



**CULTURAL CORE
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
Friday, June 2, 2023**

Committee Members in Attendance: Lia Summers, (Salt Lake County Representative) Durga Ekambaram (Salt Lake City Representative), Felicia Baca (Contract Manager, Salt Lake City Representative), Grace Lin (Salt Lake County Representative), Isaac Gonzalez (Salt Lake County Representative), Matthew Castillo (Contract Manager, Salt Lake County Representative)

Committee Members Not in Attendance: Isaac Gonzalez (Salt Lake County Representative)

Cultural Core/Downtown Alliance Staff Present: Merinda Christensen, Britney Helmers, Josh Jones, Dee Brewer, Jessica Thesing

Britney Helmers welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at **12:11 pm**. **Britney Helmers** initiated the roll. **Britney Helmers** made a motion to approve the minutes from April 6, 2023. **Durga Ekambaram** approved and **Grae Lin** seconded the motion.

Review of Public Comments

No public comments to review.

Current Business:

Blocks Brand Update

Britney Helmers we've been in conversation with Y Design run by Michael Yount to see if we can do a brand refresher and potentially a new tagline as well as a new logo. We will start to workshop this on June 6, 2023. Moving forward, we are going to see what we can do to create brand recognition for everything we have going on down here.

Blocks Media Buying RFP

Britney Helmers The DTA team as well as The Blocks team have been working on a media buying RFP that we're looking to solidify within the next couple weeks so we can retrace our steps with Love Communications or whoever else applies. We just want to make sure that we are spending the right amount of dollars for the media buying and check in to see what more we

can do and focus on that in the future. I would love your help to see if we can post that on any additional websites. **Matthew Castillo** what is the scope of the RFP? Is it actually marketing support or just media buying? **Britney Helmers** we are actually looking at limiting it to media buying. With this brand refresher, we will have the marketing at brand aspect through Y Design. So, we are looking at this one at more of a media buying. **Matthew Castillo** so they won't be doing any creative, correct? **Britney Helmers** correct. **Durga Ekambaram** we had a discussion with Love Communication a couple of months back, what is the reason we're doing this at this point of time? Is there something we need more from them? **Dee Brewer** last year when we responded to the RFP, one of the things we committed to was to look at our options in the market. We are not on the schedule we had hoped because of the change in staffing, but we felt the first order of business was The Blocks brand and then with that we'd proceed with the media buying. Nothing has changed per say, except for the interest in making sure that we're making the best choices. **Britney Helmers** it's also a good practice for us to make sure the dollars we're spending is equal to the output of what we're receiving. **Grace Lin** what's the extent of the contract, such as the number of years? **Britney Helmers** I'm looking at just one year, but we could look at this from a 3-year perspective. From a media buying perspective, creating that overall scope of work of what we're actually trying to produce from a media buying aspect, whether it be for our placemaking or programming initiatives as well as any legacy art promotions, that is the scope of work we are working on.

TENTATIVE ACTION Committee Member Discussion

Felicia Baca we have two vacancies on the City side. The first application that we have really confirmed interest in is from Spencer Lawson. He used to work in the office of Economic Development and now works for Penna Powers and has a strong marketing background. He would love to serve on the committee and will be very engaged as a board member. I feel we can vote on him today. The other two both ranked Cultural Core as their third choice. The first is Anne Olsen who works at The Shop SLC as the office manager and the second is Janine Archibeck. We can take the strategy of filling one and doing the other later. **Grace Lin** what skill sets are we looking for to round out the board? **Felicia Baca** we are lacking fundraising connections that I could see come from that sector. I don't know if we've sought out legal before. We haven't really sought out anyone as these applications are voluntary. With such a small committee, we can't hit every skill set or sector. But, I'd love to hear the backgrounds of other types of people you all are interested in. **Britney Helmers** I spoke at the Downtown Community Council Meeting two weeks ago and I felt that residents that live downtown who could help us understand what they want to see from an arts, entertainment, and cultures aspect, would be interesting. I felt that additionally those that own businesses or are small business owners downtown would be unique to see what economic value that The Blocks is bringing to this geographic location. **Felicia Baca** that previous list we had running, we had a lot of independent business and restaurant owners, but they were just recommendations. Some of them we asked in the past and knew they weren't available. **Jessica Thesing** does being on the board limit our ability to hire that board member for services? We use a lot of these different folks for activations downtown. **Matthew Castillo** this has come up in the past. I think generally, it would be allowed as long as they aren't voting or making decisions about contracts and similar topics.

With that being said, I think we have stayed away from those that do have that potential conflict because it is such a small committee and having people have to abstain or otherwise could create some challenges. One other name is Eva Rinaldi, she used to be an Arts Council board member. She manages a lot of the community engagement programming for Sundance. She's reached out to me a couple times because she is really interested in serving on some additional boards. She has a lot of great experience and insight into these types of discussions. **Durga Ekambaram** do you contact all of these people before we fill this position? **Felicia Baca** no, but if there are specific people we are interested in reaching out to, I can personally do that. **Durga Ekambaram** Jyothsna Sainath runs a nonprofit and does a lot of shows downtown. She's collaborated with the Arts Council in many ways. Because she has a nonprofit organization, she could bring in some kind of input of what they'd like to see in the future with downtown. **Felicia Baca** how do you all feel about potentially moving one forward and then tasking me with a few names for follow up? **Grace Lin** yes, that's a good idea. **Felicia Baca** do you want me to follow up with either of the candidates to see if they've joined other boards and gauge interest? **Dee Brewer** I know Anne, and she's great. I wouldn't have any problem with her being on the board. But I'm more interested in the function of this board with the name you just raised, Duga. As well as Eva and the ones Britney is talking to. **Matthew Castillo** we work with Jyothsna with the County, and I agree she would be really great. The one thing I'd like to throw out there is I think she has done work as an artist for The Blocks in the past. When we collaborated for Rose Exposed last year, she was one of the performers. Based on the kind of question you asked, I don't think that creates any challenges. **Durga Ekambaram** when I joined, Lucas Goodrich told me I wouldn't be able to apply to exhibit any of my work. So when I look at Artist Calls, I make sure it doesn't have anything to do with The Blocks. We can tell them upfront that they can't work for The Blocks. **Britney Helmers** does that need to be a clause that needs to be updated in the bylaws? **Matthew Castillo** we can review the existing conflict of interest, but I believe it is covered. **Dee Brewer** if we look at the scale of what you'd be applying for and what she would be applying for, it is probably less than a half of a percent of the numbers we are actually employing. From a budgetary standpoint, it's microscopic. **Felicia Baca** and as a reminder, people who serve on this board don't have to meet the Salt Lake city council District requirement, because of our drive time nature in the interlocal agreement. **Grace Lin** made a motion to put forward Spencer Lawson. **Durga Ekambaram** seconded the motion to approve Spencer Lawson.

ACTION ZAP Funding and CC Direct Funding

Britney Helmers our next action item has come from looking through our agreement. The Blocks team has been working on a new program that we are calling Steppin' on Main. Per the Cultural Core Budget Committee contract, organizations and programs that receive funding from the county's Zoo, Arts, and Parks program and direct funding from the CCBC, need approval from the budget committee in writing. Needless to say, we have been working to land the Utah Film Center and their Black, Bold, and Brilliant series for The Blocks Steppin' on Main program. With that, the Utah Film Center does receive ZAP funding. So, we would need approval in writing to actually be able to showcase the Black, Bold, and Brilliant Films. **Matthew Castillo** remind me, are they getting paid by the Cultural Core? **Britney Helmers** they would be. It costs

them about \$2,500 to put on their films and bring all their equipment over into the space. The action would be to vote on this and then I will send out a document to receive that in writing to actually approve it. **Matthew Castillo** I believe the intent of this contract provision is to ensure that any kind of existing programming that would've happened otherwise, Cultural Core isn't being used to supplant that and it is really helping to expand programming. From my perspective, while Black, Bold, Brilliant is an existing program, this is a new presentation and in a new location and meets the goal of expanding programming. **Britney Helmers** and just to give additional background on that. The other partners we are working with on this program are Salt City Swing, Marcus the Funny man, Viva Chile Utah, and Academia Mis Raices. What we are also trying to do with the Black, Bold, and Brilliant series is potentially do break dancers in the front as well then present the film in the lobby. **Grace Lin** made a motion to approve, in writing, Utah Film Center to be funded for this effort. **Durga Ekambaram** seconded the motion.

ACTION Vote to have Quarterly Meetings

Britney Helmers our next action item is a vote to have quarterly meetings and one additional meeting 30 days prior to next year's budget approval. That way, I can present next year's budget 30 days prior and then approve it within our final meeting. We can set those dates, time requirements. Have you felt that the current budget committee meetings meet too much, or are we comfortable with the way we have our current meetings set up? **Durga Ekambaram** during the pandemic, we had four meetings quarterly. **Durga Ekambaram** made a motion to approve. **Grace Line** seconded the motion. **Lia Summers** it is a great idea to have the budget meeting 30 days prior approval so that we can sit with it.

Blocks Co-Create Program

Britney Helmers within the budget document you will see the Co-Create program under programming expenses. We, as The Blocks team, have been working on how we can create new programs for The Blocks and make a larger impact. I have seen how The Blocks have sprinkled a lot of things around Downtown. With the potential additional dollars that we are getting for this upcoming year, creating this programming would actually help us divert those dollars in a more effective way. The way this came about was through defining placemaking. I have scraped our Action Plan left and right to understand and define what is placemaking, programming, and the legacy we want to leave behind from this Blocks brand. Number one, activate underutilized places and spaces in the Cultural Core through temporary and permanent artistic interventions. Number two, develop gradually engaging themes that connect existing and new programming and build on collaboration and collective things. Number three, encourage and increase community engagement with programming for families, children, and youth. Number four, provide opportunities to advance and showcase the work of Salt Lake's creative community. And encourage and support culturally inclusive programs reflecting Salt Lake's diversity of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, and interests. So really focusing on the exact actions and moving forward in defining placemaking.

With this Co-Create program, we have tried to define goals. Similar to defining placemaking, goals of this program would be to attract national and local artists. Two, provide opportunities to advance and showcase the work of Salt Lake's creative community. Third, bolster, encourage, and increase the community engagement with programming for families, children, and youth. These are very similar to defining the placemaking and understanding what these goals will be. Activate underutilized places and spaces and encourage and support culturally inclusive programs. The audience to apply for this program would be artists, students, nonprofits and cultural organizations. We do have work to continually build and define this. The audience for this program is the 75-mile radius, residents and visitors to the cultural core, and all ages. This entire process would be an application process featured on our website. I don't want to define this as a grant process and think of it more as a partnership. When these artists or unique activations apply, it will actually state out the direct partnerships and direct roles of the partnerships. We will also define the risks of the partnerships. These activations could be as small as a single mural or a drone show. All these activations and/or artists' pieces will be "The Blocks Presents" and with that, we would have the application process for eight unique events, placemaking, programming, etc. We planned on doing two of these per quarter in multiple different locations within Downtown. They are broken up as three \$30,000, one \$25,000, two \$20,000, one \$10,000 and one \$5,000. We have been working through the application and agreement process to ensure we are building a program that invites new ideas and bigger impact. What this program does is take The Blocks team out of the creator and artist piece and puts the artwork back into the artists hands.

ACTION Cultural Core FY24 Budget

Britney Helmers our top 25 visitations to downtown include 76% to the Delta Center, 72% for conventions, and 40% were to arts and entertainment events. We are honing in on how we can raise that last percentage. **Felicia Baca** remind me how this is calculated again? **Dee Brewer** this is the Placer data we looked at from last year. We took the 25 top days of the year and identify what these days have in common? What is driving visitation downtown? About half of those top days included in the 40% had stuff at Eccles, Abravanel, Rose, etc. had multiple things going on, such as two or more performances. **Britney Helmers** for the Fiscal Year 2024 budget, we have \$106,000 for administrative personnel, \$36,000 for office and admin which is our rent, supplies, postage, software, etc., \$117,000 for marketing and promotions, and \$343,000 for programs, events, and services which is the largest bucket of our budget. This budget is contingent upon the City and County's additional dollars for this upcoming year which is \$50,000 we'd been receiving from each. The County is approved, the City we are still working on. **Felicia Baca** it should happen this week but I haven't gotten updates. **Grace Lin** the vision you set out for the Co-Create program, those roll into the \$343,000? **Britney Helmers** correct. If you look at the budget, that will be \$170,000 towards the Co-Create program in addition to that we would have \$40,000 towards premiere event funding. Which would be events that we are also looking to gain grants and corporate sponsorships such as Glow at Gallivan to make things larger. Other programming options such as Rose Exposed, SB Dance Curbside Theater, UMOCA, and updating our Kiosk program. **Grace Lin** when you have the large grants of \$30,000, are you making them to one production entity, or are you splitting them up? For example, if 4-5 different

artists are going into this program will they split up the amount? Or are you thinking someone brings an opportunity and you provide them with \$30,000? **Britney Helmers** that what I was looking more towards. **Matthew Castillo** would the money the Cultural Core provides fully fund the project? Or would there be an expectation they bring in their own funding? **Britney Helmers** it would be an expectation that they would also bring in additional funding. As we have been working through this application process, we have thought of what are their goals of the program and what are our goals? **Matthew Castillo** talk to us a little bit more about the grants and corporate sponsorships goal of \$210,000. So that's a revenue goal? Any funding brought in would add to the budget? **Britney Helmers** correct. **Felicia Baca** so a lot of these are existing events, but are they going to start contributing dollars? **Britney Helmers** these would be events that would just be put on solely by the grants or corporate sponsorships. So, they would not be Cultural Core dollars. The only thing you'll see is The Blocks would fund a portion of premiere events, but most of those large events that we have put on in the past will have grants and corporate sponsorships. The Cultural Core would fund \$40,000 of all premiere event funding to cover what grants and corporate sponsorships aren't able to reach. Locally Made Locally Played has received a grant for the upcoming year, we have been writing grants for Last Hurrah and aiming for \$50,000 for that event, main street summer activations are helping us with the Steppin' on Main programming and have received a \$10,000 grant for that. **Grace Lin** so the high level message is the City and County fund \$600,000 and you would look to outside contributors for another \$200,000 and then the \$210,000 would go into events so really The Blocks is going to facilitate \$560,000 worth of event programming? **Britney Helmers** correct. **Grace Lin** it would be a great message to the councils to show we are partnering and bringing in money to show that The Blocks is a vehicle for development. Also, historically, marketing and promotion has been about 40-50% of the overall spending and now we're shifting to \$110,00 in marketing and promotion but then \$550,000 in events. So we are really shifting the movement to more of the placemaking element. Are we overcorrecting? **Britney Helmers** I am hoping with all of these events, that we would have additional marketing and promotion built into those dollar amounts with the Co-Create program. I would also hope that we had more nonprofits from the downtown area also apply to market at the exact same time. **Felicia Baca** as a program, a lot of the placemaking that might manifest as temporary or physical things, has this gray area as marketing and promotion because it's not cut and dry such as in the way of administrative staff as program time. Which is it, administrative or is it programming? **Josh Jones** we have also brought some of the marketing in house now. We used to contract with Elle Marketing for social media marketing, we don't do that any more because we do it internally. **Dee Brewer** Josh, is it accurate to say that there's an additional layer of promotional value that is not apparent here that we do through the Downtown Alliance channels? **Josh Jones** 100%, yes. **Matthew Castillo** I'm curious to understand a little better under programming, the programming sponsorships and promotion with Rose Exposed, SB Dance, etc. **Britney Helmers** so that is an additional \$20,000 that we have set aside to make sure that we can help others such as Rose Exposed and provide dollars from the Cultural Core to that event. SB Dance, we find that to be a great partnership we have had in the past by putting dancers on top of a parking garage. So, within that \$20,000, those are things that have continually come upon us in the past and are events we will continue to pitch dollars towards as well as other programs and events. **Matthew Castillo** so, it is opportunities that organically arise and your team has identified fit within the

budget to continue funding. **Britney Helmers** absolutely. I would hope to keep those dollars for programming, sponsorships, and/or promotion just simply for any and all legacy arts organizations. **Matthew Castillo** the one thing, given the vote we had earlier with Utah Film Center, with some of those, we might need to consider the same voting motion, such as Rose Exposed in particular because that is legacy programming and they do receive dedicated ZAP funding. **Britney Helmers** and that is one thing we will have to note on our contracts for the Co-Create program; that you may not be able to receive additional ZAP funding prior if you receive the Cultural Core budget Co-Create dollars. We will make sure that's also an add-on on those documents. **Felicia Baca** what is the process with the ZAP funding action? **Matthew Castillo** for this line item we can approve, but once the money gets designated to that purpose then we will have to make sure it is brought to the board. **Britney Helmers** before we vote, just to make it clear, what I would hope in the future with our next upcoming meetings is that I can provide a line item, dollar amount, on how that equals up to the top line budget so you can see per quarter how much we spent. **Grace Lin** made a motion to approve the budget as strategically laid out, knowing that The Blocks has the opportunity to flex the dollars as the year goes on and to provide general updates on dollars as flexed. **Lia Summers** seconded the motion.

Plan Implementation Manager Report

Fiscal Year 2023 Recap

Britney Helmers there has been a lot of great success in the past eight months and we have seen a lot of new and fascinating things. **Josh Jones** I have this perspective six years ago, being in the Chamber offices when they named The Blocks, The Blocks, and there were a lot of people with a lot of ideas of what The Blocks should be and I feel that Britney has coalesce all those ideas in the last few months into something that has real vision. And I just want to give her kudos because she has the skillset, mindset, ambition, and vision to guide this organization to something, I feel, it hasn't been. **Durga Ekambaram** I was at Central and came along with my family and another family with four kids. They loved the s'more pits and, of course, the dancers and everything going on. Me, particularly, having buskers on the Trax was really great. I was shocked that there was someone from Daybreak that knew this was happening so the marketing was really great. **Jessica Thesing** we have a great team. I think it speaks to the value that we are all one team under the DTA and the Cultural Core is a program that Britney is doing a great job executing and directing. So, we have a lot of different people that are passionate about what we do and work great together. **Durga Ekambaram** I recently had the opportunity to judge an art contest where those chosen artworks will get displayed on the Trax line. So, is there somehow we can permanently or even temporarily have a Blocks placement inside the Trax? Because, I think you can have one small poster with the brand logo and what it's about inside the Trax. **Josh Jones** the buskers for Central were so popular that UTA has contacted JoyMob to continue doing projects like that.

Report on Recent Programs an Activations & Marketing and Promotion for Legacy Arts

Britney Helmers we've had some great turnouts on Wednesday nights for our Locally Made, Locally Played program. Sure enough, the residents within the city have absolutely been loving it. We have had, continuously, 100-150 people show up on Wednesdays including dogs and kids. The partnerships have been great as well as the recognition and we have had a blast doing it. **Josh Jones** it's been so much fun and unique. It is one of those things you stumble upon and are delighted by. **Britney Helmers** another great highlight was very unexpected. I've been learning about our Liingo app the last couple months. But, we have had 1,700 visits to our mural app trail. I was thinking what we could attest this to a City Weekly article that came out about all the murals downtown and think that might have some comparison. There are 22 new downloads and at this time last year, people were only staying on our app for 3 minutes and 30 seconds where this year they have stayed on for 13 minutes. We did a full overall haul of the mural app and we are continuing continuously working on that as well. **Felicia Baca** can you provide an update on the Edison Mural getting repaired with funding with the graffiti. **Britney Helmers** I have talked with the RDA and have called Clear Coat Painting 15 times and they have mentioned they've gone out there but they haven't. After talking with the RDA, the conversation is looking as if we should wait until construction is completed to really clean it up and then go from there. Whether that be a new mural or if we try to repair it. **Jones Jones** we have had a lot of earned media in the last six months. I love the Fox 13 piece because a reporter showed up at Green Loop and Britney happened to be there and was on the news. X96 did a story about Steppin' on Main and, of course, Central had a ton of press there. A KSL story from just a few days ago has almost 4 million views where Britney and Dee talked about Open Streets and the future of it as well as how it's going to change. In total, we've had \$24 million in ad value this year if we went out and bought earned media this is what it would total. Looking at social media, this is from the past year on Instagram. The reach, per post, is 7,000 followers which is up 106% and Facebook is at 12,000 per post and that's up 65%. I always like to see what the top performing post is. The post on Central was a completely organic post and it had 16,000 views. Promoted posts was Plan-B's promotion of Fire! that had 5,000 views. This Week Downtown has been really successful with up to 59,000 subscribers and an average of 35% open rate. Finally, our website needs to be updated. It hasn't been in six years, but still works and we're up 23% on our traffic. This year, we have had 53,000 sessions on our website through promoted posts and blogs. But, it's impressive what it's still doing. **Britney Helmers** then additional things we have going on, DTA and The Blocks have been working on how we can get everyone together and really promote the arts. We are working with the team at the Utah Arts Festival to reserve the Sky Box and get all of our stakeholders and organizations in Downtown together for this social event. It has been super exciting as well, with everything we have been working on with Locally Made, Locally Played, that we have started to work on a new series called Steppin' on Main in partnership with Matt's team, the Eccles Theater, as well as Tin Angel Cafe. The big thing we have had quite a bit of success in is seeing how we're moving from Locally Made, Locally Played right into Steppin' on Main and into the thought process of Open Streets and then into Glow.

Other Art + Culture Updates

Felicia Baca we are starting Twilight and wrapped up Living Traditions. We had a great year, with attendance up a little from last year. We had a lot of new programming this year and leveled up so we have been really happy about that. We are closing grants today at the Arts Council, so a lot of things are going on. **Matthew Castillo** we are really excited about Steppin' on Main and that partnership. This is the first time in the history of Eccles Theatre that during the summer months, every Friday night we will have something free to do at Eccles Theater. So, we are so grateful for being able to partner on that and it helps us a lot in our activation goals. This summer, we still have a lot of our residents wrapping up their seasons. We've relaunched our ZAP summer passport which was a really great program, pre pandemic. And then, we had to modify that for the last few years. But, it is a family and children focused program that highlights different grantee events throughout the summer and we distribute these passports throughout the libraries across the counties. We have a ton of families participate by getting stamps from different events. Maybe there is a place we can cross promote because, of course, a lot of those events are happening in the Cultural Core and we always get a really great response from that. Another thing, our ZAP tier two closed about a month ago and we broke our record on the number of applications. We had 212 applications with 20 new organizations applying which really shows how resilient the community is and how great it is to see all those additional new applicants. The last thing I'll mention is we are engaging in a really robust master planning process for Abravanel Hall and so is UMOCA which the County is supporting quite a bit. But, a lot of really exciting discussions and concepts about how to turn the plaza out front into an arts center and public space that can leverage attendance from the convention center and temple square. So, finding ways to really establish this as one of the key cultural hubs in downtown Salt Lake City. We will be reaching out to a lot of you to participate in some stakeholder meetings.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at **1:34 pm**.