

# Downtown Fresno Partnership

## Executive Committee

Thursday, August 10, 2023  
8:30am – 10:00am

Downtown Fresno Partnership  
845 Fulton St

### Minutes

- **Present:** Jayni Wong, Phil Kliewer, Scott Anderson
- **Absent:**
- **Staff:** Elliott Balch, Lara Agulian
- **Public:**

I. **Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order at 8:35am Kliewer

II. **Public Comment**

No public in attendance

III. **Approval of Agenda (Action)** Kliewer

Motion made by Kliewer, Anderson second, motion approved unanimously.

IV. **Approval of the July 13, 2023 Minutes (Action)** Kliewer

Motion made by Kliewer, Anderson second, motion approved unanimously.

V. **Midyear Budget Status** Balch

There are minor updates from last time. The major update is that Balch looked into the historical trend of assessment revenues and he was being conservative in his estimate. We will find out in the next few months, but Balch feels like we are in good shape.

The 2023 prediction is \$836,625 and we are in good shape for revenue versus cost.

VI. **Acceptance of the Financial Report (Action)** Balch/Wong

What you see on balance sheet as an erosion of our cash position, but that is a reflection of the overpayment from last year being part of this year's revenue. When you see the \$243K in asset reduction at the top, last year's overpayment is what that is reflecting. Kliewer asked what our average monthly burn rate is. Overall, it is about \$80,000. This is good to know.

Budget vs Actual is a bit off for the same overpayment reason. The midyear exercise took this into account. We did decide to throw the Fiestas Patrias event this year, which is a money-maker, but we are still being conservative and not counting that in yet. We have Univision involved this year in the event and are doing a big show with B Level acts all as a street party.

Our financials are a Quickbook print out, but Elliott would love to have it be smoother to look through.

Motion made by Kliewer, Wong second, motion approved unanimously.

## **VII. Company Policy/Handbook Updates (Action)**

Balch/Agulian

The way sick leave was worded in the new Handbook was hard to implement and produced weird results. Balch is proposing changes in the sick leave language in the Handbook so that it is the same hourly accrual rate whether you are part-time or full-time, and we guarantee that we accrue the minimum required amount and cap it at 48 hours. With this new language an employee can use these hours in increments of one hour.

We don't currently have anything written about protective gear, but we have bikes and electric scooters. Kliewer asked if we have a safety program. We do not, but we are working on it and getting generally compliant on all things. Every employer is required to have an injury and illness prevention plan, so Brian Kelly has been working on that and we will hopefully have that up for adoption for the next meeting. Kliewer suggested that we invite Osha for a consultation. If we ask them to come, they will help you get compliant and won't give you violations. Balch likes that idea for when we move into the new office. We are getting helmets and we have gloves and other equipment already. We also recently did sexual harassment training as that had not been done before either. Kliewer said that first aid training might not be a bad idea either to just know what to do if someone gets injured.

Motion made by Kliewer, Wong second, motion approved unanimously.

## **VIII. Clean and Green Committee Update**

Balch

We continue to wait on the Planter Program. The City is trying to get that wrapped up. The City Ambassador Program RFP is still out after our response. We are still laterally co-managing it so it is weird to continue waiting. It is a great resource either way.

Balch reassigned our ambassador Rowell Reyes to a coordinator position for event engagement and resource development. We are growing the event function for more revenue and have to use our existing resource portfolio to get there. Kliewer asked what our main focus of earned revenue is. There are two things and Balch will touch on that in the CEO Update.

Ambassadors are the main focus of Clean and Green, though the City Ambassadors have taken on much of the cleanup duties. The DFP ambassadors follow up with that, check up on the street cans and dumpsters in the area, follow up with graffiti, and more. At this time, the City Graffiti Team is short staffed and short on equipment, so our ambassadors have been helping them out, cleaning smaller pieces. In the Clean and Green meeting we also talked about compactors and the Down-Town Hall meeting we have coming up next week. We are getting a good response to the meeting. Solid waste is the marquee item for that meeting, meaning compactors, SB1383, and general locking bin update.

A while ago, we had asked Beautify Fresno if we could collaborate with them on getting cardboard trash bins to use for events such as ArtHop. Beautify got a sponsorship from Mid Valley for 1,000 of these bins and they are giving 100 to DFP. Mid Valley also comped us a dumpster roll off for ArtHop. Kliewer said the partnership we have with Beautify Fresno is

great and Balch mentioned that we run their Downtown Fresno Cleanup events.

PD's Southwest District Sergeant will also be at the Down-Town Hall meeting and Mayor Dyer hinted that they may have good news to share about staffing. We have been having press events for the Façade Grant that we are a part of. Mayor Dyer has been attending these as well. Recently it was at Tres Hermanos. The owner there has had three police incidents in the last month or so, and she was able to share that directly with the mayor. Having that patrol presence is really important to the business owners in Downtown.

#### **IX. Marketing and Business Development Committee Update**

Balch

We shared data on our social media impact and even since that meeting a week ago, our followers on Instagram have grown. This was from content about Fulton Street Party and the Photo Contest we just wrapped up. Kliewer mentioned that we had recently agreed to not hire an outside marketing firm and rather do the marketing in-house. We are doing the marketing internally and are growing organically, which shows that what we are doing is working. We just started a TikTok to grow our social media reach and have two posts so far.

We are working with 16 businesses as part of the Façade Grant. A difficult one we are working on and have had City consultation for is Lune in the TW Patterson Building, since it is a historic building. With our intervention, we have straightened out the process to get that approval. You need to file the permit, go through the history committee and then get the grant approval.

Fulton Street Party was a big topic at this meeting. It will be the Valley's biggest music festival of 2023. We are marketing it accordingly. We got sponsorship from the Fresno/Clovis Visitors Bureau. We got it up on the Visit California site to get it marketed state-wide. The airport bought a corporate booth and will be out there. Balch is feeling the buzz and Agulian noted that there are too many vendors who want to be involved. We have even had to turn some away since we are at capacity. Kliewer mentioned that we should have vendor fees. We do, but they will be more expensive for Fiestas Patrias.

Kliewer asked if we knew what Farming Man is. It is Fresno's version of Burning Man. He mentioned that it might be a good idea to partner with them for an event. Kliewer would like to see events that are out of the ordinary like they do in Portland or Seattle. Balch mentioned that Downtown Fresno had an event called Over the Edge in 2011 where people could repel off the top of the Security Bank Building. Anderson remembers and did it. Kliewer said that those kinds of different events catch people's attention and are Instagrammable. Balch says that events could be its own conversation and he has many ideas.

Balch also wants to analyze the committee structure to see if it is still working for us. Maybe the Marketing Committee becomes more about strategy. Balch would love to assemble the larger empty spaces Downtown into a marketable group to lease out and that is where he wants to be with strategy and marketing. In terms of revenue diversification, some of that bigger picture stuff is not funded by assessments so that is why Balch is going after grant money for development. DFP was only looking to near term, but it is time to also look forward to the long-term stuff to have a combination of both.

#### **X. CEO / President Update**

Balch

We have asked for volunteers for the Nominating committee as board elections are coming up. The committee must be made up of those who are not terming out. Balch already sent an email to those who qualify at Kliewer's request and Councilmember Arias, Derek Franks, Sevak Khatchadourian have shown interest. It has to be at least three people. We will also ask again for volunteers at the board meeting and then solidify that there. Kliewer wants people on the committee who actually show up to meetings and participate.

Balch reached out to Ashley Webster because she had said that she would not be able to participate in our board activity until after July as she was busy. It is after July now and we still haven't heard from her. Balch wants to check back in now. Within the nominations for the board elections, we want to see people who feel passionately that the work we do here must be done.

Balch sat in with the City Administration on July 21 for a meeting including the Mayor. They spoke about infrastructure and development. With the first \$50 mill from the State they are going to focus on water and sewers. Kliewer says this is a good place to start. Balch just wants to make sure they make the pipes big enough and think ahead to the amount of housing and parking that they will make downtown. We are not too engaged as of now but will stay informed. Kliewer hopes they publish the plan as it is public funding.

This meeting with the City was over two hours and included talks on graffiti, how to remove high up graffiti, unsponsored events and who takes lead on that, and much more. They want to make these reoccurring to some extent. Balch updated them about DFP and our events. Balch also mentioned that Central Valley Community Foundation is hosting Senator Caballero and had asked if DFP would like to host a reception for her. Balch agreed. He brought this up in the City meeting and Mayor Dyer was not pleased about it. Balch does not want to overstep, but he knows there will be value in the legislators feeling connected to the community here and seeing the faces of downtown, especially when it comes to getting the rest of the allocated funds in the next years. Now, the reception with the Senator is still happening on August 18, but CVCF will be hosting it. Balch will be there and will send out that information to the board so they can attend if they like as well.

A three-year lease has been signed for our new office at 2020 Tulare St, part of the TW Patterson building, as approved by the board. Our official move-in date is October 15 with our current lease ending on October 31.

We did not include parking in the RFP when looking for an office. We already had an agreement with the City for parking passes. The City has now switched things up on us. Our passes expired at the end of July and now Parking wants us to pay according to the master fee schedule. Balch does not mind paying a little bit and according to the master fee schedule, but the parking director seems to be inaccurately interpreting the fees. Lupe Perez at the City has intervened. We should be able to purchase \$240 a year passes as a City Contractor that allows us to park anywhere Downtown where we do work. Balch is prepared to write a letter to the Administration, whether that be Planning Director Jennifer Clark or the City Manager. Anderson asked how many passes we need, and the answer is eight, which comes to about \$1800 a year in a new cost. Anderson thinks it is the least the City can do to give us free parking passes and Kliewer agrees.

Perez has also mentioned a separate revision to the Baseline Services, which has DFP store the street closure bollards for the City. Balch would possibly add this in his letter. Anderson says that there seems to be an inherent issue at the City where anytime someone tries to do something, there are random roadblocks thrown in the way. It makes it hard to achieve things these days. The parking director is also misreading the master fee schedule. She was unable to properly understand validations, which are already available and is something we want to get our merchants to use. Anderson asked if the parking is something Councilmember Arias can assist with. The short answer is yes, and our parking passes are a pretty simple thing for the City to give us.

Kliwer says that parking is the thing that holds downtown back more than anything. Balch asked if he should throw the bigger picture of parking into his letter and the committee agreed that he should. Councilmember Arias does want to raise the parking fees while they are updating the fee schedule at this time. The City feels that they are making all these investment into the parking structures and they need to unload the parking burden from the general fund so they will raise the parking prices. This will discourage people and businesses from coming downtown. There is no solidified rule on parking and the prices downtown. The meter prices change based on whether there are events, but there is never signage stating when a person needs to pay or not. Blach says we should suggest that they create more street parking spaces. Kliwer says when people are looking for office spaces, downtown seems like a great option, until people realize how much extra they have to pay for parking and what a burden it is. They then choose to go elsewhere where the parking is easy and free. Balch has talked to Dan Zach about this as well. He says that if a parking garage is full, it makes sense to raise the cost, but if it less than half full, it makes sense to lower the cost to then fill the garage. Our occupancy now is at half. Kliwer says we should go in front of City Council with this and Balch says we will, which is why he wants to make sure he knows exactly what we are asking for.

Balch has completed a round of basic hello meetings with all the City Council members. There wasn't any ask, but Balch shared the data on downtown visitorship so they have a sense of who is coming and that it is growing. He shared our MOU and underlying documents, so they have that knowledge and also shared DFP's day-to-day and goals. He told them that when they see us show up for advocacy, it is part of this larger vision. They were generally all very receptive and were great meetings. Kliwer is interested to see this data. It was shared a while ago in a board meeting packet, but Balch will share it again.

There is a coalition forming around green field growth and the impact on older neighborhoods in the city. They have been working on an urban decay study, which they reached out to Balch about. A reporter asked Balch to speak on this and he declined. There is potential for funding when urban decay occurs, but we don't know where this coalition is going. This is just something to keep an eye on. Superintendent Bob Nelson is one of the people who is part of this.

Balch spoke on revenue diversification for DFP. The revenue is three parts. Assessments are one. Earned revenue through sponsorships, beer sales, and more is the second part. Grant funding is the third. Kresge Foundation is very interested in downtowns and urban development so they may be funding us to be more involved with those things. Blach is preparing an application for this grant and it would be through the Downtown Fresno Foundation. We still don't have an operating agreement between DFF and DFP and Balch is working on that. We have been operating without one, but there is a concern that there is no documentation, especially with

money being involved. Balch will hope to get some kind of agreement ready to present to the board in the meeting next week. He cannot email it out due to the Brown Act.

ArtHop has become a vendor fair, and we are starting to think about if there is a world where we do take over that event and charge vendors. This would give us the ability to weed out problem cases and make the event run smoother. We can layout the vendors in a better way that gives our businesses better visibility. Kliewer thinks it is a good idea. Anderson thinks it is a good idea even though it will be a challenge. Some vendors may feel upset that they end up paying a cost to DFP, while others still set up for free nearby. Agulian mentions that this is already happening depending on where people set up. The mayor thinks that Caption Landon needs to be overseeing the event. If we have a PD partnership backing us up that is the answer. What would not work would be if the City tried to charge us for all the things that come with an event. Kliewer says we do not want to stop the organic growth of the event, which is his concern with us taking over. Health, food, and alcohol safety are reasons for the takeover. We are also seeing adverse effects on our businesses. The Fulton sees their alcohol sales drop on Sundays during cruise nights because people are illegally bringing their own. The events should increase revenues and there should be regulation. Kliewer says that being able to openly carry alcohol in the streets would help businesses because people like to go outside with it. We just don't want to shrink the event, but still make sure things are done safely and properly.

Balch met with Lilia Chavez from the Fresno Arts Council. She is in favor of us taking more control of ArtHop. The main topic of the meeting was Measure P. The Arts Council is a fiscal sponsor and receiver when individual artists get grants. Under Measure P, the Arts Council has a role in administering the program so they will not be able to be a recipient of grant dollars. Chavez is not sure what organization will step up to do the fiscal receivership. It seems like the grants will be large in the first round. This will be a DFF thing. If we get the structure in place on DFF side to be a fiscal sponsor for arts projects downtown, it could produce enough money to have an in-house accounting person, which would be for DFP as well. Balch wants to think of the two organizations, DFP and DFF, as integrated. Jordan Sanchez is stepping down as chair of DFF but will still be involved.

**XI. New Office**

Balch

Balch talked on this in his CEO Update

**XII. Board Open Discussion**

Balch

No comments were made.

**Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 9:48am.

**DOWNTOWN FRESNO PARTNERSHIP**

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