



Downtown Development Authority of Blakely
MINUTES
Monday, January 22, 2024
5:30 pm
Alexander Building
Chamber-Development Authority Board Room

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Dave Atkins, Beau Clenney, Franklin Ford, Edwin James, Jennifer Mulkey, and Brad Clenney.

ABSENT MEMBERS: Heather Allred (excused)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Vikki Ford, Jordan Mulkey, and Susanne Reynolds

Dave Atkins, Interim DDA Chair, called the meeting to order.

- **MINUTES:** A motion to approve the November 27, 2023 meeting minutes was made by Brad Clenney and seconded by Franklin Ford. All voted in favor.
- **FINANCIAL REPORT:** A motion to approve the financial report (OSB - \$5,913.71, FSB - \$7,500.00) was made by Franklin Ford and seconded by Brad Clenney. All voted in favor.
- **OLD BUSINESS:** Dave Atkins introduced Jennifer Mulkey and Heather Allred as the appointed fundraising committee.
- **NEW BUSINESS:** A motion to nominate Dave Atkins as Chairman, Jennifer Mulkey as Vice-Chair, and Franklin Ford as Secretary-Treasurer for FY24 was made by Brad Clenney and seconded by Beau Clenney. All voted in favor. The next Merchant Meet Up was discussed (Invite Heather Sharpe, DCA Rep. to present on the Rural Zone.). March 11th at 5 pm was the suggested date. Atkins offered One South Bank as a location if a sponsor needed a larger space. He and Reynolds will reach out to prospective sponsors. In the future, Atkins will spearhead the Merchant Meet Up events. Reynolds discussed the benefits of the GA Downtown Association membership of \$500/yr. All DDA Board Members + Executive Director would be included in the membership. Franklin Ford suggested reaching out to regional DDAs for how the membership has benefitted their downtowns. Reynolds will reach out to them for feedback. A motion to approve the GDA membership of \$500/year contingent on the feedback of regional DDAs was made by Edwin James and seconded by Jennifer Mulkey. All voted in favor. Reynolds discussed the Vibrant Communities Grant via GCA. The DDA received \$2,566.00 towards a community downtown banner art contest. A match of \$1,500.00 is required. Franklin Ford discussed if this project and spending \$1500 of the DDA budget lines up with the

DDA Mission Statement (Creates Opportunities & Promotes Downtown Blakely). A motion to approve the \$1500.00 match was made by Brad Clenney and seconded by Edwin James. All voted in favor.

- **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Dave Atkins discussed how beneficial and informative the Main Street DDA 101 training was for him and encouraged board members to take the training soon. Discussed the board taking on projects where the community would see something happening Downtown. Aktins will meet with leaders of Blakely Hometown, Early Co. Museum, and Early Co. Historical Society to discuss partnering with the DDA on bigger fundraising opportunities.
- **DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** An update on the Court Square Facade Grant program was given. A public hearing on the awning materials ordinance must happen before the City Council can vote on the amendments. Once this is done, the FG program can move forward. Reynolds also said when the local historic district is approved, the Historic Preservation Commission will be able to provide an extra layer of Code Enforcement for historic properties located in Downtown Blakely. The "Starting a Business in Blakely" document was shared. This will be used as a reference for those wanting to start a business in Blakely. Reynolds will verify information is correct with the City. Reynolds verified with Councilman Brad Clenney that the City had approved a \$15,000 allocation for FY24 to DDA. In the future, the City might give more when DDA begins generating business development for Downtown.
- **OTHER DISCUSSIONS/PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Vikki Ford asked how Blakely Hometown, Museum, and Historical Society would work well financially with DDA since they are already having a hard time funding projects. Atkins commented that the fundraisers would be bigger and better working together. More funds would be generated from the events, etc. Jordan Mulkey addressed the DDA board by discussing a downtown business project. He is purchasing former Moore's and Sentry Hardware buildings on the Court Square. He and his partners are planning to open a tap room in Moore's building by March 2025. He said the community needs to see something happening. A taproom would draw people regionally. It would be good for all downtown businesses. The entire project is estimated at \$500,000. Funding is the biggest obstacle. Mulkey asked for support and incentives available to help complete the project. Dave Atkins discussed SBA loans. Reynolds asked Mulkey to visit with her, so downtown incentives could be explained.

A motion to adjourn was made by Franklin Ford and seconded by Brad Clenney. All voted in favor.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Susanne Reynolds, Blakely DDA Executive Director.

Dave Atkins
Chairman

Jennifer Mulkey
Vice-Chair