Hiawassee Downtown Development Authority
Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2026
Time: 8:30 AM
Location: 50 River Street, Upstairs Training Room
Board Present: Bradley Barrett, Alex King, Hannah Chriswell
Staff Present: Lily Ponitz
Guests Present: Leslie Howard, Caitlin Ayers, William Ayers

I. Call to order

Bradley called the meeting to order at 8:34 AM

II. Adopt agenda as set or amended

Motion: Alex | Second: Hannah | Approved

III. Approval of June 16, 2026 meeting minutes

Motion: Alex | Second: Hannah | Approved

IV. Financial Update

- The general fund balance is healthy and we are waiting on 2026 funds from the City.
- The PBC loan account has the proceeds from the fundraiser in it.

V. Directors Update

a. Request to paint PBC mural wall
   i. Discussed charging for the advertising space. A similar-sized billboard would be worth around $350/quarter. We will not charge our tenants but could lease the space to other businesses if a tenant moves out and the space is open.
   ii. Receive designs for the wall from tenants for review at our next meeting.

b. Board roster and training
   i. Reviewed board roster and training requirements. Made a goal to complete the trainings by the end of October.
   ii. Scheduled DDA 101 training sessions for: 8/25, 9/29, and 10/13 at 8:30 AM at the PBC.

c. Staff changes
   i. The PBC/DDA Program Coordinator position will be posted soon.

VI. Night Market Update

- July – had 20 vendors, around 500 attendees and most of them were visitors, had 11 entries in the costume contest
- August – 13 vendors signed up now, music will be Cody King
  - VC Coffee will be open late and we're going to start encouraging other businesses to stay open late for the September market
- September – the Friday of Labor Day; roll out the Late Night on Main recruitment in advance of this market

VII. Paris Business Center Update

- We are hosting a joint ribbon cutting for Grass Guitars and Moore Love on Friday, August 28 at 2pm.
- We are hiring an intern pair from Young Harris College to do administrative work for the center and social media for the incubator businesses.

VIII. New Business

a. Georgia Council for the Arts Vibrant Communities Grant for Fireflies Project ($5,000)
   - Participating businesses will pay $100 for their fireflies.

   Approve applying for the Vibrant Communities Grant for Fireflies Project ($5,000).
   Motion: Bradley | Second: Hannah | Approved

b. Holiday Events – Fairgrounds, Light Up Hiawassee, Small Business Saturday Shop & Sip
   - We will participate in the fairground's booths.
   - Print flyer advertisements for Light Up Hiawassee and distribute them to teachers, churches, and daycares.
   - We want to do the Small Business Saturday Ship & Sip passports again this year, but not the PBC activation. VC Coffee can be the host location for the passports.

c. Hiawassee Half Marathon & 5K – 2027 budget and reserving funds ($8,000)
   Approve reserving funds ($8,000) for 2027 Hiawassee Half Marathon & 5K.
   Motion: Bradley | Second: Alex | Approved

d. Hikeawassee – 2027 budget and reserving funds ($6,000)
   Approve reserving funds ($6,000) for 2027 Hikeawassee.
   Motion: Alex | Second: Hannah | Approved

IX. Old Business

a. Fundraiser – 2026 recap and discussion of 2027 event and reserving funds ($35,000)
   - We want to keep doing the fundraiser and find another project to use the funds for. We'll switch the theme in 2027.

   Approve reserving funds ($35,000) for 2027 fundraiser.
   Motion: Bradley | Second: Alex | Approved

b. DDA Vice Chair vote: Alex King
   Appoint Alex King as DDA Vice Chair.
   Motion: Bradley | Second: Hannah | Approved

c. DDA board member recruitment
   - We can add Associate Members who attend meetings and do work, but don't vote. These members don't have to meet the same residency and employment requirements as DDA members.
   - Meeting with Hali Caldwell next week to interview her for Associate Member.

X. Other Business

XI. Public Comment

XII. Executive Session

XIII. Adjourn by general consent at 9:47 AM