

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
May 8, 2024
Annual Minutes**

The DSSD Board of Commissioners Meeting took place at Stress Factory Comedy Club, 167 State 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
Bob Schneider, Jimmy's A & N, Secretary (Ex Officio)
Javier Ceja, Downtown Strategic Group
Jason Cohen, Bordentown DB, LLC
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation
Fred Frassinelli, AMS Real Estate
Callie Gale Heilmann, Made in Bridgeport, LLC
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation
Andy Toledo, City of Bridgeport (Ex Officio)

Staff

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

Guests

Devon Brown
Alicia Cobb, Art Simplified
Bill Coleman, City of Bridgeport
Cris Dam, Ursa Gallery
Chris DeAngelis, Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers
Jonathan Delgado, City of Bridgeport
Mayor Joseph Ganim, City of Bridgeport
Capt. Kevin Gilleran, Bridgeport Police Department
Abraham Gottesman, Sound View Tower, LLC
Ira Jacoby, Felner Corporation
Luis Lage, Car Free Bridgeport
Blaze Lovell, Our Trans Life
Kathy Maher, The Barnum Museum
Carmen Nieves, The WorkPlace
Jackie O
Seung Hyeon Park, 162-166 ELM STREET LLC
Roderick Porter, Bridgeport Police Department
Susyun Purefoy
Mark Reed, BLOCK 912 JV LLC
Danny Roach, City of Bridgeport
Luke Scott, dogsname
Karin Smith, Kindred Thoughts Bookstore
Nate Smith, Gather Tap & Tavern
Angie Staltaro, City of Bridgeport
Jennifer Wang, Ursa Gallery
Danielle Wedderburn, City of Bridgeport

I. CALL TO ORDER, PRESENTATION OF THE ROLL, AND RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 4:20 p.m. Mr. Pires read off the list of properties by property location as sorted in the voting record. Mr. Pires asked those present to hand in ballots and proxies with ballots.

II. PROOF OF SERVICE TO OWNERS

Mr. Pires said in accordance with their bylaws, Bridgeport DSSD staff sent out by first class mail an election packet to Holders of Record of Taxable Property in the district or their representative, which meets their requirement for sending the package no later than ten days before the election. Mr. Pires said instead of sending a package to each individual property, packages were sent to groups of property owners that own more than one property.

III. ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Mr. Pires announced that a quorum had been achieved based on the responses to the presentation of the roll.

IV. ELECTION OF COMMISSIONERS

Mr. Pires explained that the process to elect Commissioners would be conducted by roll call from the certified list. There are 176 properties included on the 2022 Grand List TD District Report. Of that list, 40 were condominium units in the 881 Lafayette Blvd building, and per the

DSSD's bylaws, the condo building receives one vote toward the annual meeting election process. As such, having 70 voting properties present would constitute the majority needed to establish a quorum.

Mr. Pires repeated that the mailed ballot listed the Commissioners whose terms had expired and were up for election, including Commissioner Karolyn Egbert, Commissioner and Treasurer Eric Gross, and Commissioner and Vice Chair David Iassogna. The ballots needed to have the nominees checked, the property address, and whether it was a proxy. All ballots submitted by proxy needed to have the signed proxy form attached.

Mr. Pires announced that he would entertain any other nominations from the floor at that time. Mr. Pires noted that there were no nominations from the floor, and there were no nominations by proxy or ballot received by mail. Upon a motion by Commissioner Frassinelli and second by Commissioner Kuchma, the nominations were closed.

An official count of the ballots was conducted by DSSD Secretary Schneider and DSSD President + CEO Lauren Coakley Vincent. Mr. Schneider indicated all the ballots had been counted and a quorum having been present and established, that he wished to congratulate Commissioners Egbert, Gross, and Iassogna on their re-election to the Board. As stated by Mr. Pires, their term would be for three years beginning at the July 2024 board of Commissioners meeting from 2024 to 2027.

V. COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

While the votes for the election of Commissioners were being counted, three community presentations were given. First, Mayor Joseph Ganim made remarks about recent developments in the Downtown and future plans for economic development initiatives in the neighborhood. Bridgeport Police Department Chief Roderick Porter delivered a presentation on safety issues within the Downtown, along with remarks from Capt. Kevin Gilleran regarding decreasing trends in violent crime. Planning & Economic Development Deputy Director Bill Coleman was joined by Senior Associate Jonathan Delgado to speak about specific economic development projects transforming the Downtown led by the Office of Planning and Economic Development.

VI. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Executive

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on May 1, 2024. The Committee discussed preparations for the annual meeting, the status of sponsorship fundraising efforts to date, and how the DSSD might partner with local arts organizations on an upcoming grant opportunity.

B. Physical Conditions

Mr. DeAngelis reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on April 26, 2024. The Committee walked the district with Ms. Coakley Vincent and Downtown Ambassador Operations Manager Charles Suarez-Penn, identifying areas where additional detailed cleaning was needed, as well as sites for special or seasonal beautification projects.

C. Public Safety

Mr. Iassogna reported on the Public Safety Committee meeting that was held on April 26, 2024. The Committee focused the conversation on planning ahead for parking and traffic congestion challenges connected with the busy event season this summer at the Total Mortgage Arena and Hartford Healthcare Amphitheater. Quality of life issues impacting residents and business owners were discussed, as well.

D. Special Events and Marketing

Ms. Cobb reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on May 7, 2024. The Committee discussed parameters for participation, including

attendance requirements and connections to the community. The Committee then reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content for the past month, including the Colorful Crew volunteering opportunities and upcoming event promotions, as well as reviewed content plans for the upcoming months. The Committee provided feedback to the City’s Office of Planning and Economic Development proposal to the DSSD to manage events at Post Office Square. Finally, the Committee discussed opportunities for collaboration posed by the Fairfield County’s Community Foundation’s Arts in Service of Equity request for proposals.

VII. PRESENTATION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET

Treasurer Gross explained that the process for creating the fiscal year 2025 budget, spanning the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, began in March 2024. He circulated the draft budget and provided insight into what projected revenue and expenses were included in the plan for the delivery of organization’s programming in that fiscal year Commissioner Iassogna made a motion to approve the proposed fiscal year 2025 budget. Commissioner Kuchma seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gross made a motion to approve the Minutes of the April 10, 2024, DSSD Board Meeting. Commissioner Frassinelli seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IX. ADOPTION OF 2024-2025 REGULAR MEETINGS SCHEDULE

Mr. Pires asked the Board of Commissioners to review the schedule of Board Meetings for July 2024 – June 2025 for adoption.

July 11, 2024	August 14, 2024	September 12, 2024
October 10, 2024	November 13, 2024	December 11, 2024
January 15, 2025	February 12, 2025	March 12, 2025
April 9, 2025	May 14, 2025	June 11, 2025

Mr. Pires indicated that the Board meeting schedule would remain as it had in the past, which was the second Wednesday of each month, to be held at from 4:00 p.m. at the offices of the Bridgeport DSSD (938 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604). Upon a motion by Commissioner Gross and second by Commissioner Frassinelli, the motion was approved unanimously.

X. TREASURER’S REPORT

Treasurer Eric Gross presented the fiscal year 2023 audited financial statements for the organization. Mr. Gross detailed the assets and liabilities, including principal changes in the assets and liabilities, as well as the revenue and expenses of the District all as of the last day of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023.

Treasurer Eric Gross provided an explanation of the March 2024 financial report as provided by the bookkeeper. The Bridgeport DSSD ended the month of March 2024 with assets totaling \$223,611, of which \$273,685 was cash spread across two bank accounts. Liabilities totaled \$131,237, encompassed by a mix of Accounts Payable, Short-Term Liabilities, and lease liability. Net Assets at the end of the month totaled \$92,283. The accrued revenue was \$839,728 – primarily accrued from City of Bridgeport tax and contract payments. Expenses for the same period totaled \$888,013 – primarily related to streetscape maintenance and creative placemaking activities (\$685,749). Accrued expenses exceeded revenue for the period by \$48,285. Commissioner Kuchma made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s report. Commissioner Ceja seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

XI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Pires asked for nominations of officers for the Board of Commissioners to take effect in the new fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2024. The slate of officers nominated were:

- Commissioner Pires for the role of Chair. The motion was made by Commissioner Gross, seconded by Commissioner Egbert, and unanimously approved.

- Commissioner Heilmann for the role of Vice Chair. The motion was made by Mr. Pires and seconded by Commissioner Frassinelli. Commissioners Pires, Ceja, Frassinelli, and Heilmann voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Cohen, Egbert, lassogna, Gross, and Kuchma voted in opposition of the motion. The motion did not pass.
- Commissioner lassogna for the role of Vice Chair. The motion was made by Commissioner Kuchma, seconded by Commissioner Egbert. Commissioners Cohen, Egbert, lassogna, Gross, and Kuchma voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Pires, Ceja, Frassinelli, and Heilmann voted in opposition of the motion. The motion was approved.
- Commissioner Heilmann for the role of Secretary. The motion was made by Mr. Pires, seconded by Mr. Gross, and unanimously approved.
- Commissioner Gross for the role of Treasurer. The motion was made by Mr. Pires, seconded by Mr. Kuchma, and unanimously approved.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Pires asked for any items of new business to be shared. President + CEO Lauren Coakley Vincent closed out the meeting with a walk through of the DSSD's 2023-2024 annual report and thank yous to the DSSD's various volunteers and sponsors.

There being no other new business, the section of the agenda was closed.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 5:35 p.m.