



**UNION SQUARE ALLIANCE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**Minutes**

**July 25, 2024 – 9:00-11:30 a.m.**

**Hotel Zelos, 12 4<sup>th</sup> Street (Stillhouse Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
San Francisco, CA 94104**

**Board Members in attendance (all in person):** Clif Clark, David Lewin, Don Thomas, Tim Falvey, James Sangiacomo, Jordan Buckley, Julie Taylor, Kevin Flanagan, Lauren Ellis, Mark Purdy, Mark Sullivan, Russ Keil, Wes Tyler, Shirley Howard - Johnson, Manuela Anne King

**Staff and contractors:** Marisa Rodriguez (Chief Executive Officer), Ben Horne (Chief Financial Officer) Ken Rich (Director of Policy and Economic Development), Jason Cherniss (Director of Operations), Zarrina Yousafzai (Finance and HR Associate), Jessica Chilingerian (Marketing and Communications Associate), Liza Bernard (Events Associate), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), Beau Simon (legal counsel), and Ricky Soares from Legion and Johnny Linares from Block by Block (contractors).

**Guests:** Tammy Brock and Kacee Ochalek (OEWD),

**Summary of Actions Taken by the Board of Directors**

- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved to accept the CEO's report from June 27 as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard Johnson.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the May 23, 2024, minutes as motioned by Jim Sangiacomo and seconded by Don Thomas.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved Mark Purdy, President, Don Thomas, Vice President, Julie Taylor, Treasurer, and Stephen Brett, Secretary, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by David Lewin.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved extending the Union Square Foundation services agreement through December 31, 2024 (6 months) as motioned by Mark Purdy and seconded by Don Thomas.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved policy on use of LPRs and to approve contracting with Vigilant (Motorola) to provide the LPR related services with additional language as motioned by David Lewin and seconded by Jordan Buckley.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the new services contract with Cube84 as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Wes Tyler.



- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the letter of support for United Airlines as motioned by Jim Sangiacomo and seconded by Shirley Howard Johnson.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the marketing committee's PR firm recommendation as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Jim Sangiacomo.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the unaudited financial reports as of June 2024 as motioned by Tim Falvey and seconded by Jim Sangiacomo.
- **Action:** The Board approved the draft budget for 24-25FY as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard Johnson.

1. Call to order, roll call, introductions and welcome to the Marriott Union Square.  
Marisa called the meeting to order at 9:07am. Then introductions were made.

2. Public comment

Marisa thanked Hotel Zelos for hosting the Union Square Alliance Board of Director's meeting. She gave an additional shoutout to Pebblebrook Hotel Trust, for their support of the Union Square Alliance.

3. CEO's report

- Suit Up!

Marisa informed the Board of the recent Suit Up event. This event is in partnership with the Union Square Foundation, Macy's, SFPD, DA's office, and John's Grill to support young kids from the Bayview neighborhood to provide them with their first suit. Marisa thanked Wes Tyler for being present. Wes shared his positive experience at the event.

- IDA Conference- Seattle, September 2024

The Internation Downtown Association will be hosted in Seattle this year. A few Alliance staff will be attending and will be learning and sharing best practices with other BIDs. Marisa noted that the Alliance has been recognized and has won an award for the Bloom initiative.

- **Executive Committee met on June 27, and approved:**

- The minutes of the April 25, 2024, Executive Committee and May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024, meetings.
- Pulkesin Mohan (Taj Campton Place) as a Board Member for the Union Square Foundation.
- The renewal of the CNB line of credit in the amount of \$980,000 and to approve Julie Taylor, Treasurer and Marisa Rodriguez, CEO as signers on the line of credit.
- The new credit card in the amount of \$10,000 for use by Eva Schouten for events and related expenses.
- Sponsorship consultant (Kevin Bartram) contract.



- Accepting \$50,000 grant for Bigbelly maintenance and replacements
- **CLOSED SESSION**
- Closed session minutes from April 25, 2024.
- Remote Work Agreement.
- Status of Public Realm Manager.
- Staff position(s) and new position.
  - Revised position for Director of Economic Development and Policy.
  - Reposting Intern Position
  - New position of Chief of Staff
- New consulting client for Director of Economic Development and Policy.

**Action** The Board unanimously approved to accept the CEO's report from June 27 as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard Johnson.

4. **Action to approve the May 23, 2024, meeting minutes.**

The board reviewed the previous meeting minutes which were sent out ahead of the meeting.

**Action:** The Board unanimously approved the May 23, 2024, minutes as motioned by Jim Sangiacomo and seconded by Don Thomas.

5. **Discussion regarding Board attendance and quorum.**

Marisa and Ben informed the Board of the importance of being present (in person, as required by law) for Board and Executive Committee meetings. Discussion took place regarding the possibility of a hybrid meeting. Ben reminded the Board that due to the Brown Act and the end of the emergency order for COVID in February 2023; the Board (and Executive Committee) must meet in person.

6. **Board of Director's Officers election and action to approve to Mark Purdy, President, Don Thomas, Vice President, Julie Taylor, Treasurer, and Stephen Brett, Secretary.**

The Board of Director's Officers need to be re-elected annually as part of the bylaws. The current officers are willing to serve for another year and have confirmed their availability to do so.

**Action:** The Board unanimously approved Mark Purdy, President, Don Thomas, Vice President, Julie Taylor, Treasurer, and Stephen Brett, Secretary, as motioned by Mark Sullivan and seconded by David Lewin.

7. **Action to extend the Union Square Foundation services agreement through December 31, 2024 (6 months)**

The Union Square Alliance contracts with the Union Square Foundation to execute the programs and initiatives the Foundation funds as well as providing management and administration. With the additional funds from grants, the Alliance has been dedicating additional time to the Foundation, hence the revision and extension



(through December 2024) of the contract. The Foundation will review the contract in their August meeting.

**Action:** The Board unanimously approved the revision and extension of the Union Square Foundation services agreement through December 31, 2024 (6 months) as motioned by Mark Purdy and seconded by Don Thomas.

8. Discussion and review of memo from City regarding prohibitions on use of assessment (or grant) funds for political activities and campaigns.

Ben and Marisa briefed the Board on the Union Square Alliance's limitations regarding lobbying and political activities and directed them to a memo received from OEWD in regard to these limitations. As an organization, the Alliance cannot campaign, lobby, or endorse ballot measures using "City Funds" per its contract with the City and County of San Francisco. Assessment and grant funds are considered City funds. However, it has a separate fund of non-assessment advocacy funds, which is used when advocating for ballot measures. The fund is being depleted, and the Alliance is exploring options to replenish it. This discussion arose after a November 2024 ballot measure mentioned potential funds for public realm improvements (for a General Obligation Bond) in San Francisco. Tim Falvey asked if the Union Square Foundation could advocate, and Ben confirmed it could although being a 501C3 charitable organization it has specific limits on lobbying.

Kacee Ochalek, Project Specialist for Community Economic Development at OEWD, emphasized the importance of careful language when discussing ballot measures. While we can educate others on the pros and cons, we cannot directly influence or express support. The City's position is that generally the BIDs and CBDs should avoid getting involved in campaigns/elections.

9. To Receive the BID's Advisory Committee reports and to take action to approve several Committee recommendations:

a. Public Affairs & Advocacy (Erik Murray)

- Economic Development and Marketing Summit- August 29<sup>th</sup> at Convene  
Marisa informed the Board of the upcoming economic development and marketing summit that will take place on August 29<sup>th</sup> at Convene. The purpose of this summit is to educate our members about the Alliance's marketing efforts and ways to collaborate to promote their business. The other portion of the summit will be focused on economic development in the district and upcoming activations.
- Legislative Updates  
Marisa updated the Board on the bill package that is aimed at combating retail theft at the state level. She mentioned Prop 36 is a modified version of Prop 47. Prop 47 changed some theft and drug crimes from felonies to



misdemeanors while prop 36 increases penalties for certain theft and drug crimes, establishes a treatment-focused court process for some drug possession offenses, and mandates courts to warn drug offenders that future violations leading to death could result in murder charges.

b. Services & Public Safety (Don Thomas) <sup>[OBJ]</sup>

- May & June 2024 Operations Report.

Johnny Linares from Block by Block, gave an overview of the May and June operations report. He highlighted a thank you card that was received from a stakeholder that praised the work of the ambassadors as well as the security camera system. There has been a noticeable decrease in 10B which is a result of fewer sign-ups but also Block by Block is investigating the decrease. Discussion took place regarding the drastically lower statistics compared to the previous year. Johnny noted that there have been reporting issues still being addressed, hence the lower stats. Julie Taylor emphasized the importance of these statistics which ultimately help land deals if businesses see the positive work and impact we have on the community. Ben also emphasized the importance of statistics to show the members what they are getting for the assessments. Johnny said he would make sure that any issues are rectified, and Block by Block will provide updates.

- Project Updates: Bigbelly and grant, Member Services texting, Legion data and passing Call Program

Jason reminded the Board to continue using the texting feature for submitting service requests to Member Services and to provide feedback. Discussion took place regarding the time responses and the language in the auto response. Ricky informed the group that Legion has a new manager, Michael Brown, who will be overseeing the Legion guards. Legion is currently working on a new program that will constantly address the hot spots in the district. Discussion took place regarding overnight and early morning issues. Discussion took place regarding the theater district, open air drug use, and additional safety resources. The Bigbellys will be replaced soon using the grant that was received earlier this year. Staff are exploring replacement and repair options for the Bigbellys.

- LPRs discussion and **action** to approve policy on use of LPRs and to approve contracting with Vigilant (Motorola) to provide the LPR related services.

Ben explained that while some (around 15) of the Alliance's current cameras have the capability to function as license plate readers (LPRs), this feature has not yet been activated on the cameras. Over the past year, SFPD has deployed their own LPRs (the Flock cameras) citywide under a state grant, but these systems are not fully operational in Union Square because they depend on solar power and shadows from buildings are impacting their ability to operate. The Alliance is exploring ways to activate the LPR functionality on its cameras, working with Vigilant (a Motorola product) to ensure secure data transmission. As a pilot, they propose enabling the LPR function on three



cameras in key blind spots (SFPD to provide guidance) to support SFPD's program. Discussion took place regarding data storage of the LPRs and how the data is used to find suspects. It was proposed to include language about the pilot program with the usage of three cameras for 90 days (about 3 months) and to inform Chris Larsen about these changes as well.

**Action:** The Board unanimously approved policy on use of LPRs and to approve the quote for contracting with Vigilant (Motorola) to provide the LPR related services with additional language as motioned by David Lewin and seconded by Jordan Buckley.

- Discussion and action to approve new services contract with Cube84. Ben presented an overview of the Cube84 proposal and work plan for FY 24-25, highlighting key objectives and priorities. The main areas of focus include name capturing from texting, geofencing, and tracking ambassador and security team walk paths. These improvements aim to better monitor ambassador service routes in Union Square, gather consistent data on member requests, and enhance service delivery by identifying potential gaps. Currently, the Alliance is billed \$115 per hour for 40 hours of work per month, with the new quote increasing to \$125 per hour for the same period. Ben continued negotiating and Cube84 came back at a rate of \$120/hour for 40 hours of month of service. The hours are banked (if not used) and also roll over from year to year.

**Action:** The Board unanimously approved the new services contract with Cube84 as motioned by Don Thomas and seconded by Wes Tyler.

c. Marketing & Communications (Mark Sullivan) 

- Website Enhancement Updates and Additional monetization strategies. The Alliance has launched a pilot program on the website with the hope to monetize the site. Currently, Blake Charles Salon and The Marker Hotel are being highlighted with two different ad styles. Once the data is collected, it will determine the duration of the ad and potential costs (value) for placing ads.
- Union Square in Bloom Updates The Board was invited to the Lux Club Magazine Launch event on August 8<sup>th</sup> at the Westin St. Francis. The event will highlight businesses in the district and showcase the 18-page bloom spread. The Board was also invited to the Bloomies event on August 17<sup>th</sup> that will be the final bloom event for 2024 and where the Bloom winners will be recognized.
- Social media and other updates. The Alliance's social media has been focused on promoting Pride events, SF Live, and Powell St project for the months of June and July with a total of



1.8M impressions over the 4 social media platforms (with growth of 310 followers).

- **Action to approve letter of support for United Airlines.**

The Alliance would like to support United Airlines expansion of services to have a direct flight from SFO to DCA (Ronald Reagan International Airport) to be sent to the Department of Transportation. Because of Union Square's direct BART connection to SFO, the Alliance sees the benefits of this direct flight for tourism from the east coast and conferences.

**Action:** The Board unanimously approved the letter of support for United Airlines as motioned by Jim Sangiacomo and seconded by Shirley Howard Johnson.

- **Action to approve marketing committee PR firm recommendation.**

The Alliance has been exploring PR firms to partner with to combat the negative narrative of Union Square and have identified Public Progress PR. A draft of a one-year services agreement was distributed to the Board for review. The Alliance will continue to work with David Perry to spread our messages and press releases on an ad-hoc basis.

**Action:** The Board unanimously approved the marketing committee's PR firm recommendation and agreement as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Jim Sangiacomo.

d. Streetscapes and Public Realm (Manuela King) <sup>(OBJ)</sup>

- **Update on the Powell Street Improvement Project**

The Powell Street Improvement Project is on hold as we await potential additional funding for the overall project's completion. The Alliance held a well-attended open house at 111 Powell to showcase the redesign concept of Powell Street.

- **Project Updates: Stage Improvement, Lighting Project, Maiden Lane, Selle Project, R-Evolution, Winter Walk**

The Alliance has put out an RFP for a project manager to oversee the stage improvement project at Union Square. As for the alleys, Elwood and Campton are lit with bistro light and Harlan is a work in progress. The city has identified capital improvement funds for Maiden Lane. The Alliance will be hosting a community meeting to hear feedback on potential improvements for Maiden Lane. The Selle project will officially launch in the windows of the Flood Building that will showcase photos of Union Square from the 1960s. R-Evolution is set to be installed in early 2025 at Union Square Plaza (permitting still in process).

e. Finance & Audit (Jim Sangiacomo)



- **Action to Accept the Unaudited Financial Reports of June 2024, for recommendation to the Board of Directors**

The Union Square Alliance ended the fiscal year with an operating surplus of \$360K, significantly outperforming the modified budget, which had projected a \$196K deficit. This resulted in a positive budget variance of \$578K overall.

Key factors contributing to this were assessments and core operations, which exceeded the budget by \$530K due to clean and safe expenses being \$285K under budget and additional revenues of \$120K. Marketing and administrative expenses were also slightly under budget by \$66K and \$57K, respectively.

While there was a \$96K negative variance in "Other Revenues" due to delays with grants and permissions from property owners, lower spending on Other Funds (\$145K) led to a \$48K overall positive variance. USBID assessment expenses remained close to the management plan, with 76% spent on clean and safe services, 11% on marketing, and 13% on administration.

Three minor accounting issues remain unresolved, including a Block-by-Block credit (~\$15K), CCG billing (~\$5-10K), and adjustments to the lease at 291 Geary (~\$30K). As of 6/30/24, net assets (reserves) stood at \$2.345 million, with a cash balance of \$2.351 million, and the organization earned \$67K in interest income during the fiscal year. Members reviewed the report which had been sent out ahead of the meeting.

**Action:** The Board unanimously approved the unaudited financial reports as of June 2024 as motioned by Tim Falvey and seconded by Jim Sangiacomo.

- **Review of draft 24-25FY budget and action to make recommendation to Board to approve 24-25FY budget.**

Ben presented the draft budget memo and summaries to the Board, noting that while there is a planned small deficit (\$24) which is essentially a break-even budget, the plan is to exceed the budget both with increasing revenue and managing expenses. The 3% increase in assessments is included, bringing the total to approximately \$7 million. He also provided a month-by-month breakdown of the budget. Members reviewed the summary budgets and memo. Discussion took place regarding the impact of the chief of staff position on the budget.

**Action:** The Board approved the draft budget for 24-25FY as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard Johnson.





- Discussion regarding the Fiscal Manual and policies.

Ben informed the Board that the fiscal manual will be revised this fall.

#### 10. Announcements & New Business

- SF Live Happy Hour – August 8 at 5pm (Biscuits & Blues)
- Bloom Closing Event, Saturday August 17<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm @ Union Square Plaza
- Executive Committee August 22, 2024, at 9:00am
- Next Board Meeting- Annual, September 26, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. (location TBD)

11. **Adjourned:** 11:17am