



**Mansfield Downtown Partnership  
Board of Directors  
April 3, 2023  
Mansfield Town Hall  
Town Council Chambers**

**4:30 PM**

**DRAFT Minutes**

Present: Ryan Aylesworth (left at 4:56 p.m.; joined via Zoom at 5:03 p.m.), Brian Coleman (via Zoom), Mario Conjura (via Zoom), Steve Ferrigno, Frank Gifford, Louis Goffinet, Rachel Goldberg, Toni Moran, Kyle Muncy, Ron Schurin, Colby Trembley (joined meeting at 4:32 p.m.), Sean Vasington, Emily Wicks (joined meeting at 4:36 p.m.), and Cara Workman

Absent: None

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director; Kathleen Paterson, Senior Communications Manager; Magdalena Pawlowski, Event Coordinator; Joshua Stern, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: Jeremiah Cole-Kelly, Realtor, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices

**1. Call to Order**

President Kyle Muncy called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

**2. Opportunity for Public to Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes of March 2, 2023**

Brian Coleman made a motion to approve the March 2, 2023 minutes. Louis Goffinet seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Colby Trembley joined the meeting at 4:32 p.m. and Emily Wicks joined at 4:36 p.m.

**4. Executive Director Report**

New Event Coordinator Magdalena Pawlowski and Board members introduced themselves. Cynthia van Zelm introduced Jeremiah Cole-Kelly, the leasing agent for The Standard at Four Corners.

Ms. van Zelm passed around a sign-up sheet for volunteers for the Summer Stroll and other upcoming events and encouraged Board members to volunteer. She said the Summer Stroll will take place May 25 and will be expanded this year with tours, interactive activities, musicians, and other new additions.



Ms. van Zelm said students and professors from the UConn Landscape Architecture program will present to the Board at its May 4 meeting. There are also several agreements between the Partnership and the Town and/or UConn to be reviewed at the May 4 meeting.

## **5. Report of the Finance and Growth Committee – Review and Approval of FY23-24 Partnership Budget**

Toni Moran, Chair of the Finance and Growth Committee, said this year's budget contains a \$10,000 increase in health insurance costs, partly to account for the new Event Coordinator's coverage as the previous Event Coordinator had been covered by her husband's insurance. Ms. Moran said UConn and the Town of Mansfield are each upping their contributions to the Partnership this year, though the Town's increase has to be approved as part of the Town's budget approval. The expected amount of dues from Board and committee members has been increased as well. The Town will continue to make an additional \$40,000 contribution to the Partnership for economic development services.

Ms. Moran said the cost of the Partnership's legal services has decreased slightly, while the costs of Town services such as IT, finance, rent, and phones have increased. Ms. Moran noted 5% increases in staff salaries and said \$4,000 was added to the budget to implement customer relationship management software. There is also an increase in the marketing budget, a smaller increase in the printing and binding budget, and an increased budget for program expenses, including food for socials and other events. Copy maintenance costs have also increased.

Ms. Moran said the budget contingency has been eliminated, but there is still a healthy fund balance. She said the Finance and Growth Committee has approved the budget and the motion to approve it at this meeting will not require a second.

Ms. Moran made a motion to approve the FY23-24 Partnership Budget.

Cara Workman asked if funds are earmarked for annual evaluation of strategic plans. Ms. Moran and Ms. van Zelm said the notes in the budget preserve earmarking \$3,000 every year for strategic plan review.

In response to a question from Ron Schurin, Ms. Moran said the total budget is \$402,984, with a \$403,000 expected revenue. She said while this year's budget is balanced, it does not solve the issue of additional increases in expenses next year.

Sean Vasington asked if the expected amount of dues includes sponsorships. Ms. Moran and Ms. van Zelm said the dues include memberships only and that sponsorships are covered in the quarterly financials under Fund 270, and not part of the operating budget.

Brian Coleman asked if the Partnership has an insurance broker. Ms. Moran said the Partnership uses Wilcox & Reynolds as they work with multiple types of insurance; engaging more than one broker would lead to higher costs to time and staff resources even if it decreased expenses. Mr. Coleman asked if any additional budget cuts would be possible. Ms. Moran said the Finance and Growth Committee went through the budget line by line and found small reductions that could be made, including to legal services, but determined that no further reductions could be made without harming the Partnership.



Ryan Aylesworth said although it is still a good time to be a municipal employee, the competitive gap is narrowing. He stressed the importance of employee retention and said he feels implementing step increases for the Partnership staff's salaries is a fiscally responsible move.

The motion was approved with Mr. Coleman opposed and all other members in favor.

## **6. Report and Action Items from Committees/Working Groups**

### Working Groups

Mr. Vasington, Chair of the Promotion/Public Spaces Working Group, said the Working Group recently visited the studios where the Landscape Architecture classes are held. The students are considering a larger planning approach, and the Working Group members encouraged them to view Downtown Storrs as having a larger boundary and to consider ways to activate the parts of the downtown south of CVS. The program will present to the Board at its May 4 meeting.

Ms. Wicks said UConn art professors Kathryn Myers and Christopher Sancomb have each completed art installations in the downtown as part of UConn's Tree of Life project. She said the Partnership staff is working with local artist Jillian Welenc to create murals in more of the downtown windows. Ms. van Zelm said Ms. Pawlowski has an art background and can assist in these efforts. Mr. Muncy praised the concurrent efforts to create art and lease the available spaces in the downtown.

Steve Ferrigno, Chair of the Business Owner/Property Owner Engagement Working Group, said the group will be meeting this week to discuss engaging UConn students to write profiles of the downtown businesses. He said Administrative Assistant Joshua Stern has compiled information about the downtown restaurants' use of delivery services such as Uber Eats for a potential cross-promotion. Ms. Workman said a UConn student organization focused on business planning and strategic development has expressed interest in collaborating with the Partnership.

Mr. Muncy, Chair of the Sustainable Funding Working Group, said annual contributions have been received from two of the downtown property owners and are expected from a third.

### Celebrate Mansfield Festival

Chair Emily Wicks said the Festival Committee met in March to discuss activities for the Festival and potential booths and sponsors. The Committee members reviewed the timeline for the Festival and will divide up which members will contact which potential participants.

### Executive

The Executive Committee has not met since the previous Board meeting.

### Governance

Chair Frank Gifford encouraged Board members to volunteer at events. He then noted the revised Executive Director job description included in the meeting packet, with proposed changes based on input received at a previous Board meeting.

Ms. Workman made a motion to approve the proposed changes to the Partnership Executive Director job description. Mr. Schurin seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Schurin, who served as chair for the most recent Governance Committee meeting, pointed to the nomination form included in the packet for Jocelyn Santiago, Mansfield's Early Childhood Services



Coordinator, for membership on the Celebrate Mansfield Festival Committee. The Governance Committee had approved Ms. Santiago's nomination for recommendation to the Board.

Mr. Schurin made a motion to approve the nomination of Jocelyn Santiago to serve on the Celebrate Mansfield Festival Committee. Colby Trembley seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

## **7. Correspondence and Communications**

All noted.

Ms. Moran asked Mr. Cole-Kelly to speak about the community development efforts of The Standard. Mr. Cole-Kelly said the development will consist of 15,000 square feet and will be divided into three units; the hope is for larger retailers to occupy two of the units as anchors and for the third to be divided for smaller businesses. He discussed pricing and parking and said construction should take approximately 24 months.

Ms. Workman and Mr. Muncy discussed the sizes of the planned units and how they compare to the Downtown Storrs spaces. Mr. Cole-Kelly said The Standard's units will not be connected. In response to a question from Mr. Ferrigno, he said the spaces will have provisions for restaurants, but drive-throughs will not be possible. In response to a question from Mr. Coleman, he said all three spaces could be divided, but his hope is for two larger anchors.

## **7. Adjourn**

Ms. Moran moved to adjourn. Mr. Ferrigno seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.