



**Downtown Evanston Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 8, 2026, 9:30AM
Creative Coworking, 922 Davis Street**

Board Members Present:

Angela Valavanis, Creative Coworking (*Chair*)

Nathan Kostant, Golub (*Vice Chair*)

Andrew McDonald, Rotary International (*Treasurer*)

Gretchen Brauer, Wheel & Sprocket, (*Secretary*)

Marty Cless, Core & Rind Hospitality

Sarita Kamat, Artem Pop Up Gallery

Not Present:

Jim Nash, Farnsworth Hill

Paul Zalmezak, City of Evanston

Staff: Andy Vick, Laura Brown

I. Call to Order at 9:30AM (Angela)

II. Approval of December Minutes (Angela) **[Vote]**

a. Andrew moved to approve; Nathan seconded. Exec Board approved minutes unanimously.

III. Treasurer's Report (Andrew & Andy)

a. December Financials

i. 2nd 2025 SSA tax allocation invoice has been submitted to the City, and we are expecting to receive the full amount of tax revenue budgeted for 2025

ii. We expect to end the fiscal year with expenses under budget, and a surplus of revenue over expenses totaling \$58,819

- b. 2026 Northwestern CBA funding in the amount of \$250,000 has been invoiced, and payment is expected by the end of Q1
- c. Northwestern has also pledged, and been invoiced for, \$9,000 in general operating support (which was not included in our approved 2026 budget)
- d. 2025 Audit: Letter of Engagement has been signed with Cheryl Rohlf's & Associates, and the audit process is expected to start in February

IV. Executive Director update (Andy)

- a. 2025 Evanston Gift Card report provides an overview of the gift cards purchased, spent and where transactions occurred
- b. Finalizing Downtown Summer Sounds concert series line up
- c. Exploring an upgrade to a digital kiosk at Fountain Square
- d. Planning underway for a new "gateway" mural on west wall of the former Affordable Portables building
- e. Work has begun on our 2025 Annual Report, and a draft of the report will be shared with Exec in a couple of weeks, before it goes public

V. Director of Marketing update (Laura)

- a. Communications Dashboard overview
- b. Planning is underway for the Love Local Chocolate Crawl, our first event of 2026

VI. Other Business (Angela)

- a. New Board member to replace Vivian Killebrew, who closed her downtown business. Andy will reach out to a potential candidate about joining the Full board.
- b. 2026 Sponsorship Deck shared with Exec Board members to consider and share

VII. Open Discussion (All)

- a. Northlight Theatre opening in fall 2026
 - i. What can we do to clean up the surrounding areas on Maple Avenue and Church Street—especially the area near the Metra station
 - ii. Timeline TBD for adjacent building demo on Oak and Church Street
 - iii. Discuss with CVB about advertising/marketing for Northlight opening
- b. New residential construction projects on Chicago Avenue and Davis Street – extra marketing support needed for nearby businesses during construction

VIII. Adjournment (Angela)

Next Exec Board meeting: Thursday, February 12, 9:30AM