



**Downtown Evanston Executive Board**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, January 11, 2024, 9AM**  
**Creative Coworking, 922 Davis Street**

Board Members: Mike Smylie (Chair) - *on the phone*, Angela Valavanis (Vice Chair), Isabelle Libmann, Jazmine Lee, Nathan Kostant, Gretchen Brauer

Absent: Andrew McDonald (Treasurer)

Guest: Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Staff: Andy Vick, Laura Brown

- I. Mike called the meeting to order at 9:05am
- II. Approval of December Minutes (Mike): Angela motioned to approve; Isabelle seconded.  
Meeting minutes approved.
- III. Treasurer's Report: Andy
  - a. 2023 "soft close" on the December financials
  - b. Reported that we are ahead of where we want to be in terms of revenue over expenses
  - c. City now has tax funds from Cook County and we will receive final 2023 installment within next couple of weeks. Paul noted that the first installment for 2024 usually received in April/May.
- IV. Executive Director update (Andy)
  - a. Transferred funds from Byline Bank money market to checking accounts

- b. Working on website updates: business listings, general content, events
- c. Northwestern confirmed \$18,000 contribution for 2024
- d. Maintenance: City ended contract with StreetPlus and is issuing a new RFP for trash removal, sticker removal, graffiti removal, spot cleaning, etc. There is a temporary month-to-month contract with Brightview to remove garbage from downtown bins.
- e. Evanston Thrives Meeting on 1/18 to discuss how to spend the funds allocated to placemaking, economic development. Andy will be encouraging the purchase of a stage for all SSAs, Parks & Recreation, and others to use, and extending pavers at the south end of Fountain Square.
- f. Sponsorship Outreach for 2024 events, primarily the Downtown Summer Sounds
- g. Northwestern Analytics students are working on a research project to create downtown business inventory with vacancies, type of business (women-owned, BIPOC-owned, etc.), and numbers of employees
- h. Andy talked to Metra about cleaning up the exit/entrance and areas around the Davis Street station; possible work to happen in spring 2024

V. Director of Marketing update (Laura)

- a. Holiday events were an overall success; helped drive traffic to retailers
- b. Upcoming Events:
  - i. S'mores on the Square: Feb. 10 & March 9, 5-7pm; partnership with City of Evanston Parks & Recreation
  - ii. Love Local Chocolate Crawl: Feb. 8 or 15 (TBD)
- c. Advertising: Contracts with similar media partners (CVB, Evanston Now, Roundtable) and extended reach digital advertising

VI. Business Outreach: connecting with Devil Dawgs, Inspired Counseling, Cora Violet Auctions to provide marketing support as needed

VII. Other Business (Mike)

- a. Revised 2024 Budget **[VOTE]**
  - i. Andy updated budget that was originally submitted in early September based on new programs and looking at 2023 expenses, some noted below:

1. Downtown Summer Sounds: \$50,000 budget due to rentals, entertainment, sound tech, activation funds which will require more sponsorship dollars and related program expenses
  2. Scaled back on banners, maintenance and audit
  3. Added funds to new photography category and added funds for software
- ii. Nathan motioned to approve the revised budget; Isabelle seconded. Revised budget approved unanimously.
- b. Pre-authorization to pay-off Byline line of credit **[VOTE]**
- i. Andy requesting pre-authorization to pay off the line of credit when we receive the 2<sup>nd</sup> installment from City
- c. Pre-authorization to invest balance of 2023 tax payment **[VOTE]**
- i. Andy requesting pre-authorization to move remaining funds into the money market.
- d. Mike proposed to approve both pre-authorizations to approve paying off Byline line of credit and investing the balance into the money market
- i. Angela motioned to approve the vote; Nathan seconded. Pre-authorizations approved unanimously.
- VIII. Board Announcements (All)
- a. Executive board meetings changed to 9:30-10:30am
- IX. Mike adjourned the meeting at 9:45am

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

S'mores on the Square (February 10 and March 9, 5-7PM)  
Earth Day Cleanup event (April TBD)

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Next Exec Board meeting: Thursday, February 8, 9:30AM  
Next FULL BOARD meeting, Thursday, April 18, 4PM at 820 Davis St.