

**BRIDGEPORT DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
August 14, 2024
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
Jason Cohen, Bordentown DB, LLC
Karolyn Egbert, Trefz Corporation
Philip Kuchma, Kuchma Corporation
Tony Sherwood, AMS Real Estate

Staff

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

Guests

Alicia Cobb, Art Simplicated
Chris DeAngelis, Cabezas-DeAngelis
Surveyors & Engineers
Ira Jacoby, Felner Corporation
Kathy Maher, The Barnum Museum

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pires called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

II. RECOGNITION OF GUESTS

Mr. Pires opened the meeting by welcoming guests Chris DeAngelis of Cabezas-DeAngelis Surveyors & Engineers, Alicia Cobb of Art Simplicated, Ira Jacoby from the Felner Corporation, and Kathy Maher from The Barnum Museum.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Gross made a motion to approve the Minutes of the July 11, 2024, 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 June 2024 financial report as provided by the bookkeeper. The Bridgeport DSSD ended the month of June 30, 2024 with \$272,539 in assets, of which \$151,889 was cash spread across two bank accounts. Liabilities totaled \$176,031, encompassed by a mix of Accounts Payable, Refundable Advances, and lease liability. Net Assets at the end of the month totaled \$96,508. The accrued revenue was \$1,025,901, of this \$937,131 was accrued from City of Bridgeport tax and contract payments. Expenses for the same period totaled \$1,069,962 – primarily related to streetscape maintenance and creative placemaking program expenses (\$796,661). Accrued expenses exceeded revenue for the period by \$49,061. Commissioner Kuchma made a motion to approve the June 30, 2024, financial report. Commissioner Egbert seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

DSSD President Lauren Coakley Vincent then presented the three contract extension amendments for the DSSD's contracted service providers in fiscal year 2025: accounting services delivered by CompuLedger, marketing services delivered by The Bananaland, and streetscape maintenance services delivered by SMG Corporate Services. Mr. Gross made a motion to approve fiscal year 2025 contract amendments as presented. Mr. Iassogna seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

V. REPORT FROM THE CITY

Mr. Toledo was not in attendance to present a report from the City, so this agenda item was tabled to the next board meeting.

VI. PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Ms. Coakley Vincent gave an overview of the Downtown Ambassador team’s performance report for the month of July 2024, which reflected an increase (8%) in sanitation instances over the past month and a decrease (6%) over the previous year due to changes in the quantity of stickers and graffiti removed, alcohol containers collected, and trash bags collected. The team saw an increase (1%) over the past month and over the previous year (4%) in beautification instances due to the number of hours dedicated to watering and landscaping. The Public Safety category reflected a decrease (10%) over the past month and from the same point in the previous year (33%) in public safety instances due to a drop in reported incidents of panhandling. Finally, there was an increase (9%) in public engagement interactions over the past month and a decrease (7%) over the previous year due to fluctuations in hospitality assists and business contacts. Ambassador outreach pertaining to the City’s Storefront Improvement grant program resulted in 27 viable applications.

Ms. Coakley Vincent then provided a recap of the Colorful Bridgeport content in shared in July, as well as the events that the DSSD either led or supported during the month, including the kick off of the Downtown Farmers Market season and the return of the Downtown Thursdays free concert series. She announced a partnership with the Bridgeport Arts + Cultural Council and Greater Bridgeport Latino Network to host a series of salsa dancing nights in Downtown Bridgeport during the fall. Finally, Ms. Coakley Vincent shared that the City had invested in 16 Big Belly waste receptacles to be installed in the neighborhood, with designs created by Colorful Bridgeport. She previewed the locations and designs, noting that the installation date would be in early September.

VII. REPORTS OF STANDING & SPECIAL COMMITTEES

A. Executive

Mr. Pires reported on the Executive Committee meeting that was held on August 7, 2024. The Committee reviewed the draft fiscal year 2025 contract amendments for the DSSD’s contracted partners for accounting, marketing, and streetscape maintenance. The Committee provided input on the draft municipal ordinance language changes pertaining to board composition and reviewed the community engagement plan proposed by the Elections Committee. Lastly, the Committee finalized the agenda for this month’s board meeting, including the request from the Connecticut Arts Alliance that the DSSD join as a member.

B. Physical Conditions

Mr. DeAngelis reported on the Physical Conditions Committee meeting that was held on July 26, 2024, 2024. The Committee walked the district and identified specific sites for beautification projects in fiscal year 2025, with special attention paid to tree beds, tree trimming, and modifications that could be made to Firecracker Alley between 41 and 49 Cannon Street.

C. Public Safety

Mr. Iassogna reported on the Public Safety and Security Committee meeting that was held on July 26, 2024, 2024 with Bridgeport Police Chief Roderick Porter and discussed recent safety incidents impacting residents and business owners.

D. Special Events and Marketing

Ms. Cobb reported on the Special Events and Marketing Committee meeting that was held on August 6, 2024. The Committee reviewed the Colorful Bridgeport content for the past month, including the “A Day in Downtown” video series, What’s Happening weekly event newsletters, Downtown Farmers Market featured vendor posts, and Downtown Thursdays concert promotions. The Committee recommended plans for events and activities to highlight for Hispanic Heritage Month and discussed plans for upcoming events that the DSSD is organizing or partnering to implement in the fall. Finally, the DSSD’s summer interns presented Downtown event concepts to the Committee for feedback.

E. Elections

Ms. Heilmann reported on the Elections Committee meeting that was held on July 30, 2024. The Committee reviewed what the ordinance language change will be, who will vote for the new board members, who should be recruited and how, and how to prepare prospective Commissioners for board service. The Committee affirmed that the goal of the engagement plan was to implement a welcoming and inclusive process that made explicit the current board’s commitment to recruiting a more diverse membership, and identified key engagement plan milestones.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

The Board of Commissioners continued the discussion about how to amend the DSSD’s municipal ordinance related to board composition. The board reviewed the draft amended ordinance language to be presented to Bridgeport’s City Attorney, and then referred to the City Council. Mr. Gross made a motion to approve the amended language as presented. Ms. Heilmann seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Pires called for the meeting to be adjourned at 5:31 p.m.