

DOWNTOWN FRESNO PARTNERSHIP

Board of Directors

October 18, 2023
12:00 P.M. – 1:30 P.M.

Palomino Event Space
2111 Tuolumne St

MINUTES

Present: Scott Anderson, Conrad Moore Jr, Councilmember Miguel Arias, Sevak Khatchadourian, Toni Tinoco, Derek Franks, Richard Caglia, Edward D. Fanucchi

Absent: Paul Nerland, Mayor Jerry Dyer, Phil Kliewer, Mario Gutierrez, Jayni Wong, Tyrone Roderick Williams

Staff: Elliott Balch, Gloria Valdovinos, Lara Agulian

Public and Guest: Lupe Perez, Veronica Stumpf, Jordan Sanchez, Christine Miktarian, Henry Ellard

I. Call to Order/Establish Quorum

Anderson

Call to order at 12:13 p.m.

II. Public Comment

Miktarian from State Center Community College District joined the meeting with updates about their building at 1171 Fulton St. SCCCD moved into this building in 2018 and they love being downtown. There are some concerns with the “G” sign on top of their building, especially after the wind last winter. A structural engineer came to look at it and put scaffolding up. Unfortunately, the structural engineer cannot confirm the structural integrity of the sign and has recommended that they pull off the sign to see how it is connected. There are no drawings or plans from the sign installation. They reached out to companies for quotes to take off the sign and for how to go about it. SCCCD wants everyone to know about this because they know that the sign is an important part of the city’s skyline, and they fully intend to put it back up. They just need to take it off to put a sound structural design in place.

It will likely come down before December, but it will come back. The sign itself is rusting so they will replace it, but it will look the same. They do want to have it be able to light up, which it does not do now. They have asked companies if the sign can be refurbished but are hearing that it is likely not possible. They want to replicate it using the company that originally made it, Fresno Neon. SCCCD has already talked to the City and the Historical Society about it. The Fresno Bee has already contacted SCCCD about it and will do a story closer to the removal. Originally, the sign rotated and did have electrical, but none of that works now. It is held in place by guide wires. If those came off, it would spin uncontrollably.

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Miktarian is open to questions and ideas. Councilmember Arias asked that if it is not salvageable, they donate the sign to the Fresno Fair. Miktarian said that they have been thinking of doing that already, even if it is just one of the three sides of the sign. They just have to see how the removal goes. Miktarian thanked everyone for their time.

III. Approval of Agenda (*action*)

Balch

Anderson motioned to approve, seconded by Councilmember Arias, motion approved unanimously.

IV. Approval of August 16, 2023 Minutes (*action*)

Balch

Anderson motioned to approve, seconded by Councilmember Arias, motion approved unanimously.

V. Financial Review (*action*)

Balch

The financial report was available for the Executive Committee meeting but we did not go through it in detail. In budget vs actuals, the over payment from last year of \$507k in assessments is still a factor in the overall numbers. They look low, but you have to add the \$507k back. This means we are short \$86k. We are doing well on event income. The budget for this year was built with the total number allocated for events at \$77k of which \$6,000 was in-kind so we are not closely following that. We have received in-kind donations and sponsorships. We are also short on assessments, but we do have High Speed Rail paying some delinquencies from years ago along with federal. There is no one else who has delinquencies stretching farther back than this year so most are current.

In terms of expenses, for the total cost of goods sold, we are spending about in line with the events budget. In terms of administration expenses, we are over what was budgeted for accounting. We have outsourced bookkeeping support and some of the overage is due to the fact that we are doing process improvements. We are getting a number of tools that will make the ongoing costs lighter with better management. Balch does not believe we will see decreases in that line as we will have growth.

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We are over in dues and subscriptions, and part of that is that Balch subscribed DFP to the Downtown Rotary. This gives everyone on staff the opportunity to network, get educated, and connect. We can also get grant resources through the rotary, so it is a good partnership. Insurance is lower, but that can change. Our insurance has been issued to a long defunct 501(c)3 organization, Downtown FACES, and not actually to DFP. This would not be great if we had a claim so this cost may go up. When we had our golf cart stolen, we got an insurance payout for that issued to FACES. We were only able to cash it because we have accounts for both FACES and DFP at United Security Bank. They reopened the FACES account because Amy Fuentes, who was an old signer, said it was okay.

Councilmember Arias asked about the net income. It says negative \$410k, but you have to add the \$507K assessment to that. We are actually trending about budget expectations by \$90k. DFP has some costs that were not budgeted, like small costs for the office move and potential staff parking costs. Rent will not increase this next year as we moved to an office space with the same rent. We have sponsored a couple of things like the Fresno Arts Council's State of the Arts event. We are identifying that there are partners that are important in things that we are thinking about for the future. There is a signage budget for economic enhancement, which was for pole banners, but we do anticipate a cost for signage at the new office being around \$5,000-\$7,000. This is more of an administrative cost, but one to note as it will be the most significant cost of the move.

Balch's gave a preview of next year's budget structure as that will have to be adopted during the December Board meeting. The way things are structured now is a bit misleading. There are programs like economic enhancement and clean and safe that have these budgets and then there is payroll that is presented separately. The reality is that a lot of the work that we do for the programs are through the staff. We don't have a way to capture personnel costs by the individual and be able to track and assign those costs to the category of program that they are doing. We want to build the budget that can do that and that makes us auditable. As we grow bigger with more funding sources, there is value in being audited, especially against the Management Plan.

Anderson motioned to approve, seconded by Tinoco, motion approved unanimously.

VIII. Clean and Green Committee Update

Balch

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We are tracking various issues working with the City, whether that is street cans, trash compactors, and planters. We are also keeping up with Mid Valley on SB1383 for our businesses who will have to comply or turn in a waiver. Mid Valley will be on the ground, visiting each business in the next week or two. We also spoke about security and keep up with that

We work with the City Ambassadors daily. They have been helping us digitize documents as we prepare to move offices. Balch believes there is forward movement with the RFP process at the City, but Balch won't comment on that as there are elected officials in the room.

Perez mentioned that they did a walk through of the trash cans on Van Ness. Hopefully there is a solution to them soon.

Balch asked if there is any questions or any ideas of what people think we should be talking about at the Clean and Green meetings and there were no comments.

IX. Marketing and Business Development Committee Update

Balch

We have had two big events since the last meeting being Fulton Street Party and Fiestas Patrias. They both went well and are going to pave the way for bigger and better events next year.

We are already starting to get plans laid out for 2024 with events and sponsor packets. One new thing is a partnership with Jamin Brazil for an entrepreneur networking and technical advice workshop series once a month. That actually starts next week with more than 30 people signed up. DFP's role is mainly promotion.

There is a parking study going on and we want to make sure we are engaging and developing advocacy on what works best for Downtown, especially when it comes to City Council.

Balch made an ad hoc comment about committees generally. We are figuring out different configurations we want to propose for next year about committee structure. Marketing and Business Development has a really big scope with program work, advocacy, and events. Clean and Green is big, but issues also come up with things like signage. For example, DFP has a information Kiosk on Van Ness and Mariposa that keeps getting vandalized. We are working

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with Public Works to see about getting it removed. This didn't really fall under any committee. We did discuss it at Clean and Green, but being an informational kiosk could have put it under Marketing. Balch is thinking of a User Experience Committee. There will be more to come on this.

X. CEO/President's Report

Balch

I. Finance

Balch mentioned that he already discussed the budget structure change during the financial review. To add to that, he wants to add single events budgets so we really know what we want to hit at each event and can track it effectively. Balch will have a budget to propose for 2024 at the next meeting.

There will be two things that impact the budget next year. Balch announced that the Kresge Foundation is awarding DFP a 2-year \$299,000 grant to support cultivating the enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable development Downtown. DFP already has the Management Plan for the PBID and the services we provide. There is also a lot of expectation and work that we do around development issues, especially now with infrastructure that is beyond our traditional scope. This will help Balch manage the workload of all of that. It will also help us answer how we get more development and solve community problems in a proactive way. The grant funds a position for DFP. DFP is the fiscal sponsor of the grant, receiving the grant, but will pass through to DFP. Balch will talk more about the grant and the position in the closed session, especially as it will impact this year's budget as well.

The City Ambassador RFP, dependent on decisions made by the City, will also impact the budget. Again, Balch won't comment further on that for now, but it is something he is aware of.

When the PBID was founded, the idea was to see an increased level of services and unite the Downtown voice. There was at least a 2-1 budget resource that was beyond the assessment. This is what we are working for again. We want to bring in more resources.

II. Facilities

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DFP is moving offices, and the process has already begun. We did end up getting keys and access to the new office a little early, which was nice of our landlord. We have new signage in the works with Chris Pacheco from A Plus, thanks to a connection from Anderson. Pacheco is matching some of what we are doing with signage to add indoor signage as well. We are packing things, shredding documents, slowly moving things over. Monday is our cutover where we are more at the new place than the old place. Our printer moved on Wednesday with the internet coming over Monday and Tuesday. When we sent out the Board ballots, the return address was to the new address. We are in conversation with the City about our staff parking. This is a potential unexpected cost.

III. Advocacy

We are in conversation with the County about the Needle Exchange Program. County Health organized a meeting two weeks ago about the program. The program will most likely take place at the County Health building on Fulton Street. Joe Prado at the County said they are continuing to work towards that and to start on December 9. He did mention that they are open to moving to the morning on Saturdays. We are exploring a small contract with them to help track data about transiency and any other impacts to the area each week. Councilmember Arias mentioned here that the mayor has suggest about a half a dozen locations that meet the criteria at the request of the County. Perez was fully working on that. Balch will circle back with Prado and see what the progress is on that. Councilmember Arias said that since the services are medical, it should take place in a medical facility.

We are also in talks with County Behavioral Health about a smaller \$20,000 to help them map services to the population they fund services for. It is a contract to give them information we gather from other service providers and the community on the street. It is a small start, but Balch is hoping to develop this relationship and ultimately become a conduit for more County Behavioral Health dollars to come Downtown. There are a lot of resources there that are not hitting the ground here.

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There is a data subscription tool called Placer.ai. Valdovinos went to the International Downtown Association Conference in Chicago and a lot of downtowns have Placer.ai and use it for reports. We are working towards getting this with funding partners as this is an unbudgeted cost and the cost is \$10,000. Valdovinos said it has been hard to gauge how many people have been coming to our events. With Placer.ai we will be able to track this with phone data and this can be helpful when we are working to get sponsorships as well. Balch mentions that this can also help us with more regional connections as we will be able to see how many people come to Downtown from nearby cities.

IV. Strategic Initiatives

Measure P is rolling forward and we are putting things together to underwrite a significant amount of performing arts that we bring to the Downtown community in the year. We are proposing Measure P support on that. We are also working on murals with DFF and City College, which is another Measure P opportunity.

There is a grant that the State has put out for Regional Climate Collaboratives that we are talking to some of the other neighborhood organizations about. Balch wants to talk to the City about this to work out how we can help neighborhoods, including Downtown, become more competitive for federal funding for green infrastructure. This includes charging stations, power generation, bike lanes under the Active Transportation Plan, and more.

V. Policy, Compliance, and Best Practices

The Executive Committee approved of a new Record Retention Policy, which was provided to the Board. We have been using that to guide our shredding and digitizing. They also approved new wordage for sick time in the Employee Handbook. We are moving stuff into Gusto as our employee portal.

We do have an unanticipated cost for music licensing. Balch asked Franks if the Grizzlies pay ASCAP and they do. ASCAP reached out and we owe them money from Q2 of 2013. We are now looking through all of our files to see how

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much we paid for entertainment that we can document. This may be a cost we see before the end of the year, but we are building it into our budget for next year.

VI. Board Governance

Ballots are out. For the next board meeting on December 13, we would like to have it at 3:30pm, then use that opportunity to open our office for an open house at 5:00pm. We will invite DFP and DFF boards and the community. We did mention this event along with the ballots we mailed. It will be a nice way to round out the year and for some it will be their last meeting as a board member. DFF's board meeting is the same day and will happen before the DFP meeting.

Balch would like to explore a board retreat with the new board in the first quarter of next year. He wants to talk about how we are structured and why we do what we do. He is thinking about a half day on a Friday, knowing that everyone is busy. He appreciates everyone's support and wants to keep the collaborative process with the board.

XI. City of Fresno Update

Perez

Perez mentions that a lot was already discussed in the meeting. Perez and Balch did attend a meeting this morning to about the reconstruction of Mariposa Plaza. It will most likely start December 4, but depends on the supplies they get. Councilmember Arias mentioned that construction may take up to a year. There is a possibility that the transformer is delayed, and this would result in a seven-month pause in construction. This would not be ideal as it can be tampered with if left half-finished and will double to cost. The City is working out the best timeline, which would possibly be two phases, and are hoping for an end date of Fall next year. Space for the ice rink and stages are all included in the plans, with the proper electricity and equipment needed for those. Balch mentions that DFP's plan A for most events next year, is to not use the plaza. For example, for Fiestas Patrias and Fulton Street Party, we are planning to put the main stage on Tulare Street. If the plaza becomes available, that is plan B and we would use it. We are just trying to be prepared.

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Sanchez asked if the power for the ice rink would be included in the plans and how we get the materials for the ice rink. Councilmember Arias said a contractor comes in with the materials, but we will have the power. This is why we need the transformer. In the past we have had to borrow a transformer, though the power infrastructure exists. Balch says that we are already talking about the operational implications for the rink next year. It will be back. We are going through old files of the past ice rink, so we are not starting from scratch. Councilmember Arias says there is a contractor who runs it, markets it, and has all the materials. Balch says that we were part of a lawsuit ten years ago because of a broken ankle and the San Jose rink just wrapped up a sliced finger lawsuit from years ago. The ice rink will show up in our budget as well.

Perez mentions there is a conference coming up with the Maddy Institute next Wednesday in the Grand. Balch will send out the invite to everyone. The mayor and Balch will be speaking.

The Christmas Parade is on December 2nd. Balch has already been reaching out for sponsorships and opened that up to the board as well. He is thankful for those in the room who are already sponsoring. He believes we are getting good traction on that.

XI. County of Fresno Update

No County representatives were present.

XII. Board Open Discussion/Reports from Board Members

Councilmember Arias mentioned that PG&E is continuing their work. The second phase of planting trees Downtown is coming in the next few weeks. The first phase was planted in the fall, but none of those survived. They are filling in the empty wells, such as around Arte Americas. There are also a couple of sidewalk projects in the works.

Balch mentioned that there is a quarter million budget for overhead lighting on Fulton starting from the Brewery District and ultimately going North. Councilmember Arias says that is on Public Works and Scott Moser, and they are working on it. They are also working on putting in hooks to do more banners overhead.

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XIV. Closed Session

Balch

After the closed session, the board reconvened in regular session and announced that Balch would circulate a draft job description for the new position funded by the Kresge grant, inviting feedback and approval from board members over email, before posting the position. The position will be reflected in the proposed 2024 budget presented at the December meeting.

XV. Adjournment – 1:26pm

Anderson

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