

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT**

**February 28, 2024
8 AM**

Meeting held at Work_Space, 903 Main Street

MEMBERS PRESENT: Daniel Mulligan, Acting Chair
Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary
Sophia Dzialo
Ryan Fagan
Esther Jeffery

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT:

ALSO PRESENT: Lynn Sottile, Concilla Ndlovu,

STAFF PRESENT: Bernie LeBel, Downtown Manager

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tarek Ambia, Finance Chair

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS
ABSENT: Gary Anderson, Director Planning and Development
Millie Texidor – GMCC Representative

Call to Order:

- Mr. Mulligan calls the meeting to order at 8:05 AM

Roll Call:

- Mr. Mulligan noted those present and absent.

Public Comment:

- Not at this time

New Business:

- Slate of Nominees for 2024 Biennial Election (A) - A motion to accept the slate as presented is made by Ms. Dzialo, seconded by Ms. Jeffery. All approve.
- Proposed 24/25 FY Budget for Adoption - Ms. LeBel notes that there was a change in the use of fund balance to cover any/all shortfall of the budget. In this way, we avoid raising taxes and having a possible surplus as we have in years past. Every other item remains the same. Revenue and expenses balance at \$210,735. Mr. Mulligan feels that at some point, we need to increase the tax rate. Ms. Dzialo would like to see the split of 50/50 between tax and fund balance. Increasing the reach of the events and policies that benefit the downtown could be used for the surplus. Ms. Jeffery would like to

make sure that events will benefit all of the businesses. Mr. Mulligan feels that we will have a lot of undocumented costs associated with the Streetscape Project if and when that goes through. Ms. Dzialo feels that the funding for signs and promotions during the construction period could be covered by the Town, but we should be prepared if that funding doesn't go through. Mr. Mulligan would like to see a 1-2% increase in the taxes to make sure the use of fund balance doesn't deplete too much. This would increase tax revenue to \$86,000; Use of Fund Balance would reduce to \$19,835.

Public Comment:

- Ms. Sottile would like to know if this budget was presented to the constituents. She would like to know about the parking system and if the Board feels the \$20,000 annual cost is worth the expense and revenue generation. She feels there are still costs that aren't accounted for and information that Passport hasn't provided to the District. She also notes that every time taxes get raised, rents go up. She feels that parking doesn't accurately represent the costs and revenues; how many fines are issued, how much is the cost per ticket, how many tickets aren't paid and do those cost us? She would like to see the website costs which do not show up on the budget either as a yearly fee or monthly fee. Ms. LeBel states that the rate is \$700 per year for the first three years, then goes to \$1300 after (which will be this year). The website cost is in the Print & Other Advertising line of the budget. Ms. LeBel agrees about the lack of parking information; she will be having a followup with the new VP of Passport who acknowledged the shortcomings in their service. Ms. Sottile feels that the issues with Passport take the manager away from the business that should be handled and would like the Board to consider the person-hours that have been spent over the past two years. She feels that knowing what the revenue is should be the driver for parking; every dollar taken in needs to account for every dollar spent and she doesn't feel that this budget does that. Mr. Mulligan would like to see a more active finance committee and next year, we need that committee to get a better handle on the entire budget. Ms. Sottile would like to see a running balance on the budget going forward to track what is being spent and when. Also, that she wonders if there is a possibility to issue fines for property owners who do not adequately clear snow from the sidewalks or clear sufficient space through the windrows to get from the street to the sidewalk.

Other Business:

- A motion to approve the budget as presented with a modification to increase tax revenue to \$86,000 and reduce use of fund balance to \$19,835 is made by Ms. Dzialo, seconded by Ms. Jeffery. All approve.

Adjourn

- There being no further business a motion to adjourn is made by Ms. Jeffery at 8:38 AM, seconded by Mr. Fagan. All approve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary DMSSD

Recorder