

# **AURORA BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD**

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Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
January 24, 2022

## **Board Members Present:**

Garrett Walls, Chance Horiuchi, Bob Fryberger, Nosh Tarachand, Alok Sarwal, Carolyn Pace, Martin Liles, Regina Edmondson

**Board Members Absent:** absences recorded this month; Hitesh Patel, Michele Reding

**Council Members Present:** Mayor Mike Coffman

**Staff Present:** Elena Vasconez, and Leslie Epperson

**Guest Present:** Commander Wright

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Walls called the meeting to order at 11:01am.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Mr. Walls moved to approve November minutes.

Mr. Tarachand seconded.

No objections: November minutes approved.

## **BAB BUDGET**

The 2022 Budget for BAB is \$8217 – that is the amount allocated from the City.

Mr. Tarachand asked how much we used last year and does it rollover from year to year.

Ms. Vasconez promised to get the previous years budget for the next meeting and confirmed that the amount did not roll over. We start fresh with a new budgeted amount each year. What we do not use, goes back into the general fund.

Mr. Tarachand commented that we should expend some of the budget and try to get some of that extension done so that we can actively report concerns of Aurora businesses.

Mr. Walls commented we most likely will use a larger portion of this budget than we have. We'll probably need every bit of this budget for what we have planned for the Award ceremony.

Ms. Vasconez commented for your information we have gone over budget in previous years.

Mr. Tarachand asked for the budget numbers of previous years.

Ms. Vasconez promised to get the past budget numbers.

Ms. Horiuchi asked sponsorship in the past from Dry Dock and the wine and food. I was just wondering if we could calculate sponsorship because that way, we can see how much we went over and how much sponsorship we can ask. Maybe even from former awardees or even the community? I know, there's not a lot of events scheduled for 2022. So, asking some of the sponsors in our community might be a little easier now knowing that this is going to be a pretty big event, a community event versus just in the city lobby.

***ACTION ITEM:*** Ms. Vasconez to get past budget numbers for members.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments

### **Mayor Mike Coffman**

1. I visited a restaurant this morning that is trying to reopen. They had a fire. Because of COVID, they established a more robust patio, and it was a covered patio. A homeless person started a fire in there, to keep warm and the fire spread and burned down their patio and the awning for their patio. When the fire department came to put it out, unfortunately did a lot of damage to the inside of the restaurant. So be careful about that.
2. There won't be a vote on the camping ban. Next month, there'll be a study session on the seventh of February. And the vote will be on the 14th of February. We are concerned about the crime rate. We still have staffing shortages with the police department. We're doing multiple academies. But remember in 2020, we lost a lot of senior personnel with a lot of experience. And when people come out of the academy, they still have a period of time where they're doing field training and they're not going to be out there on their own. And it's tough and it's critical to a lot of businesses to have that police presence. As we build up the numbers, we'll be able to reestablish some of those specialized units where they'll be fully staffed.
3. Council member Gardner is going to tell you about his proposal and to give you details on it. We passed a grant program for smaller businesses, at least by the SBA definition of smaller businesses, to do security type upgrades for the business. And that's going to use ARPA funds - America Recovery Program Act. We'll be meeting fairly soon in a winter workshop and talk about priorities in terms of ARPA spending. Any questions, I'd be happy to answer.

***ACTION ITEM; no items this month.***

### **Commander Steven Wright, Fire Commander**

There are about 10,000 commercial properties in the city of Aurora that a division of the fire department inspects - life safety inspections. One thing we're considering is taking on a vendor relationship. The vendor's name is Compliance Engine. And basically, to help us more efficiently with our workload, they would go and inspect systems that are in commercial properties, not the actual property. Every commercial property needs a fire alarm system, sprinkler system, fire pumps, hood systems with kitchens, home systems and generators. And those all require annual or biannual inspections to make sure they work properly in the event of emergency. So, we have about 10,000 commercial properties. And each one of these properties are required to have some kind of system that this vendor would come in and inspect and keep that data and that paperwork on a cloud-based system for us, to help us with that part of the workload, to be quite honest, we are behind on inspecting those systems. We've known about this vendor for five years now and considered working with them. And I think this year, we're going to present it to public safety courts as a plan moving forward. It's no charge to the Fire Department or the City. They basically make money if the systems they inspect do not pass and need repairs/maintenance, then they have a resource book of contractors that are certified to work on those systems and they pass that on to the business owner if there's repairs/maintenance that needs to happen, these certified contractors are made available. So, these contractors pay the vendor to keep on this kind of Angie's List of fire system contractors. Boulder uses it, West Metro, which is Lakewood, Brighton, Colorado Springs, Arvada, all use this vendor to help them stay on top of their fire protection systems within their commercial properties. The PowerPoint that will be given to public safety courts, I'm scheduled to do that sometime in the first quarter of this year is what. I thought this group might find interesting.

Ms. Pace - if they make their money from a finder's fee; Are they a national company? So, they probably promote and connect businesses with national contractors and not with local contractors, potentially contractors from Aurora who could do the repairs, would that be correct?

Commander Wright - You know, I don't know. That's a good question. I'll look into that. Because they're in Los Angeles, Chicago, Phoenix, San Diego, Seattle, Albuquerque. So yes, they are very national. But I don't know where their contractors come from. I understand your concerns.

Ms. Pace - I just want to keep in mind the unintended consequences for our business community, because there's a lot of contractors that aren't a major employer. So, we wouldn't want to put people out of business.

Commander Wright - I will look into that local/national aspect. Thanks for the perspective. I appreciate it.

Mr. Walls - Having a vendor do these inspections, does it follow the same sort of appeals process? Or the same sort of ordinance process than having a fire department do life safety inspections? Would this new vendor be the last word on an inspection? Or is there a normal process, a process that you can go through to challenge maybe some of these things because they do have a financial incentive and having repairs done?  
Second question, was there an RFP issued for this particular vendor?

Commander Wright - That will be the city side of that as far as RFP and bids and purchasing will be part of presenting that to public safety and courts. Because this is the only vendor that does this. It's similar to the fire department got a grant from FEMA to make an arson investigations trailer. And there's only one company in the country that makes the arson investigation trailers. Now there are other companies that could possibly bid or put something together, a one off if they tried it. So that's what we're discussing on this project. But I think the presentation of public safety courts would be exactly that; here's this idea, here's the biggest player that does it. Is the city interested in it? Do we want to see if there's some local company that can put something like this together? Or they're the only ones I know of; So that's okay. If they want us to go through some requests for proposal process that might affect if we want to pursue it.

Garrett Walls - there are a lot of companies that do inspections, especially life safety inspections that are local, whether it's fire panel stuff or life safety in general, we do have contractors here. I get worried whenever there's a financial incentive for an inspector. It's automatically not an equal relationship when they walk through the door, balancing public safety because they know that their revenue depends upon the reports that they write.

Commander Wright - understood. And to answer another part of your first question. Local Authority would have jurisdiction over all our fire code. The whole IFC stuff I've been presenting to you guys for a year would have precedent over what the contractor inspects. So yes, the appeals board will still be the same.

Ms. Horiuchi - I was just curious how many businesses were able to be inspected for an assessment last year? I was just asking, because we do know, some of our businesses actually contact the fire department to request to get on a schedule. So, if you have about 5000 that you did last year, and there's 5000 more that need to be done; How do those businesses get on a schedule? Or, what is the

process for them? Some restaurant owners and some shops have shared that someone hasn't come by.

Commander Wright - Great question. Some we do have to inspect annually, like a school for example. And then there are some that can go three years without being inspected. We do about 4000 a year. I can say if there's a business that wants to reach out to us, the best way is email us at [lifesafetyinspectorgroup@Auroragov.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:lifesafetyinspectorgroup@Auroragov.onmicrosoft.com). If any business wants to just email me directly, [sdwright@auroragov.org](mailto:sdwright@auroragov.org). I can forward it to the proper inspector.

Ms. Horiuchi - I'll send them your email.

Mr. Liles - I'm obligated to perform my own biannual inspections. I'm obligated to submit those into the city. As the landlord, I have the right to hire anybody. It's my prerogative. Correct me if I'm wrong, commander, this third party who comes in is the eyes for this. It's just bringing it to the attention of the individuals or the ownership. And then ownership has the right to cure?

Garrett Walls - It depends on what the inspections are for - if it's life safety for your CO that has to be through the City process. At least that's my understanding from development services. That sign off has to be from an AFD or their vendor.

Commander Wright – Yes and that would be this vendor. They will only be doing the system's because exactly what he's talking about is Aurora fire as the authority on the type of building and occupancy and the life safety issues in the building. But they can come in and check if system is out of inspection and be a conduit of the information.

I love the input. This idea is just in the idea process. I'll be back monthly to update you guys.

***ACTION ITEM; no items this month.***

Trevor Vaughn

I wanted to provide you an update on the state's sales and use tax simplification system we talked about a year ago. We did a resolution to enter an IGA with the state for integration into the system. They built something that I would say is questionable. It's really a struggle to use that product. And it's causing issues both for municipalities getting the data as well as businesses that go in to do that centralized filing. The system is to be a centralized filing portal to simplify tax remittance for the state and home role city's central location. The state is still working through that. We still have not got an integration up and running.

If you're a small business that has less than \$100,000 in taxable sales, the State gives you an exemption from destination sourcing; where you have to collect the tax of where the product is shipped to. That exemption is due to expire in February, the bill that's been proposed is to extend that to October.

Senate Bill 20 2032, that's about licensing, what they wanted to do at the legislature is make sure that jurisdictions don't require some small these small businesses to go get licenses and each and every home rule jurisdiction, when they're just shipping some products into those jurisdictions unless it's more than \$100,000 worth of product. Aurora will provide a sales tax account, free of charge. We don't charge them for a business license and then that gives them somewhere to file. So, they're not having to obtain a business license at the cost of \$47.

Mr. Walls wanted to know about a schedule for tax and license classes.

Mr. Vaughn – We work with the SBDC for our classes. I believe they are listed for the year.  
Ms. Vasconez – schedules are set and, on the website, – [www.Aurora-SouthMetroSBDC.com](http://www.Aurora-SouthMetroSBDC.com)

### **2021 Business Awards**

Some ideas for the 2022 Business Awards Ceremony.

Did not have a sub-committee meeting re: the awards ceremony.

Ms. Pace – cannot attend until after end of July

Mr. Liles – Travel in July, schools start in August

Mr. Tarachand – July more people are traveling. On board with early spring, spring, early summer

Mr. Walls – Harder to get people to a concert when school starts. Is there a member who can spearhead this?

Mr. Tarachand said he could be on the committee.

Ms. Horiuchi can participate – partner w/BID and share costs. The BID has concerts scheduled for August - October

Mr. Walls – Ms. Redding and Mr. Patel did let Mr. Walls know they would not be able to attend. Worried about an outdoor event and alcohol. Will we need a permit?

Ms. Vasconez – Will check out locations in the city. Can support the committee to keep the city, Andrea and City Manager informed

Mr. Walls will send out an invite to the members for the sub committee get some details knocked down and approved

***ACTION ITEM: get subcommittee together to gather ideas and plans for the 2022 Award Ceremony. Meet 2<sup>nd</sup> week in February. Set up time to meet with City Manager about the new direction of the award ceremony. Ms. Vasconez to get budget numbers for subcommittee meeting.***

### **CM Gardner – Ordinance 2022- Diaper Sales Tax Exemption**

Exempt sales tax on diapers – This would exempt diapers, both child and adult diapers from the collection of sales tax in the city of Aurora. Children are going to school in or preschool or daycare, in products that really couldn't be considered diapers, plastic bags and other things like that. The amount of sales tax that we're collecting on these items isn't a life changing amount, though, in many cases, it'll go a long way toward making them more affordable for residents in our city. They're medically necessary for hygiene both for the wearer and also for those that come in contact with the wearer.

Mr. Vaughn – State Bill 221055 to exempt feminine hygiene products and diapers – Jan 2023.

CM Gardner – Does not want to wait for the State bill.

Mr. Walls – there are many nonprofit organizations that provide free, low cost, no cost diapers in our local community. we're a sales tax funded city. When those things start adding up over the longer period of time, when does the city transition away from a sales tax funded form of government?

CM Gardner – those nonprofits outside of what they receive for donations are paying sales tax on the purchase those diapers, and that's money that can't be spent for other uses.

Mr. Liles - budgetary amount forecasted is a loss of \$575,000. Have you considered or looked at the annual budget to see what could be removed to balance that out? Now that you're not having that income?

CM Gardner - from talking to the budget folks, I don't think there would be a specific need to cut anything from the budget to absorb this.

It was important to me to present this to our business advisory board, because I want to make sure that, we're having a discussion about issues that could potentially impact the business community. Ultimately, I hope that I could have the support of the BAB, in the form of a letter you did the same last year for the exemption for menstrual products. And I'm hoping that there's a similar outcome here.

Mr. Tarachand proposes to move that the BAB support this ordinance and write a letter of support.  
Ms. Edmondson seconds  
1 – opposed – Mr. Liles  
Motion passes

***ACTION ITEM: CM Gardner would like BAB support in the form of a letter. Mr. Walls and Ms. Vasconez to write letter.***

**CM Gardner – Safety and Security Grant Info - E. Colfax corridor safety & security grant funds – ARPA funds**

City Council approved the ordinance to dedicate \$3 million of ARPA funding to create a business grant program for safety and security upgrades. As part of that we dedicated \$500,000 to the east Colfax corridor from Yosemite to Peoria. Businesses can apply up to \$10,000 to make upgrades to security. I don't envision this as just a way to put a bunch of cameras in the community, because I don't think that's a good outcome. There's these environmental design reviews have a lot of different recommendations, in changes, you can make to your property that will deter crime.

Mr. Walls more information to come including when the program will start.

CM Gardner – the city will use its communication to get the word out.

**COUNCIL CONTACTS**

Mr. Walls talked with the members regarding the newly elected council members. It usually takes council members one to two months to kind of get in the rhythm before they start finalizing their plans. Mr. Walls will facilitate board members meeting with their new council member, having an interview if that's what they request. When Council Members are ready to make their appointment, they can either reaffirm your position as their appointee or they can make a new appointment. Mr. Walls will keep board members abreast of what is happening.

Ms. Reding –CM Combs. –

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Mr. Tarachand – CM Gardner – We discussed what he would talk about today.

Ms. Pace – CM Juan Marcano –

Bob Fryberger- CM Murillo – I sent her another email just saying where she's at.

Ms. Horiuchi –CM Jurinsky – Ms. Vasconez volunteered to reach out to CM and ask

Mr. Liles –CM Bergan – scheduled to meet on Wednesday in Mr. Liles office.

Mr. Patel – CM Marcia Berzins –

Ms. Edmondson –CM Hiltz – Ms. Vasconez to reach out to CM for Ms. Edmondson

Mr. Sarwal - CM Angela Lawson – reach out to her. Make sure that she's happy with your appointment. And remind her that during study session or a council meeting, she needs to make that announcement that you're being reappointed if she so desires.

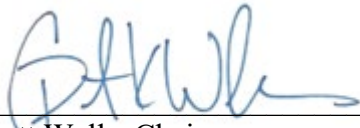
Garrett Walls – Mayor Coffman – updates at meeting

*Outcome:* BAB members will continue to reach out to their Council Members and keep them up to date. Please stay in touch and maintain the connection. Staff will help to facilitate board members with new Council Members.

Mr. Walls moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:25pm.

Ms. Horiuchi seconded

APPROVED:

  
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Garrett Walls, Chairperson