



**UNION SQUARE ALLIANCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2ND ANNUAL MEETING**

Minutes

October 1, 2025 – 9:00-11:00 a.m.

**Hotel Nikko San Francisco, 222 Mason Street
3rd Floor, Monterey Room**

Board Members in attendance (all in person): David Lewin (Grand Hyatt Union Square San Francisco), Don Thomas (Donatello) - Vice President acting as Board Chair, Evan J. Kaizer (Sieroty Company, Inc.), J. Timothy Falvey (Hanford-Freund), James Sangiacomo (Trinity Properties), Lauren Ellis (CK Contemporary), Russell D. Keil, Jr. (The Keil Companies), Shirley Howard-Johnson (Entertainment & Arts Consultant), Stephen Brett (Brett & Co.), Manuela Anne King (RHAA), Brian Fenwick (The Marker Hotel), Clif Clark (Westin St. Francis), Julie Taylor (Collier's International), and Peter Hart (Hilton Union Square San Francisco).

Staff and contractors: Marisa Rodriguez (CEO), Daniela Vasile (COO), Benjamin Horne (CFO), Melanie Medina (Executive Assistant), Zarrina Yousufzai (Finance & HR Associate), Liza Bernard (Events Coordinator), Hollie Chiao (Marketing & Communications Associate), Marlenne Mendoza (Project Coordinator), E. Ryan Santamaria (Intern), Beau Simon (Womble Bond Dickinson), Jaffar Mendieta (Block by Block), Miracle Matau (Block by Block), and Jackson Alcantra (Legion).

Guests: Sebastien Pfeiffer (Beacon Grand), Mark Hennon (BRV), Jackie Hazelwood (OEWD), Tammy Brock (Property Owner), Tom Brock (Property Owner), Mike O'Brien (Hall Assoc. of Native Sons of the Golden West), Joel Blocksom (Hall Assoc. of Native Sons of the Golden West), Patricia Cardenas (Property Owner), and Angela Rezab (JLL).

Summary of Actions Taken by the Board of Directors

- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved to accept the CEO's report ratifying the actions of the Executive committee from August 28, 2025, as motioned by Evan. J. Kaizer and seconded by Brian Fenwick.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the July 24, 2025, meeting minutes, as motioned by David Lewin and seconded by Julie Taylor.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the revised bylaws to be sent to membership to vote, as motioned by Peter Hart and seconded by Clif Clark.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the RFP to be distributed to various firms and publicly posted, as motioned by Manuela Anne King and seconded by Jim Sangiacomo.
- **Action:** The committee unanimously approved the Annual Report 24-25FY, as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.



- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved a letter of intent capped at \$25K for EFA to begin ordering supplies and materials for the Union Square Stage project while the contract legal details regarding City contracting requirements were resolved, as motioned by Tim Falvey and seconded by Brian Fenwick.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved the permit with the Recreation & Parks Department for installation and operation of sound equipment, as motioned by Tim Falvey and seconded by David Lewin.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved a services agreement with We are the Kind for \$55,000 for music entertainment at Winter Walk and \$64,000 for music and entertainment for Maiden Lane activation, as motioned by Evan Kaizer and seconded by Julie Taylor.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved a services agreement with Jennifer Luxemburg for \$26,000 for roaming entertainment during Winter Walk, as motioned by Brian Fenwick and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved 24-25FY Audit Report, as motioned by Stephen Brett and seconded by Evan Kaizer.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved Unaudited Financial Reports of August 2025, as motioned by Jim Sangiacomo and seconded by Russell D. Keil Jr.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved extending Union Square Park services until 10/21, as motioned by Brian Fenwick and seconded by Clif Clark.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved accepting an additional \$550,000 awarded under RFP230 (contract to be approved when drafted), as motioned by Peter Hart and seconded by David Lewin.
- **Action:** The Board unanimously approved contract amendment for Legion, as motioned by Brian Fenwick and seconded by Peter Hart.

1. Call to order, roll call, introductions, and welcome to Hotel Nikko

As Vice President of the Alliance Board, Don Thomas called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m., thanking Hotel Nikko for hosting. Don then took roll call. Marisa also thanked the Nikko Hotel and John Ngo, Executive Office Manager for the Nikko, welcomed the Alliance to the hotel

2. Public comment

Don called for a public comment. Hearing none, he proceeded with the next action item.

3. CEO's report

• Staffing updates

Daniela shared that the Alliance is in the process of hiring a Services Manager and has narrowed it down to two finalists. A decision is expected to be made by the end of the week. Marisa reminded the committee that Eva Schouten is still working with the Alliance but remotely in Santa Barbara on a part-time basis. Additionally, she stated that Ken Rich is currently traveling for a month.

• International Downtown Association Conference

Marisa recapped that a few of the Alliance staff had the privilege of attending the International Downtown Association (IDA) Conference in Washington D.C. She explained that IDA is a conference for BIDs/CBDs to gather and learn from each other's successes and challenges in their district. Marisa, Daniela, Zarrina, Hollie, and Marlenne all shared their experiences and what insight they gained from the workshops, keynote speakers, and discussions such as security camera programs and implementing an app that seamlessly records the statistics of foot traffic in a certain



area or event to collect and analyze data. Staff also shared a presentation and a short video they created of their experience at IDA.

- SFGHF x Union Square Alliance Heart Unveiling Press Conference
Marisa invited the Board to the press conference of SF General Hospital Foundation and the Union Square Alliance for the new heart sculpture unveiling located at the plaza, following the Board of Directors meeting. State Senator Scott Wiener, Ned Segal, and Supervisor Daniel Sauter will be in attendance.
- Macy's Tree Update
Marisa shared that, after working through the challenge of securing a sponsor, the Macy's Great Tree will be up this holiday season. She expressed her gratitude to Chris Larsen at Ripple for sponsoring the tree this year.
- Union Square Park Services Update
Ben explained that the Alliance is discontinuing their daily services in the plaza. Block by Block and Legion will contract directly with SF Recreation and Parks to maintain the services in the area. The Alliance will still be providing events services as requested by event producers. As for the Stage Improvement Project, it is projected to be completed by February 2026. The initial goal was to have it completed before the 2025 holiday season but due to new materials for the old pillars, the project was delayed.
- Executive Committee met on August 28, and discussed and approved:
 - Minutes of June 26, 2025, meeting
 - Brian Fenwick as new PAC Chair
 - General contractor proposals for the Union Square Improvement Stage Project
 - Contract extension with Progress Public Affairs
 - Contract renewal with Cube84
 - Line of Credit (\$1mil) with City National Bank
 - CLOSED SESSION**
 - Closed session minutes from June 26, 2025

Action to accept the CEO's report including ratifying the actions of the Executive committee from August 28, 2025.

Action: The Board unanimously approved to accept the CEO's report including ratifying the actions of the Executive committee from August 28, 2025, as motioned by Evan. J. Kaizer and seconded by Brian Fenwick.

4. **Action to approve the July 24, 2025, meeting minutes.**

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

Action: The Board unanimously approved the July 24, 2025, meeting minutes, as motioned by David Lewin and seconded by Julie Taylor.

5. **Discussion, review, and action to approve revised bylaws to be sent to membership for vote**



The bylaws were last updated in 2021 it is considered a best practice to periodically revisit and revise them to make sure they reflect current operations, legal obligations, and Board practices. A red line draft of the bylaws was presented to the board that included revisions of board participation, Brown Act provisions, approval of contracts no more than \$50,000 by the CEO rather than \$25,000 that has been the historical policy, and redefining officer roles in the organization. Additionally, voting for Board Officers occurs annually but the terms will change to every two years, and an emergency provision was incorporated per California corporate law. Ben thanked Melanie for supporting the process of the bylaw revisions.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the revised bylaws to be sent to membership to vote, as motioned by Peter Hart and seconded by Clif Clark.

6. Overview, timeline and discussion of RFP for strategic planning and action to approve for distribution
Ben led the discussion and commented that with the Alliance's renewal approaching in 2029, the next strategic plan will play an important role in laying the groundwork for that process. The most recent strategic plan, completed in 2022, was highly successful, and the Alliance is now in the RFP process of selecting a firm to guide the upcoming effort. Ben shared that the Alliance is already in discussions with three firms, Beacon Economics, Streetsense, and Uncommon Bridges, to potentially co-lead this work, and he provided an overview of each firm's expertise and qualifications. Ben reviewed the anticipated strategic planning process and the project timeline, indicating that a decision on the leading firm is expected by mid-January, with strategic plan development projected to occur from February through July. It was noted that community-wide outreach will be conducted, and the feedback collected will be used to inform and adjust the strategic plan to reflect the city's needs in the upcoming decade. Marisa noted that the Alliance's most recent strategic plan was well structured and polished that the city adopted it. Discussion took place regarding the budget and the direction of the long-term organizational goals for this project.

Action: The Board unanimously approved the RFP to be distributed to various firms and publicly posted, as motioned by Manuela Anne King and seconded by Jim Sangiacomo.

7. Review and action to approve Annual Report 24-25FY
Ben noted that state law and the city contract require the Alliance to produce an annual report outlining the organization's accomplishments, services provided, and financial results for the fiscal year. He stated that Eva has overseen the design of the annual report for the past few years and acknowledged Hollie for leading the design efforts (with a new design firm) for the current year's report. The annual report was shared with the Board for their review and Ben highlighted sections.

Action: The committee unanimously approved the Annual Report 24-25FY, as motioned by Julie Taylor and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.

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

- a. Streetscapes and Public Realm (Manuela King)
 - Update on the Powell Street Improvement Project
Manuela reported that a stakeholder meeting was held yesterday focused on the Powell Street Improvement Project. Marlenne shared that the project is currently in its Design Development Phase, with groundbreaking anticipated in November 2026 and completion expected by November 2027. The current cost estimate stands at \$41 million, and the Alliance is working with the



Downtown Development Corporation (DDC) and the city to fill the funding gap. Marisa noted that the Mayor's Office, particularly Ned Segal, has made the Powell Street Improvement Project a priority. Additional updates will be provided at the next Board meeting.

- Contract with Field Operations
This item was not discussed.
- Project Updates:
 - Union Square stage improvements
 - Possible action to approve EFA contract for installment of sound equipment on USP stage.
Ben informed the Board that there is an outstanding legal issue regarding the contract with EFA for the stage project. Under the Alliance's master contract with the City, contractors are required to use LBEs when available, and EFA was not planning on that requirement. However, the grant contract does not include an LBE provision. There was discussion about whether EFA may be exempt from the master contract requirements since they are being hired through a grant-funded project. To keep the project moving, it was recommended that the Alliance move forward with a letter of intent (LOI) for \$25,000 so materials can begin to be ordered while the legal question is resolved.
 - Action to approve permit with Recreation & Parks Department for installation and operation of sound equipment.
Ben shared another complication regarding the Stage Improvement Project, in which the Alliance and the Recreation & Parks Department are not in agreement with ownership rights of the materials. The Alliance has suggested that the rec & park will own the pillars while the Alliance will own the equipment and operations such as the sound system. The Alliance is pending a response from the city on this suggestion.
 - Action: The Board unanimously approved the permit with Recreation & Parks Department for installation and operation of sound equipment assuming successful negotiation and legal protections for the Alliance (approved by legal counsel), as motioned by Tim Falvey and seconded by David Lewin.
 - Maiden Lane
Liza noted that, with Maiden Lane now designated as an entertainment zone, the goal is to establish consistent activations through a new program titled "Afternoons on the Lane," developed in partnership with OEWD supported by RFP226 funding. She reported that the program will feature live entertainment, including acoustic music and DJs, as well as promotional specials from local businesses such as Asha Tea House, KP49, Iron Horse, and Just for Fun. The activation series is scheduled to run from September 2025 through March 2026, operating Thursdays through Sundays from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.



- Cable Car Turnaround
Marlenne gave an overview of the Cable Car Turnaround Arts activations that have been occurring starting from August through January. The first art installation was a guitar slide and the soon to conclude art installation is a banana that also serves as a public bench. The upcoming installation will be a Dia de Los Muertos backdrop and Santa sled to follow for the holidays. Along with these installations are vendors that host community activities such as live music entertainment, arts and crafts workshops, pumpkin painting, and more. Marlenne reported that there has been positive feedback from the community through surveys and social media, boosting the foot traffic within the area.
- Holiday Decor
Liza shared that holiday decorations will be installed throughout the district. She mentioned that snowflakes will be suspended from the Hallidie Plaza bistro lights and at the Cable Car Turnaround flag poles and the Ornament Trail on Powell Street will include blue turf on the promenade. The Union Square Plaza Stage backdrop will have a new Winter Walk signage for selfie and photo opportunities. Lastly, Maiden Lane will have snowflakes suspended from the bistro lights pending a possible JP Morgan Chase installation. These holiday decorations will be completed in early November.

b. Marketing & Communications (Mark Sullivan)

- Union Square in Bloom 2025 Recap
Liza recapped the Union Square in Bloom 2025 campaign, which consisted of over 45 bloomed businesses, 8 public installations around the district, 30 bloom-themed cocktails, 3 public events, 1 private community event, and a Bloom dress made by fashion designer, Jad Racha. Hollie noted that this year's Bloom campaign generated a record-breaking engagement across social media platforms, with posts reaching thousands of users, sparking widespread shares, and boosting the events' online visibility. Some notable events shared on social media include Tulip Day, Mother's Day Fashion Show, Nintendo collaboration of "Pikmin in Bloom MINIWALK", and "Blooms & Bubbles Bar Crawl."
- Bloom 2026
Hollie stated that next year's Union Square in Bloom 2026 will mark its 5th anniversary for this campaign. The events established so far include Tulip Day on March 21, 2026, and the fashion show on May 8, 2026. The Alliance is partnering with the With Love, Halston Foundation for Bloom 2026 and will host a Bloom Dress Design Challenge for the Academy of Arts. The winner of the competition will receive a scholarship, mentorship, and an opportunity to display their dress at the annual fashion show in the Square.
- Holidays 2025
 - Holiday Fundraiser – Save the Date – December 4, 2025 – Location TBD
Liza reminded the Board that the Annual Holiday Fundraiser is returning in the first week of December. More details will follow.
 - Winter Walk



Liza announced that Winter Walk Presented by JP Morgan Chase will be hosted starting December 13 through December 24. The programming schedule is expected to be Mondays – Wednesdays from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Thursdays – Sundays from 11 a.m. – 9 p.m. The event will be held on Stockton Street from Post to Geary and Geary to O'Farrell. This year's Winter Walk is supported by OEWD, BuildGroup (in kind), DDC, Amazon, GAP (pending), and presented by JP Morgan Chase as well as partnerships with West Coast Craft, We are the Kind, Salvation Army, and SFSPCA. The event will consist of blue turf and arctic décor, food, outdoor bars, daily live music and a children's corner with activities including roaming artists, outdoor holiday market, and a JP Morgan Chase Maiden Lane activation. Hollie shared the marketing collateral will include BART advertisements and visual signages for Winter Walk Presented by JP Morgan Chase.

- Action to approve services agreement with We are the Kind for \$55,000 for music entertainment at Winter Walk and \$64,000 for music and entertainment for Maiden Lane activation.

Liza stated that the music entertainment includes the AV sound system, screens, and programming. Ben commented that when you break down these amounts into the individual performances that it is a very economical arrangement.

Action: The Board unanimously approved services agreement with We are the Kind for \$55,000 for music entertainment at Winter Walk and \$64,000 for music and entertainment for Maiden Lane activation, as motioned by Evan Kaizer and seconded by Julie Taylor.

- Action to approve services agreement with Jennifer Luxemburg for \$26,000 for roaming entertainment during Winter Walk.

Liza explained that Jennifer Luxemburg books artists for Winter Walk, including Santa and face painting.

Action: The Board unanimously approved services agreement with Jennifer Luxemburg for \$26,000 for roaming entertainment during Winter Walk, as motioned by Brian Fenwick and seconded by Shirley Howard-Johnson.

- Update on sponsorships

Marisa and Hollie shared the details of JP Morgan Chase as the presenting sponsor for Winter Walk, including a sponsorship of \$160K, tent activation on Winter Walk, Maiden Lane lights and sound activation, and BART advertisements. The legacy sponsor is Build Group while the rest of the sponsors are pending for Turf, Ornament Trail, and Holiday Marketplace.

- c. Finance & Audit (Jim Sangiacomo)

- Line of credit update

Ben reported that the line of credit was renewed but was an extended process due to lack of communication response. This line of credit renewal is a 2-year agreement.

- Discussion and update regarding insurance broker selection



Ben stated that Zarrina has been in the process of looking for a new insurance broker and has narrowed it down to two finalists: BPIA and Gallagher. Ben noted that while BPIA, The Alliance's current broker, has a strong track record with nonprofit clients and is familiar with their organization, recent communication challenges have become a concern and challenging delays with binding some event policies. Gallagher, a multinational firm presented an impressive proposal and a strong team. With the Alliance growing over the past couple of years, Ben voiced that he is leaning towards selecting Gallagher since they seem to have a more proactive approach and are working with a number of CBDs already. Board members commented that with the current challenges in the insurance industry a larger firm with access to many markets and a larger team made sense. A decision is expected to be shared by next Board meeting in November.

- **Action to approve 24-25FY Audit Report**

Ben shared that the 24-25FY Audit Report was a clean report, with the letter from the auditors and financial statement draft attached for the Board's review.

One revision was the Alliance losing the RFP231 HEART Safety grant and shifting to Field Operations through SF Public Works, resulting in the Alliance funding Field Operations for May and June. Ben had accrued for this contingency. Luckily, Field Operations only billed the May invoice and was able to shift the June work to Public Works subcontract.

The second revision was Block by Block reporting that all their contracted hours had been used up, information that The Alliance did not account for in their budget plan. Ben stated that, after a CPA audit of their billing and payroll registers, Block by Block's reported billing reflected approximately 3,000 more service hours than what appears in their corresponding payroll records indicate. The issue is still being resolved with Block by Block. Discussion took place regarding payroll issues. Both these adjustments resulted in a higher surplus for the 24-25FY of \$200K.

Action: The Board unanimously approved 24-25FY Audit Report, as motioned by Stephen Brett and seconded by Evan Kaizer.

- **Action to accept the Unaudited Financial Reports of August 2025.**

Ben reported that The Alliance remains on budget, with an \$80k variance and some anticipated additional expenses, including clean and safe expenses. He noted a negative revenue variance alongside a positive spending variance for other funds. The Alliance expects to begin drawing on the line of credit in November, and current receivables remain high due to grant receivables and USF receivables which should be paid in the near future.

Action: The Board unanimously approved Unaudited Financial Reports of August 2025, as motioned by Jim Sangiacomo and seconded by Russell D. Keil Jr.

d. Public Affairs (Brian Fenwick)

- **Elizabeth Watty - PermitSF**

Brian Fenwick recapped the presentation given by Elizabeth Watty regarding PermitSF. The reformation of the permitting process was the main topic, broken down in four different areas: customer experience and operations, government accountability and policy, technology, and performance management. This process speeds up the market and completion/permitting for the



businesses in the community and overall city. Discussion took place regarding the permitting process for retail pop-ups and street activations.

- SFMTA Updates – Meters, Parking, Powell, and Market Street

Brian informed the Board that Mayor Daniel Lurie selected Union Square as the location to announce his next 100 day plan, which displays his commitment to the district. SFMTA shared that in the next 100 day plan, it consists of parking permits, as they are looking to incorporate a digital platform to streamline the permitting process. Moreover, SFMTA expressed their support in Powell Street, especially with the safety challenges in the district's garages. Discussion took place regarding the resolution of these issues to prepare for significant upcoming events in the city/Bay Area such as the Superbowl and FIFA World Cup.

e. Services & Public Safety (Don Thomas)

- July & August 2025 Operations Reports

Jaffar Mendieta reported continued improvements in productivity and accuracy, noting over 900 graffiti abatement, over 1900 hazardous waste removal, over 170 used needle cleanup and disposals, and about 53K pounds of trash removal. The Block-by-Block team has maintained consistent, high-quality cleaning services, actively reporting and documenting numerous 311 requests related to illegal dumping that have been a common occurrence. Marisa advised the Board to remind their neighbors of the trash policies. Jaffar also recognized a Block-by-Block ambassador, Alice Triplett, for preventing the spread of fires from occurring, as an individual was committing arson crimes. Additionally, the Block-by-Block team now has 10 Safety ambassadors, 2 team leads, and maintained the overnight safety supervisor. Furthermore, welfare compliance rose from 94% in June to 97% in August. Lastly, services to guide street residence and visitors to available programs, such as Live Memorial, increased by 53% from July to August.

Jackson Alcantra reported that Legion maintained high visibility and professionalism, as the team completed over 6,200 passing calls in compliance in both months and self-initiated activity slightly grew with over 2,400, showing that the officers have been taking initiative and responding before dispatch prompts them. Other notable key metrics included the decrease in open drug use by 30% and zero instances in use of force by the team. Discussion took place regarding an unfortunate event within a neighboring district, emphasizing the dangers that the Legion team faces on a daily basis.

- Union Square Plaza services and action to extend services until 10/21.

Ben briefly mentioned that the extension of services in Union Square Plaza was changed from 10/31 to 10/21 for ambassador services but will remain 10/31 for security services but that the previous agreement ended on 9/30 thus Board needed to approve additional services for this extension.

Action: The Board unanimously approved extending services until 10/21 (and 10/31), as motioned by Brian Fenwick and seconded by Clif Clark.

- Services audit results

Ben did not discuss this since he had previously discussed the audit results earlier in the meeting.



- **Possible action to approve RFP230 amendment for \$550,000**

Ben shared that the Alliance received RFP 230, the HEART Safety grant of \$500K for additional Welcome Ambassadors within the district. The city provided an additional \$50K to the initial grant, as the ambassadors will put more emphasis on hospitality. Jackie Hazelwood discussed the contract logistics with the Board, concluding that the contract will be extended and is still in progress. The Board provided their feedback on the contract and collectively agreed that the Alliance should wait for the signed contract before committing additional funds.

Action: The Board unanimously approved accepting \$550,000 additional funds (with an amendment to be provided later) through the RFP230 grant, as motioned by Brian Fenwick and seconded by David Lewin.

- **Action to approve contract amendments**

- **Block by Block**

Daniela mentioned that the contract is still in progress and she will meet with Block by Block tomorrow to finalize it and bring it to the next Board meeting. Although the budget for July-December had generally been agreed to already.

- **Legion**

Daniela stated that the Alliance has asked Legion for a budget since their contract is expiring but will scale down during the holiday season. Based on the Alliance's projected budget, it will be over \$1.2M, assuming all shifts are covered.

Action: The Board unanimously approved a contract amendment for Legion, as motioned by Brian Fenwick and seconded by Peter Hart.

- **Project Updates**

- **Security cameras**

Daniela provided an update that Dmitri Shimolin from AVS/Safe City Connect has been working on a plan to enhance the public private partnership through the city with security cameras. He has sent the Alliance a draft proposal to review and plans on submitting it to the DDC. The proposal consists of camera system upgrades and an expansion on Market Street. The project is estimated to cost \$2.3M, and the process is expected to be about 6-9 months.

- **Bigbelly updates and possible action**

Daniela noted that the BigBelly contract is expiring soon and has received 3 quotes from various vendors for other trash receptacle options. She discussed that the best course of action would be to try out all three different vendors and distribute the units throughout various locations in the district.

Action: No action occurred since a vendor was not officially selected yet.

- **Derby Alley**

Don stated that light sensors and a gate were activated in Derby Alley. He recognized Domenique Charles from SF Public Works for her strong efforts in the past couple years.



9. Announcements & New Business

- Executive Committee – October 23, 2025, at 9:00am
- Next Board Meeting – November 20th, Location *TBD*
- Union Square Foundation Holiday Fundraiser – Thursday, December 4th – Location *TBD*

Adjourned: 11:23 a.m.