

MINUTES FOR THE
BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD
Wednesday, November 13th, 2024

1. Roll Call

The following members of the Business Advisory Board were present:

Andy Robertson, Chair
Pook Carson
Brittany Reese
Abudujaannah Soud
Alfonso Brito

Scott Lyttle, Vice-Chair
Jocelyn Kearn
Isaac Atencio
Barri Allaire

Also Present:

Peter Makowski, Department of Economic Development; Will Wright, Department of Economic Development; Kiara Polee, Department of Economic Development; Ibrahim Ramazani, Department of Economic Development, Andie Feldman, Department of Economic Development; Austin Kimmel, Salt Lake City Council.

Absent:

Sheridan Mordue
Jeff Carleton

1. Approval of the minutes

- a. Review and Approval of September 11th, 2024, and October 9th, 2024, meeting minutes.

Mr. Atencio made a motion to approve the minutes from September 11th, 2024. Ms. Reese seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Reese made a motion to approve the minutes from October 9th, 2024. Ms. Carson seconded the motion. Upon roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Briefings by the Staff

- a. Report from the Director.

Ms. Reichgelt provided updates on the Department of Economic Development's recent activities to the Business Advisory Board. She highlighted that the department is in the process of hiring a new project manager after losing a team member in October. The position, which focuses on workforce development, is expected to be filled soon, with second-round interviews underway. She also discussed a significant win for the team, announcing the recruitment of Clean Joule, a company that grew out of the University of Utah and specializes in clean airplane fuel. The company is expanding its operations in Salt Lake, showcasing the city's growing potential for innovation in sustainable technologies.

Further, Ms. Reichgelt updated the Board on recent loan program activities, including loan approvals for Exotic Fast Foods, Ski Trucks, Botanica SLC, and City Cakes SLC. She explained that the Economic Development Loan Fund (EDLF) is currently on pause to allow for an in-depth portfolio analysis, ensuring the sustainability of the fund for the future. The team is also improving loan processing and payment collections to ensure the program's longevity. Additionally, Department of Economic Development Director Lorena Rizzo Jenson praised the team for their hard work and asked the Board to consider consulting support for refining loan processing and collection efforts. Despite the pause, Ms. Reichgelt assured the Board that the fund remains healthy, and the department is committed to maintaining its effectiveness.

3. Business Items

A. Salt Lake City Procurement

Chris Jennings, Chief Procurement Officer, presented Salt Lake City's procurement process and business opportunities to the Business Advisory Board, highlighting the role of his division in purchasing goods and services across all city departments. He explained that the division's purchases range from everyday items like office supplies to larger, more specific needs such as construction materials and software. Mr. Jennings stressed the importance of partnering with vendors, especially local businesses, to foster community relationships and keep city funds circulating locally. He also described the department's efforts to manage city contracts efficiently, ensure taxpayer money is well-spent, and maintain transparency through competitive processes and good documentation.

Mr. Jennings also discussed the unique aspects of public procurement, which differs from private sector buying by requiring open competition and equal opportunity for all vendors. He noted that his team follows strict regulations and policies to uphold transparency and fairness, even when the procurement process might appear complex or bureaucratic. Mr. Jennings encouraged vendors to engage with the city through regular outreach events and to utilize online resources like slcpurchasing.com, where procurement opportunities and updates are posted. He emphasized the city's support for small businesses, explaining that involving local vendors not only supports the economy but enhances community engagement with city projects.

B. Salt Lake County Emergency Winter Shelter Plans

Andrew Johnston, Senior Advisor to the Mayor, presented Salt Lake County's Winter Shelter Plan to the Board, detailing the ongoing efforts to support the homeless population during winter months. Mr. Johnston shared that Salt Lake County holds about 60% of Utah's homeless population and currently provides approximately 1,050 year-round shelter beds, which are supplemented with additional resources during colder months. A significant part of this year's plan involves partnerships with local churches and a new shelter at the former Motel 6 on North Temple, providing 210 more beds for the winter. However, despite these efforts, the current bed capacity still falls short, prompting discussions on long-term solutions like a "Code Blue" initiative, which activates emergency shelter options when temperatures drop below 15°F.

Additionally, Mr. Johnston discussed a proposed "campus" model to provide centralized year-round services, which would include 1,200 shelter beds along with medical, behavioral health, and employment services. This approach, while potentially beneficial, raises challenges such as finding suitable land and securing the estimated \$30 million annual operating costs. Mr. Johnston emphasized the importance of having an "exit plan" to ensure rapid transition from shelters to permanent housing, which remains a significant hurdle given the lack of affordable housing options in Salt Lake County. He pointed out that

states with high housing costs tend to experience higher rates of homelessness, underscoring the need for affordable housing solutions as part of the county's homelessness strategy.

Mr. Johnston also highlighted Salt Lake City's justice-focused efforts, such as the "Familiar Faces" program, which aims to divert frequently arrested individuals experiencing homelessness into supportive services rather than the criminal justice system. This initiative, along with collaborations with state and county agencies, aligns with a broader vision to address homelessness at the state level. Mr. Johnston explained that the city's role involves ensuring public safety and maintaining public spaces, while the county focuses on providing health and social services. As the city and county coordinate these efforts, Mr. Johnston stressed that solving homelessness will require continued investment in affordable housing and supportive services to create sustainable, long-term solutions.

C. Community Champions no cost summer intern program

Board Member Barri Allaire presented the University of Utah's U Career Success Community Champions Intern Program to the Board. This program provides second-year students with paid internships to support local businesses, offering assistance in areas such as social media management, computer tasks, and event planning. The students, who are already gaining educational experience, will begin working with businesses starting in March. The goal of the program is to help smaller businesses by offering paid intern support while giving students valuable real-world business experience.

The program is designed to assist small businesses, not large corporations that can afford to pay interns. The university funds the intern's wages, making it an attractive opportunity for businesses that might not otherwise have the resources for such support. The interns will help with tasks like organizing clothing, managing social media, and reaching out to other local businesses. Ms. Barri emphasized how beneficial these interns can be for small business owners, especially those who are running businesses on their own. The program is particularly valuable as it allows students to gain practical experience while businesses receive essential help.

4. City Council Announcements

Austin Kimmel provided updates on the following items.

A. Sugar House S-Line Parcels Property Disposition.

The City Council discussed a property transfer that would support the extension of the S-Line in Sugar House. The transfer involves land managed by the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) in partnership with UTA. This step is part of ongoing efforts to improve transit access in the area.

B. Jordan River Fairpark District Zoning Map & Test Amendment.

The Council received a briefing on a proposed new zoning district, the Jordan River Fairpark (JRF) District. Covering 93 acres across 38 parcels, the JRF zoning would enable redevelopment of the area, potentially including housing, commercial spaces, and a baseball stadium. The district would allow buildings up to 400 feet tall. An agreement between property owners and the city is required by year-end, or zoning regulations may not apply.

C. The Central Business Improvement Area and Appoint a Board of Equalization.

The Council reviewed the renewal process for the Central Business Improvement Area (SAA) in downtown, which needs reauthorization every three years. This multi-step process is expected to be completed by April 2025

D. City-wide Test Amendment for Gas Station Standards.

The Council is evaluating a new amendment that would enforce a minimum distance between gas stations and parks, open spaces, or water bodies. This requirement aims to improve environmental safeguards. A decision could be made in December.

E. GK Folks and HK Brewing EDLF loans on November 19th.

Next week, the Council will review EDLF loan applications for GK Folks, a nonprofit supporting African immigrants and refugees, and HK Brewing, a taproom and brewery. A vote on these loans is expected soon.

5. BAB Member Announcements

A. Councilmember Lopez-Chavez meeting recap, BAB Chair Mr. Roberts

In a recent meeting, Councilmember Lopez-Chavez, who represents the downtown district, expressed strong support for business initiatives and encouraged continued collaboration. She showed interest in returning to future meetings, possibly with another council member, to foster open dialogue on business and event permits. She emphasized the importance of ongoing communication through letters to the City Council and suggested exploring revenue from special events permits more closely. BAB Chair Mr. Roberts also urged members to engage with their local community councils and planning commissions to gain insights and keep up with district issues.

Business Advisory Chair, Andy Robertson, also talked about the Serve a Meal program at the Geraldine E. King Women's Resource Center in Salt Lake City. This initiative offers volunteers the chance to assist with meal preparation, serving, and cleanup, helping to meet the nutritional needs of up to 200 women experiencing homelessness. The program fosters meaningful community engagement and provides shifts lasting about two hours, available for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Volunteers must be at least 16 years old and should wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes. Organized by Volunteers of America, Utah, this effort supports vulnerable populations through various services, including housing, mental health, and substance abuse programs.

B. BAB December election comment, BAB Vice-Chair Mr. Lyttle

The meeting concluded with a reminder about upcoming January elections for new BAB leadership and instructions for feedback submission on recent presentations.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.


Andy Robertson (Feb 8, 2025 08:03 MST)
Andy Robertson, Chair

This document and the recording constitute the official minutes of the Economic Development Business Advisory Board meeting held on November 13th, 2024.