

# Portland Downtown Board of Directors

## Board Meeting minutes

January 18, 2018

549 Congress St



**Present:** Kim Volk, Ken Cianchette, Mike Erickson, Phil Haughey, Denine Leeman, Sue-Ellen McClain, Mike McDonald, Trish McLellan, David Packard, Suzie Rephan, Alen Saric, Penny St. Louis (on phone), Peter Tousignant (on phone), Erik Urbanek, Matt Veith

**Excused:** Anastasia Contos, Sarah Martin, Greg Mitchell, Robyn Violette

**Staff:** Casey Gilbert, Taffy Eaton

**Minute 1.** Kim called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone present

**Minute 2.** Motion to accept

- a) **December 13, 2017 Board meeting minutes:** On a motion made by Denine Leeman, seconded by Ken Cianchette and unanimously adopted, it was

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Board Meeting of December 13, 2017 be and hereby are accepted as proposed.  
Discussion: The Old Port Festival Community Survey has been sent

- b) **December Treasurer's Report:** Erik reviewed the attached summary report. On a motion made by Mike McDonald, seconded by Sue-Ellen McClain and unanimously adopted following discussion:
- We are tracking \$9,284.96 over budget YTD
  - Income:
    - LUYH events income is over budget with a few sponsorship payments still outstanding
  - Expenses:
    - Programs are over budget due to the Cadet expense. It will increase further before the end of the fiscal year.
    - Marketing is still under budget but will catch up next month once all the invoices have been received
  - Denine brought up the write-off of the existing Park & Shop income. If written off, it would come in as income. Kim explained that following discussion with the accountant, we agreed to bring it in as it's spent ie, on the Multi-modal Marketing campaign.
  - Denine mentioned being over budget for the Cadet program. Was there a reclass of funds over budget? No, we did not have extra funds, the budget was \$10,000 and \$10,000 was spent.
  - Casey distributed a Light up Your Holidays event comparison spreadsheet for 2014 through 2017 (further discussion below in her Executive Director's report)

it was

**RESOLVED:** that the December financial statements and Treasurer's report be and hereby are accepted as presented.

### Minute 3. Committee reports:

- Merchant: Matt reviewed the December meeting briefly. There were discussions about the Holiday events and Old Port Festival. Kim asked about Merry Madness feedback. Casey commented that Portland Downtown received only positive feedback. Matt suggested raising the ticket price.
- Old Port Festival Ad hoc: no comments on the minutes. Adam sent a Community survey today.
- Clean & Safe Committee: Denine summarized – the committee discussed the Supplemental Services Agreement (SSA) and will further discuss options to change the hours of the Public Works staff depending on needs. Adding trash cans downtown – the committee will send a notice to property owners to offer them the option to purchase a can near their property, adding 10 more trash cans to the current number.
- Legal Affairs: no comments

On a motion made by Trish McLellan, seconded by David Packard and unanimously acknowledged it was

**RESOLVED:** That the following Minutes of recent Committee Meetings be and hereby are acknowledged:

- Merchant Meeting (12/5/17)
- Old Port Festival Ad hoc (12/5, 12/12)
- Clean & Safe (12/14/17)
- Legal Affairs Committee (12/20/17)

### Minute 4. Other committee reports:

- Legal Affairs Committee
  1. 2018 Election process
    - Trish confirmed that there are 3 stakeholder positions and 3 property owner positions opening for FY19
    - The draft RFP for outsourcing the entire election process is in the packet. The committee is looking for Board input.
      - The expenditure is unbudgeted and will cost approximately \$6,000
      - The RFP could be reduced to outsourcing a portion of the election process. Denine commented that Portland Downtown needs governance over this process.
      - Trish commented that in 2017, Albin, Randall & Bennett volunteered to count the ballots and it went well
      - How much of the process should Portland Downtown have outside oversight on? Email comments to Trish by February 21<sup>st</sup>
  2. Changing committee name to Governance – A motion was made by Trish McLellan, seconded by Mike McDonald and unanimously approved. The Roles and Responsibilities of the Governance Committee are included in the packet.
  3. Annual Property Owners meeting – there was discussion about using The Regency on March 15, 2018 beginning with a 3:00pm Board meeting, followed by the Property Owner and meet the candidates meeting. Casey confirmed that candidates are invited as well as stakeholders.
  4. Trish reminded Board members to bring nominations to the Governance Committee. Stakeholder vacancies are in Accommodations, Retail and Restaurant categories.

**Minute 5.** Executive Director's update: Casey distributed and reviewed the report she provided before the Executive Committee meeting.

- Casey reviewed historical financials for 2014 – 2017 Light up Your Holidays events, (attached) budget vs actual each year. The total includes outstanding sponsorship checks. Next months' financials will reflect these numbers, as we expect to receive all outstanding checks in January.
- Casey and staff will keep an eye on Merry Madness expenses in 2018. Ken reminded the Board that if we had to purchase wine, it would add substantially to the event cost. All wine has been donated thus far.
- The big marketing cost was \$3,000 for the Light up Your Holidays 4-page insert in the Portland Press Herald. The overrun was distributed to merchants.

- Kim asked if we have an exclusive with the Portland Press Herald. Casey said our contract requires a certain amount of cash be spent with them annually.
- The event was net positive. Events went as well as could be expected.
- Suzie offered to make calls to merchants to remind them about Shop for A Cause Day for outstanding donations
- Casey circulated the State of the City Mayor’s address invitation
- Casey thanked staff for holding down the fort while she traveled and thanked the Board for allowing her the time off. She is reinvigorated and happy to be back!

**Minute 6. Other business:**

- a) Old Port Festival Ad hoc Committee draft recommendations (attached): Erik informed the Board that the committee is at the recommendations stage. Vendor registration will begin in February, so the fee structure needs to be finalized.
- Board members reviewed the document. Erik said the committee learned a lot about the history of OPF. It is a revenue positive event and worth doing.
  - In its current state, OPF is not reflective of Portland’s culture and Portland Downtown wants to get away from that. It’s time to make some changes.
  - The committee has developed both short and long-term recommendations. What do we want the event to be and how do we want to represent ourselves to the public? The committee wants participation by quality vendors because it will be a quality event.
  - Fee readjustment review:
    - Increase the artist and crafters fee to \$150 from \$100. Staff will monitor vendor registration and report back to the Board. The increased fee is an attempt to “up our image”. If we lose some lower end artists and crafters, it will not be an issue. A juried process is a possible long-term goal.
    - Retail in-district vendor fee will decrease to \$0.00 from \$100 for businesses in the footprint
    - With these changes, the event will still have net positive revenue of \$2,900
    - We will not lose much revenue by firing kiddie ride vendor D&L Amusements. Replacing carnival rides with other vendors will increase revenue.

**Discussion:**

- Concern was expressed about retailers reserving the space in front of their store but not using it. The merchants need to be active (as recommended in the letter).
- How will that be enforced? Portland Downtown could suspend their vendor rights next year.
  - Suzie says the point of this recommendation is to assist merchants who don’t want to open their shop, to give them the opportunity to give out a coupon for a future trip to their store.
  - Some merchants might have product on their tables. One Exchange Street merchant sold out of all goods on her sidewalk table in 2017 but never opened her store.
  - It’s an opportunity for merchants to market themselves to a large group of people with little expense and to control what goes on in front of their stores
  - Casey offered to speak to merchants seeking clarification on their role
  - We will put a deadline on merchant early registration so unreserved spaces can then be sold
  - Vendor placement – we will move the “carnival” type food vendors and those that reserve several booth spaces to the edge of the footprint

Denine made a motion to accept the recommendation for implementation of these changes for 2018 OPF with the addition of language in item #6: add “an active” in front of “presence” and add “staffed” in front of “table”. Sue-Ellen seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

- b) Growth ad hoc Committee Q&A: Kim asked for an update from David Packard and Ken Cianchette
- Ken explained that the committee is working on making the City’s legal agreement equal the footprint
  - The committee is exploring expansion by incorporating properties into the footprint that are already being served by the Public Works crew

- Kim has clarified that the City does not drive the Portland Downtown budget, Portland Downtown does. The committee is working with Casey and staff to determine a budget that allows Portland Downtown to produce programs to their fullest. The City will determine the mil rate based on our budget.
  - The mil rate is budget driven, not assessment driven
  - The committee is working on a draft letter and will represent it to the Executive Committee and Board in February
  - Trish suggested having a pie chart in order to see our categories of expenses
  - Casey told the Board that Portland Downtown leverages about \$750,000 from Assessment taxes and about half of that goes back to City
  - Ken reminded the Board that we have to sell Portland Downtown's value to property owners. David agreed that we need to provide transparency also.
  - Casey suggested that "expansion" may not be the right term to use. We're simply closing the gap and evening out the borders of the district.
  - It became clear on the committees' perimeter walk, there is a lot of room for improvement in the areas not currently in the footprint
  - Tommy Higgins suggests that it would mean adding 1 person to the downtown Public Works crew
  - Ken and David said that Chris Huff, the City Assessor, suggested moving away from the legal description and relying on a map only. Penny agrees with dissolving the legal description.
  - Harold Pachios agrees with evening out the borders. His main point was to be able to sell the higher level of services offered to property owners.
  - Kim brought up Chris Huff's comments about expansion in the January 10<sup>th</sup> Growth Ad hoc Committee meeting minutes. The City's revaluation will be effective in 2021.
  - Committee members will talk to City Councilors, 2 at a time
  - The Board will meet with property owners on March 15, 2018, in time to submit a budget to the City in April
  - Kim said the mil rate history was \$1.33, went down to \$1.20, then down to \$1.11 and has been \$0.92 for 10 years. Assessment values have not kept up with expenses.
- c) New Board appointment: Kim asked for the Board's acknowledgement of Megan Doane from Portland Stage to serve a 1-year term as a Chair Appointment in the Arts & Culture sector. Kim encouraged Megan to run for a Board position. Denine made a motion to accept the Chair's appointment. Ken seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.
- d) Mike McDonald mentioned that the recent uptick in graffiti is noticeable. Casey is advocating for full-time downtown graffiti removal in the next budget.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Kim adjourned the meeting at 10:15.

Respectfully submitted,  
Taffy Eaton, Recorder