

Helena Business Improvement District

Board of Trustees Minutes

Tuesday, July 12th, 2022 – 3:30 p.m.

330 Jackson St. & Zoom

Board Members Present:	Rex Seeley, Chair; Seth Brandenberger, Vice-Chair; Mark Roylance, Alicia Pichette;	
Board Members Absent:	Lee Shubert; Sean Morrison; Ryan Stavnes;	
Public: In Person; Zoom	Sarah Hamblock joins 3:35 p.m.	
Staff:	Micky Zurcher, Executive Director; Jordan Conley, DHI Operations Director	
<u>Agenda</u>	<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Motion/Action</u>
Welcome & Introductions	Meeting called to order by board chair, Rex Seeley, at 3:30 p.m.	
Public Comment	<p><i>*Public Comment minutes revised from the original minutes for more content and written by Mark Roylance.</i></p> <p>Micky requested a conversation regarding the July 3rd flash flood that occurred in downtown Helena and referenced previous email communications. Micky drafted an emergency relief fund application and stated her intent to spend \$5000 from the marketing budget to help support downtown property owners and businesses. DHI has set up a GoFundMe page, will pass a donation bucket at Alive at Five on Wednesday, and is considering donating to the relief fund sales from wristbands sales on 7.13.22. The following is dialogue discussed by those in attendance at the meeting.</p> <p>Alicia noted that Micky talked about help for property owners, but application sometimes says, “property owners and businesspeople” and other times says only business owners. Alicia suggested language to clearly indicate funds are open to all property owners including residential - seems too exclusive if this applies only to business owners.</p> <p>Rex said he is against it; giving emergency funds is not what the BID does. We can serve as a source to help find the funding and distribute funding. Rex would rather spend the money on the projects we already have ongoing, like trying to fund a police officer downtown. It is great if Micky and Jordan go for it, that is fantastic. We can administer funds, help people find where to get help, but does not see giving out emergency funds as BID’s job. We discussed similar funding during COVID. It is a good thing, but (the problem is) uneven distribution of the funding.</p> <p>Mark agreed. How do we take \$5000 from all the property owners and try to determine who is worthy? In the draft application there is no requirement for substantiation of costs of damage. All the property owners fund us downtown and the money we spend should benefit all downtown and the public perception of downtown. If we are trying to choose among all the people that have legitimate claims they could apply for, and we have \$5000 dollars and whatever else we can raise, how do we decide who gets how much and who is worthy? We may tick off people who do not get help and feel their claim is as great as those who did. We have already cut flower baskets from 250 to 100. If we have money, we can throw at things that are likely to be controversial and hard to be objective about giving out to individual property owners, we should have more flower baskets, fund a downtown police officer.</p> <p>Jordan said regarding public perception of downtown we have had so many calls and inquiries about what we are doing about this, and our answer is we are doing nothing. It does not look good.</p>	Action: Micky and Jordan will continue to set up funding mechanisms to support our marketing efforts showing the BID and DHI are supportive and care about the vitality of the downtown. Micky and Jordan will work on the application and get it sent out by the end of the month.

	<p>Rex said we are not in a position financially to do it. We can help direct people where to go. Mark said compared to hundreds of thousands of dollars of flood damage, our budget is just a drop in the bucket.</p> <p>Seth agrees; is in favor of people wanting to donate.</p> <p>Alicia asked about what else could we do on marketing side, such as PSA's giving direction to help people weed their way through process, directing to insurance commissioner's office, flood insurance.</p> <p>Rex noted biggest problem is very few people have flood insurance.</p> <p>Seth said DES could be a useful resource for information.</p> <p>Mark stated, not trying to be mean or stingy about this, but the scale of the problem is so large; we are not an insurance company that has enough money saved for a disaster.</p> <p>Micky spoke about public perception. During pandemic, our BID did nothing but other BIDs across our state did do relief funding. This is a chance to put out positive vibes, even if \$5000 is not much and will help with renewal. Doing something small will be better than doing nothing.</p> <p>Mark said he gets it; if we can do something that's equitable and objective that does not ruffle more feathers than it smooths over. What if we get a hundred applications with at least \$500 damage and we offer each of them \$50? Do not want to look ridiculously inadequate. We must do what we can within our resources, being an information source to help people out.</p> <p>Jordan replied that we do not know how who will apply. Let us not create problems before we have information. We could send out survey to get sense of however claimants there will be. This flood falls into a gap where it is not bad enough to require a state of emergency and trigger state funds, but bad enough to really hurt small businesses. Most people do not have flood insurance. Do not present this as major relief but as helping people out paired with other resources.</p> <p>Alicia asked what other entities are providing financial support for downtown, such as HACF?</p> <p>Jordan said their focus is on helping other nonprofits, such as the YWCA which took a large hit.</p> <p>Mark said not against spending the \$5000 but wants to look at what other BID's have done to produce a fair process for selecting recipients and producing amounts; is there a cap per loss?</p> <p>Sarah suggested they may be able to get matching grants from business like First Interstate Bank and Stockman Bank to multiply the initial \$5000. It is important for people who buy buildings downtown to know they have support. Suggested looking at ranges of damage, such as if someone has \$2500 of damage, offer up to \$250; if they got \$10,000 damage then might offer \$500 or \$750. Might be enough to help business who are in a make-or-break catastrophe. Short-sighted to say we just cannot do enough.</p> <p>Seth likes the idea of having a collection Alive at 5 and asking for business donations.</p>	
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	<p>Jordan said they did something similar in Red Lodge with no advertising or planning but got \$500. Could do better with more planning and could also donate a portion of wrist band sales.</p> <p>Micky was disappointed BID did nothing during pandemic. Would rather try it and have it blow up in our face than do nothing. Better to do something even if minimal amount.</p> <p>Jordan said they already are providing information and direction to people.</p> <p>Seth said he feels like we do not have money; we do not have our assessment formalized from the city. When his business flooded, fans and shop vacs were the kinds of things they needed early on.</p> <p>Micky suggested what we do is reimbursement for supplies/equipment needed to clean up.</p> <p>Seth thought that was a good approach; feels should be based on Alive at 5 donations. We have a certain mission we have set out to do and our funds are already minimal.</p> <p>Rex said there are businesses downtown that are marginal at best. It might be nice if we could bias the money toward small businesses, but it is difficult to do. This may not be what we do, but we could call it marketing. It is better than nothing.</p> <p>Micky pointed out we have over \$300,000 in STIP account now. It will dwindle to \$200,000 before assessment comes but it is still unallocated. Rex felt this was moot; need to determine what we call this. Micky has authority to spend \$5000 and she intends to do it.</p> <p>Rex reiterated {relief} funding is not what we do, but it is good marketing. All agreed that matching aspect is good. Alicia said we need to call this something other than disaster relief when applications go out. Try to bias help to people that really need it.</p>	
DHI Update	<p>Jordan relayed these highlights pertaining to DHI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cancelled last week's Alive at Five • Hitting good numbers at Alive at Five • Looking ahead to a permanent stage project • Setting up a meeting with event organizers and the city to see how the city better support event organizers can • Emergency training event • Soapbox Derby • Bounce back to school event at the GNTC 	
Approve May financials		Motion by Seth to approve the May financials. Mark seconds. Motion passes.
Approve May minutes		Motion by Mark to approve the May work session minutes. Alicia second. Motion passes.
Old Business a. Downtown CIP b. Re-creation c. B&C grant	<p>a. Micky reminded the board about the CIP meeting tomorrow at RPA</p> <p>b. Micky stated she continues to email with the city attorney about language regarding the process for the next ten-year creation.</p>	Action: The board asked to delay the B&C grant discussion until



	<p>c. Rex stated he wants to spend money on a downtown police officer. Mark feels the discussion and draft for the B&C grant is redundant with the façade grant. Alicia feels the same sort of thing. Delay this.</p>	we can dialogue in person. There needs to be more clarity on certain points. Micky will place the discussion on next month's agenda.
New Business a. Amended Bylaws b. FY24 Police Officer	<p>a. Bylaws updated mostly with grammar corrections and cleaning up the language to fit with the calendar year versus employee start date.</p> <p>b. The board is supportive on working with the city police department on a partnership for a dedicated downtown police officer. As part of the discussion, the board is happy to consider contributing \$40,000 towards the officer's salary but is willing to negotiate. The BID would like to have oversight of this person but not complete. Questions to consider for further discussion are:</p> <p>How is the police department going to share reports? What is the data the police department can provide to this program? Where (hours/location) is this person going to be? Is this an annual contract?</p>	Motion by Mark to approve the amended bylaws. Alicia seconds. Motion passes. Action: Micky has a meeting set up with Police Chief Petty in August before the next board meeting where the board and Chief Petty can continue the conversation for FY24.
News & Announcements	None	
Next Meeting	August 9 th , 2022	
Adjourn	Meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.	
Minutes submitted by	Micky Zurcher	

