She stated that this would leave a remaining balance of \$1700 in the line. She noted that in the proposed budget she increased the amount of money for public art to \$5,000 and suggested that the line remain unchanged for the next fiscal year budget.

Advertising- Lane noted that from this line she is holding \$3,000 for website upgrades and that it has a remaining balance of \$9,275. She proposed that for the upcoming fiscal year, the line remain unchanged.

Rental of Other Equipment- Lane noted that currently this line is unused but will take the \$447.50 for the shred event from this line leaving a balance of \$552.50. Lane proposed that for the upcoming fiscal year budget this line remain the same.

Insurance- Lane noted that she was holding funding for the DBDA's public art insurance in the amount of \$2200 and shows a remaining balance of \$1,440. Lane proposed that this line remain the same for the upcoming fiscal year budget. Edie inquired what the liability coverage for public art is. Lane noted that off had she was unsure but would look into it. Edie noted that it might be worthwhile to look into combining public art insurance with Town to reduce the costs.

Due and Subscriptions- Lane noted that she is still waiting to pay the Chamber of Commerce dues of \$300 from this line and has a remaining balance of \$147. Lane proposed that this line remain the same for the upcoming fiscal year budget.

Bank Service- Lane noted that this line is unused and proposed that it stay the same for the upcoming fiscal year.

Special Projects and Events- Lane noted that she is still holding funding in this line for parades at \$1000 EGGstravaganza \$1300 and First Friday events at \$1500. Lane noted that she had talked with the folks at the library and there was not a desire to replicate the EGGstravaganza events that has been done in the past and would like to stop holding funds for it leaving a balance of \$5560. Lane stated that for next year's proposed budget she suggested keeping the line the same and she is designating \$1000 for parades, \$2500 for Boone BOO, \$4000 for First Friday Art Crawl Events, and \$1000 for a Boone Culinary Festival.

MSD Project/Streetscape- Lane stated that she is currently holding funding in the line for \$4000 for downtown flower baskets leaving a remaining balance of \$10,258.39. Lane proposed that for the

upcoming fiscal year, this line remain the same.

Community Development- Lane stated that she is currently holding funding in the line in the amount of \$3,000 for Jones House concert sponsorship and \$20,000 for Boonerang sponsorship leaving a remaining balance of \$2,500. Lane proposed that this line also remain as is for the upcoming budget.

Contracted Services- Lane noted that she was holding funding to cover the DBDA's Adobe account and is showing a remaining balance of \$1700. Lane proposed that this line remain the same for next year's budget.

Approval of Budget Recommendations

The Board spoke briefly about the budget and Lane noted that if other projects come up or budget items need to be tweaked they can always be addressed during Board meetings. Renee then made a motion to approve the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Kendra and had a unanimous vote.

Promotional

Discussion of Committee Meeting Scheduling

Lane opened by informing the Board that according to the survey of Board members, the time with the most availability is the second Tuesday, of the month at 8:30 am. Lane also shared the current roster and projects for each committee. She noted that the Promotions Committee as well as the Design Committee will need to have additional meetings but she will work to schedule those as far in advance as possible.

Design

Update on Dana Folk Way

Lane informed the Board that she met with Public Work staff to get their thoughts on proposed upgrades of additional lighting and art in the alley. She stated that they agreed that it would be best to start by cleaning the graffiti and potentially painting the white wall a color that matches the brick. She continued that she has also been talking with the Watauga Arts Council Director about what medium to use for the art so that it could potentially be reused in the community. Lane finished up by letting the Board know that she had reached out to the Property Manager and was waiting to hear back. With no other discussion, the Board moved on to the next agenda item.

Update on Hellbender Mural

Lane let the Board know that the Hellbender mural was slowly but surely progressing. She noted that she had a meeting scheduled later in the afternoon with the Center for Biological Diversity staff to discuss what local collaboration on the project would look like. She told the Board she would keep them updated on the progress. With no other discussion, the Board moved on to the next agenda item.

Discussion and Review of the Proposed Partnership for the Boone Benches Project

Lane opened by pointing the Board to the handout in the packet that outlined the project. Wayne asked if there would be an opportunity within the project to celebrate living individuals and Mark noted that there definitely could be. The Board spoke briefly about the placement of the Joe Miller statue. After a short discussion, Kendra made a motion to approve the partnership and the \$5,000 in funding for the project. The motion was seconded by Megan and had a unanimous vote.

Megan asked if there had been any updates to the Public Safety Answering Point Project that the

University had been working on. Lane stated that she did not have any updates. Megan inquired with the Board if anyone knew the reason why the University was pursuing its own call center. There was a brief discussion about the project and Lane stated that she would inquire about updates and if available bring them back to the Board.

Call for Adjournment

With no other business, Kendra made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Megan and had a unanimous vote.