

September Board Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2021 • 6:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

Via ZOOM conference: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86909160163> Meeting ID: 869 0916 0163

One tap mobile +16699006833,,86909160163# US (San Jose)

Attendees: Robert Sakai, Mary Ishisaki, Kathy Nelsen, Emily Nichols, Dave Dunham, Alex Prouty, Kim Kolbe, Steve Ishii, Dan Byron

Absent: Jerry Ono, Dennis Kern

Staff: Grace Horikiri, Brandon Quan, Melissa Ayumi Bailey

Guests: Susie Kagami (JTF), Sandy Mori (JTF), Sam Mihara, Kenta Takamori (JTF), Ray Giron,

1. **Call to order and roll call** **6:00**

2. **Action Item: Approval of August 25, 2021 Minutes** **6:03**

Motion: Mary Ishisaki; Second: Steve Ishii

The motion was passed unanimously.

3. **Action Item: Approval of August Financial Report** **6:05**

Motion: Kathy Nelsen; Second: Alex Prouty

The motion was passed unanimously.

Looking at the Budget to Actual Variance report. The assessment money is not due again until the end of December-early January. We have retained earnings to carry us through to the beginning of the year without any issue. There is a net income of \$948, and with the carryovers we have handled our expenses. Looking at the Balance Sheet. A cash balance of \$777,499 is shown, which also includes \$60,000 in agency reserves- operations at \$40,000 and \$20,000 for SafeCity Camera program. We have \$1,099,711 in retained earnings which will be used going through the year by Marketing and Communications, but we will also retain some of this as emergency savings. Looking at Profit and Loss statement. Income as mentioned is \$948, total expenses were \$71,955, so net loss before carryovers is \$71,007. Carryovers from the prior years included in the budget give us a net income of \$55,190.

A. 4th Assessment Payment

There was no monies paid on the 4th payment this year, which includes through the end of August. This is not unusual because all the assessments were paid prior to the 4th assessment.

4. **Executive Director & Staff Reports** **6:10**

A. Executive Director Updates

- Big Belly OEWD Pilot RFP 209 Second Amendment & Big Belly Connect Contract Renewal

Received \$13,000 in support of the Big Belly SMART Trash Bins in Japantown. This grant also takes care of 99% of the OEWD matching funds requirement for JCBD. In total for this project we will receive \$39,000 over 3 years. We learned that other CBDs are having issues with theft of the solar panels from the bins, but we have not experienced this yet in Japantown. The first agreement we signed in 2019 was for 2 years, and this second amendment will be a 3 year contract that ends in 2024. The monthly service agreement comes out to \$551.65, which is a reduced rate from our past invoices which were a little over \$800 a month.

- COVID Testing
- Invitation to participate in Fleet Week (10/6) and SF Phoenix Day (10/17)

JCBD and the JMA were approached by Fleet Week to participate in the Neighborhood Concert Series, which was also brought to Japantown in 2019. A naval brass band quintet will perform on October 6th from 5-6PM. Japantown merchants were encouraged to offer deals on the Fleet Week app for servicemen and women.

B. Grant Submission Updates / Heart of Jtown Resiliency Fund Update

The Big Belly grant will be extended through FY2023. We are responsible for a midterm report and final report, at which time we will be paid \$13,000 for each submission and also receive reimbursement for the Big Belly maintenance costs.

C. Cleaning & Safety Updates including SafeCity Camera Program

Cleaning report was submitted in the Board Packet. There were 7 requests for video in August, 5 from SFPD and 2 from the public. Most were car break ins, one person had property stolen, video of stolen vehicles passing through our district, and a vehicular accident on Geary. A recap on the video request work time. Brandon spent about 5 hours actively looking for video of incidents, and another 17 hours passively uploading videos to the portal.

The Mayor held a press conference with SFPD on its retail crime unit. SFPD will be adding 3 sergeants to its organized retail crime unit. The City will also assign a lieutenant to deploy 10 beat officers to help provide security, and work with the crime data to target high crime areas and deter recurring theft. There is also a Community Ambassador program which deploys unarmed retired officers to serve as visible deterrents. They have radios to communicate directly with SFPD. They are increasing this program from 8 to 25 ambassadors. A teleserve unit is going to be used instead of CopLogic which will allow people to report thefts by phone and online. This allows people to get information in without needing to wait for officers to come in person to take reports. Reporting crimes is important so SFPD gets the data and knows where they need to be paying attention.

5. JCBD Marketing & Communication Committee Updates

6:20

Breath/Bless Mapping Project. We received a projected budget for the new interior project area we hope will take place in Suite 525 in the East Mall. A line item budget from NAKED, Inc. was shared. The total estimated cost is now \$85,000. There is a possibility of getting a grant from Epson which would provide projectors for the project. A dandelion prop currently in the Paris exhibition will be repurposed for Japantown. We are hoping to also reduce the

accommodation costs by partnering with Hotel Kabuki. Security/staffing and insurance costs are also not included. The target opening date would be December 4th and it would run for 8 weeks. We will likely do a ticketing system to limit the number of people inside the exhibit space at a time for security and social distancing purposes and to assist with costs.

Social Media Updates. Max Nihei and Emily Nichols have been continuing on getting businesses online.

The Japantown postcards are finished and will be printed for distribution ASAP.

Japantenna project will be presented in the public comment portion. There will be a sponsorship request to JCBD for this project.

6. Community Updates 6:30

A. Japantown Task Force/Japantown Cultural District

Executive Director Steve Nakajo has submitted his resignation and he will be leaving after December 31st. JTF will be in the process of developing a hiring procedure and looking for a new Executive Director. Steve has worked very hard the past three years of his tenure and we are indebted to him for his hard work. We will update about the hiring process.

A meeting with Mayor Breed was held last Friday for 45 minutes. Cathy Inamasu, Paul Osaki, Jon Osaki, Grace Horikiri, Rich Hashimoto, and Sandy Mori were present. The purpose of the meeting was to express concerns about the Buchanan Hotel's conversion to a permanent shelter. Prior to the pandemic starting, the hotel was at 90% occupancy and the Mayor was not aware of that. She wants to collect more data on the economic impact of the conversion and assured us that it would not come up before the Board of Supervisors. Japantown's strategy is to make sure it does not go to the BOS because it becomes a more complicated political situation. The plan is to convince the head of the department and the Mayor to take it off the list. The Mayor is not able to give any response yet until she reviews more data on the economic impact. The other City officials present were Shireen McSpadden (HSH), Dan Adams (hired as a consultant to find buildings for conversion to shelters), and Andrea Bruss, her assistant. The meeting was in person and not virtual, which made it more effective. Sup. Preston has requested that the Mayor and HSH look at other hotel options in the Western Addition. He is now getting a lot of heat from his constituency for this decision.

7. Discussion on the proposed acquisition of the Buchanan Hotel by the City to convert it to a permanent supportive housing 6:35

Two community meetings were hosted by HSH and had over 300 people attending each. The first meeting was more people in opposition, and the second had more homeless advocates. Meetings were also held with Eric Moulton of KHP. The culmination was the meeting with the Mayor last Friday mentioned by Sandy.

Mary Ishisaki wanted to highlight Ms. Oda's editorial response in the Chronicle to the OpEd and how it explained the history behind the opposition within the community. It is both the historical and financial impact that counts in this matter. A lot of hotel tax funding and customers would be reduced with the loss of the hotel income.

Action Item: Approval of statement letter

Motion: Mary Ishisaki; Second: Dan Byron

The letter was accepted by the board.

Robert Sakai: Votes to accept

Steve Ishii: Votes to accept

Kim Kolbe: Votes to accept

Kathy Nelsen: Votes to accept

Dan Byron: Votes to accept

Mary Ishisaki: Votes to accept

Alex Prouty: Votes to accept

Abstentions: Emily Nichols, David Dunham

8. General public comment - 2 minute per person**6:50**

Ray Giron: Having looked at the letter, there was a lot of argument with regard to the financial health of Japantown. Would it also make sense to include safety issues and effectiveness of the type of establishment? When I look back at the attempt by the City to house homeless during the peak of the pandemic, the City allowed a number of people to get rooms in hotels, I think this experiment was a huge failure due to the disorder caused by people given free reign in these rooms. I wonder if the same thing could happen at the Buchanan. From what I understand, a third party will be managing it, not the City. My main concern is really with the safety and wellbeing of the neighborhood, businesses, and tourists in the area. It would be nice to cite some examples of experiences we've had in the neighborhood with the current occupancy. I don't know who is currently residing there, but maybe there is an option for it to hold the aged Asian community? Asians seem to be a demographic in the neighborhood that doesn't get to speak up too much about their plight for support in the City. Maybe offering it for Asian retired people would be a solution.

Sam Mihara: I wanted to mention a crime event that happened next to SuperMira. There was a visitor from out of state parked on the Buchanan side. The back window was broken into and luggage was taken. We looked at the cameras and it picked up a Silver Lexus with no front license plate that went around the block looking for prospective goods to be stolen. It stopped next to the SUV and the passenger broke the window and put the luggage into the Lexus. The total time of activity was only 5 seconds. This problem has to be addressed. The person in the SUV is going to go back home and tell people not to come to San Francisco or Japantown and that is going to have a major impact in future. We need to tell visitors to keep their cars clean, nothing inside, and get more foot patrol officers out there so people will be less interested in committing a crime.

Kenta Takamori: Briefing for Japantenna project. This is a not for profit project that will create a physical storefront in Japantown to promote Japanese regional travel, food, and culture, through a rotating display centered around Japan's prefectures.

The name Japantenna comes from the word "antenna shop" which is used in Japan as a metaphor for prefectural shops in main cities. There are 47 prefectures in Japan. Each prefecture has unique history, geography, foods, tourism attractions. Prefectural governments support promotion efforts through "antenna shops" placed throughout Japan. Antenna shops typically sell local food and crafts, and also encourage people to visit the

prefectures. Photo examples of antenna shops were shown.

The objectives of the project are to reduce the number of unoccupied storefronts in Japantown by one, help attract visitors to Japantown with a novel approach to showcasing Japan, contribute to the cultural dynamism of Japantown by inciting new content, ideas, and investment direct from Japan, create new prefecture-centric marketing opportunities and themes for Japantown's businesses and restaurants, and promote Japan's regions by highlight the variety and cultural depth of its prefectures.

The steering group has five members: Kim Kolbe (retail/design/entrepreneurial), Kaz Maniwa (community/government), Emily Murase (community/government/nonprofit), Kenta Takamori (community/finance/entrepreneurial), and Tatsuki Tomita (entrepreneurial/government).

Strategy. We will start with a pilot project November 12-December 5 with Kagoshima prefecture. The pilot project will not sell any products. The Japantenna pilot is being organized as part of the Japantown Task Force. Japantenna aspires to work with other community organizations. Utilize volunteers and in kind support. We may need to hire part time staff for continuing operations. We are aiming for longer term funding from prefectural government trade and tourism promotion budgets. The pilot project will provide important learnings that can inform longer term strategy.

Sandy Mori: In addition to JCBD taking a position to oppose the Hotel Buchanan, the only other organizations that have taken a similar position are JTF, NLF, and JMA. I am mentioning this because we need a lot more organizations to take a position.

It was noted that The Center, NJAHS, SF Japantown Foundation, and SF JACL voted to make statements in opposition as well.

9. Announcements and New Business 6:55

Grace Horikiri: I have an announcement regarding the Brown Act. In March 2020, an executive order was signed to authorize virtual meetings. This has an expiration date of September 30, 2021. Starting next month, we will be able to continue online meetings but every 30 days a vote must be taken on whether or not meeting in person poses an imminent danger and the next meeting will be virtual. Our counsel is still reading up on this and more information will be shared when it comes in.

10. Action Item: Adjournment 7:00

Motion: Mary Ishisaki; Second: Dan Byron

The motion was passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00PM.

Next JCBD Board Meeting: The next scheduled JCBD Board meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 27, 2021 at 6pm. Due to the rise of the Delta variant of COVID, we will be continuing with our virtual meetings for the time being until we hear more from the City on guidance. Login information is located at the top of the page.

***General Public Comment:** Members of the public may address the Board for up to two minutes with respect to each item on the agenda, and may speak up to two minutes regarding matters not on the agenda during general public comment.

Agenda materials distributed to the JCBD Board members are available for inspection during regular office hours please contact melissa@towncbd.org to request materials.