

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
March 12, 2025
Meeting Minutes**

The DSSD Board of Commissioners Meeting took place at the offices of the Bridgeport DSSD, 938 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604. In attendance were:

Commissioners

Phil Pires, C & W Associates II, Chair
David Iassogna, M&T Bank, Vice Chair
Eric Gross, John Broadcannon, Treasurer
Callie Gale Heilmann, Made in Bridgeport, Secretary
Javier Ceja, Downtown Strategic Group
Jason Cohen, Bordentown DB, LLC
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation
Tony Sherwood, AMS Real Estate
Andy Toledo, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)

Staff

Lauren Coakley Vincent, DSSD President
Charles Suarez-Penn, DSSD/SMG

Guests

Ira Jacoby, The Felner Corporation
Sarah Lopez, Office of Sen. Chris Murphy
Kathy Maher, The Barnum Museum
Daniel Miller, CBIA
Yolanda Petrocelli, Downtown resident
Jessica Rosario, Groundwork Bridgeport
Anna

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Ira Jacoby from the Felner Corporation, Sarah Lopez from the Office of Sen. Chris Murphy, Kathy Maher from the Barnum Museum, Daniel Miller from CBIA, Yolanda Petrocelli, Downtown resident, Jessica Rosario from Groundwork Bridgeport, and Anna.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gross made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 12, 2025, DSSD Board Meeting, as presented. Commissioner Iassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IV. TREASURER REPORT

Treasurer Gross provided an explanation of the January 2025 financial report as provided by the bookkeeper. The Bridgeport DSSD ended the month of January 2025 with \$188,695 in assets, of which \$141,256 was cash spread across two bank accounts. Liabilities totaled \$82,372, encompassed by a mix of Accounts Payable, Refundable Advances, and lease liability. Net Assets at the end of the month totaled \$106,317. The accrued revenue was \$466,913 – primarily City of Bridgeport tax payments. Expenses for the same period totaled \$482,308 – primarily related to streetscape maintenance and administration of the organization (\$374,102). Accrued revenue for the period fell short of expenses by \$15,395. Commissioner Kuchma made a motion to approve the January 2025 financial report. Mr. Iassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

V. REPORT FROM THE CITY

Mr. Toledo provided updates on the City Council's charter revision commission and the St. Patrick's Day Parade, and requested input on the five-year consolidated plan that establishes the needs of vulnerable community members.

VI. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team's performance report for the month of February, which reflected consistent levels in sanitation instances over the past month and a small increase (9%) over the previous year due to graffiti, stickers, and alcohol containers removed. The team saw a large increase in the amount of time devoted to beautification work from the previous month (160%) and from the same time period in the previous year (260%) due to the time spent salting curb cuts. The Public Safety category reflected a negligible increase from the previous month (2%) and a large increase from the same month in the previous year (238%) due to instances of panhandling. Finally, there was a small increase in the number of interactions in the Public Engagement category from the previous month (5%) and from the same month in the previous year (9%).

Ms. Coakley Vincent then gave updates on the Colorful Bridgeport content in February, including the Colorful Nights nightlife series, Black History Month series, What's Happening events and board expansion announcements, and Valentine's Day. She shared the range of sponsorship opportunities released in early March. Finally, she unveiled the new Colorful Bridgeport website, which went live on March 11th.

VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Executive

Mr. Pires reported on the combined Executive and Finance Committees meeting that was held on March 5, 2025. The Committee discussed how to approach resolving the loss of DSSD assessment funds from land development agreements in the DSSD service area. A meeting was set up with the City Attorney's office and Finance Director to discuss next steps. The Committee then reviewed the projected year end estimates for the fiscal year 2025 budget, determined whether to extend agreements with current contractors in the next fiscal year, and reviewed the strategic plan objectives for priorities to include in the draft fiscal year 2026 budget.

B. Physical Conditions

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on February 28, 2025. The Committee discussed strategies to recruit volunteers for upcoming Colorful Crew projects. The Committee then shared recommendations for the fiscal year 2026 budget pertaining to streetscape expenses.

C. Public Safety

Commissioner Iassogna reported on the Public Safety Committee meeting that was held on February 28, 2025. The Committee discussed recent safety issues in the Downtown, as well as the new nightclub, hookah lounge, and event space ordinance passed by the City Council. The Committee then shared recommendations for the fiscal year 2026 budget pertaining to public safety expenses.

D. Special Events and Marketing

Ms. Coakley Vincent reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on March 4, 2025. The Committee reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content from the past month and previewed content for the upcoming months, including the Colorful Nights nightlife series, Black History and Women's History month videos, and the board expansion outreach. The Committee provided feedback on the 2025 banner design. Finally, the Committee shared recommendations for the fiscal year 2026 budget pertaining to marketing and creative placemaking expenses.

E. Elections

Ms. Heilmann reported on the Elections Committee meeting that was held on February 25, 2025. The Committee debriefed the “How to Run To Become A Commissioner” training, which was recorded and relevant materials made available on the DSSD website. The Committee then drafted the content of the annual meeting voter and candidate guide, as well as the ballot and annual meeting notice documents.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 4:29 p.m.