

**Keyport Bayfront Business Cooperative
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 11, 2024 at 7:00pm
70 West Front Street, Keyport NJ 07735**

Call to order: 7:00 pm

Sunshine Law notice read by Attorney Joseph Manfredi

Roll Call Attendance:

Present:

Mayor Rose Araneo, President
Susan Montanti, Vice President
Joseph "JoJo" Merla
Yulia Kravchin
Jacqueline Machado (phone)
Jetmir Kacaj
Jason Faltings (phone)

Absent:

Council Member Stephen Gross
Genevieve Andrews-Kelly
Chris Matey
Doug Weider
Joe Pesce

Also in Attendance:

Joseph Manfredi, KBBC Attorney
Jack Straub, KBBC Administrative Coordinator

Results of KBBC Board of Directors Election - Joseph Manfredi

2 seats expiring December 31, 2025

- Jetmir Kacaj, 5 votes
- Yulia Kravchin, 5 votes
- Jacqueline Machado, 5 votes
- Joe Pesce, 5 votes

1 seat expiring December 31, 2026

- Christopher Matey, 6 votes

3 seats expiring December 31, 2027

- there is no tie breaker in the bylaws, therefore all candidates with 5 votes will have one year terms

Mr. Manfredi stated in the future we want to do things differently to improve everybody's ability to vote, it was somewhat cumbersome for commercial property owners and business operators to pull the material needed to submit with the ballot.

Approval of Minutes for November 13, 2024

Motion: Joseph Merla

Second: Susan Montanti

Voice vote, all approved

President's Report

President Araneo reported to the Board that the KBBC Valley Bank main account had been hit with fraudulent activity. The largest transactions were caught and denied by Valley, but several fraudulent ACH charges did go through. Valley has informed KBBC it could take up to a year to recover the ACH charges.

Treasurer's Report - Jack Straub

Jack Straub reported the bank reconciliation has a few discrepancies due to the fraudulent activity at Valley. The accountant has temporarily placed those transactions

into a holding account, approval of the bank reconciliation can be held until it is corrected.

MOTION to approve balance sheet, P&L, exclude bank reconciliation.

Approve payment of bills, but split payment to Nicole Gangino to pay only November invoice. December invoice can be paid at the end of December. Jack Straub stated he will be meeting with Nicole to transfer login information.

MOTION by Joe Merla, seconded Susan Montanti.

Roll call, all approved.

Administrative - Jack Straub

Before administrative, Jack Straub distributed a draft 2025 budget to the Board. This is for review only, not to be voted on at this meeting. The Board members can review and suggest any changes between now and the beginning of next year; hopefully the Board will be prepared to approve the 2025 budget at the January meeting.

For administrative, we are ready to cut the checks for the GoFundMe proceeds to the four businesses affected by the building collapse last summer. We will need the gross amount raised through GoFundMe, right now we only have the net amount after their fees. Mr. Manfredi will provide that information.

Unless the Board would like to make any changes, the KBBC 2025 meeting schedule will remain on the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00 in the Borough Hall Council Chambers. The Board agreed to keep the schedule for the second Wednesday.

Business owner Cat Galli had sent a letter to Mayor Araneo regarding several issues with KBBC, which was then sent to KBBC Board members. Mayor Araneo read the letter to the Board. The letter contained several suggestions regarding KBBC communication with business owners as well as social media. The Board discussed numerous ideas, focused mostly on trying to get more business participation and improved communication.

Social Media -

Jack Straub reported Nicole has been heavily promoting the holiday events on social media, from the Miracle on West Front Street through the house tour and holiday sip and shops.

Events - Susan Montanti, Genevieve Andrews-Kelly, Yulia Kravchin, Jackie Machado

Susan mentioned once again we had very few volunteers to decorate the tree.

Visual Improvements - Joseph Merla, Susan Montanti, Chris Matey

Joe mentioned sidewalks along West Front Street have been repaired, and most tree stumps have been removed.

For future improvements, he suggested looking into making the boathouse at the boat ramp a Keyport welcome center, and possible KBBC office. Board discussed possibilities for using as a welcome center.

MOTION by Susan Montanti to move forward with making a recommendation to Borough Council.

Seconded by Jay Kacaj, voice vote all approved.

Marketing - Yulia Kravchin, Stephen Gross, Susan Montanti

Yulia stated marketing had been discussed previously in discussion regarding the letter from the business owner.

Bylaws - Doug Weider

Since Doug was absent, Mr. Manfredi reported the bylaws changes were submitted to Borough Administrator and Borough Clerk for approval by Borough Council. Mayor Araneo stated they were approved at the last Council meeting.

New Business

Joe Merla asked if there is any backup for emails, etc in the event the Board needs to access. Yulia suggested a OnePassword account. Jack Straub explained that KBBC emails are accessible on the desktop computer in the office. He also recommended a dedicated laptop and cellphone which can be turned over in the event the administrator is unavailable. He agreed to investigate pricing and report back to the Board.

Mayor Araneo announced the Keyport Fire Department will no longer be running the St. Patrick's Parade, and they asked if KBBC would like to take over running the event. Board discussion was that it would probably be too big an event for KBBC to handle on our own.

Susan Montanti mentioned Downtown New Jersey, a trade organization which she thinks KBBC should look into joining. She also said she had spoken with both the outgoing and incoming Executive Directors of the Red Bank BID, regarding some of their marketing and promotional ideas.

Mr. Manfredi announced the Borough Administrator has offered her QPA (Qualified Purchasing Agent) services to KBBC for no charge. This would allow the bid threshold to be raised from \$17,500 to \$44,000. He prepared a resolution to adopt if the Board would like to proceed.

MOTION by Susan Montanti, seconded Jay Kacaj, roll call all approved.

Administrative Coordinator Position

Mr. Manfredi stated that when Jack Straub was hired by the Board it was through the end of December 2024. On the agenda is a discussion of the position he currently holds. He explained to the Board that under NJ law, whenever a public body discusses an employee's employment, the employee must be provided a Rice Notice. Mr. Straub did receive a Rice Notice, and asserted his right to have his employment status discussed in open session. If the Board has any legal questions for the attorney, they may go into closed session to discuss those issues only. Mr. Straub asked Mr. Manfredi where it stated that his employment would end on December 31, Mr. Manfredi stated it was in the resolution which was passed when he was hired. Mr. Straub requested a copy of the resolution. Mr. Manfredi asked the Board to go into closed session for two minutes.

MOTION to go into closed session by Susan Montanti, seconded by Mayor Araneo.

Mr. Straub was informed by Mr. Manfredi that he could not attend the closed session, his employment would not be discussed, he would just be giving brief legal advice to the Board.

Board returned from closed session, MOTION by Mayor Araneo to reenter open session, seconded by Susan Montanti, voice vote all approved.

Mr. Manfredi stated he is correcting the record, he notified Mr. Straub that when he spoke earlier he was referring to a prior employee in regards to employment ending on

December 31. The record stands corrected. Mayor Araneo stated the Board has a couple of options to consider, continue with Jack's employment, bring on an Executive Director, or combining two positions. MOTION by Joe Merla to continue to keep Jack at his current position, seconded by Susan Montanti, roll call all approved.

Public Session

MOTION to open to the public 8:59pm

Motion by Joe Merla, seconded by Susan Montanti, voice vote all approved.

Larry Vecchio - There are still some loose or missing pavers on West Front Street which should be addressed. Secondly, he would like KBBC to follow up on a proposal from several years ago to paint the Henry Hudson Trail overpass which crosses over Highway 35. KBBC had been given preliminary approval, pending repairs from Monmouth County. Larry also mentioned the KBBC sign on Highway 36 should be repositioned. He also inquired about having the MiniPark lower plaza stained. He would also like West Front Street parking to be addressed. Social Media needs to be supported by paid advertising.

John Merla - In his opinion the process for the recent KBBC Board elections was a total waste of money. There should be an election committee to address. He also suggested for a stakeholders meeting, have a morning and evening session on the same day. Discussion by the Board regarding voting procedures and stakeholders meeting. John also mentioned that the holiday window painter was not consistent in the businesses he covered. He said Matawan involves their high school art department in their window decorating, perhaps this is something we could look into in the future.

Ann Boyce - Asked why waivers were not required this year for businesses having their windows painted. Brief discussion by the Board regarding the window painter contract and services performed.

Chad Simons - Suggested as a possibility contacting Legacy Auto, a Keyport business which does wraps, perhaps they could do window decorating.

John Merla - Wanted to thank Italian Touch for providing hot chocolate and popcorn for children at the tree lighting. (Applause).

Ann Boyce - Regarding Fire Department parade - will KBBC be receiving a refund from the check we gave them in 2024? Also is there a requirement for attendance by Board members? Council member has missed many meetings.

Donna Purcell - A business facebook page was started a few years ago, as with many other things offered to businesses, very few have participated. Much of the work required to work with the businesses one-on-one could be achieved if KBBC had an Executive Director. Also, did we receive the photos from the photographer at the Bewitched event. Jack Straub stated the photos were received today.

Chad Simons - Mentioned influencers frequently come into town and take photos for their pages to attract followers, perhaps we could engage with them. Also, he has been attending business alliance meetings in Old Bridge which are helpful for hearing ideas from different business.

Ann Boyce - Inquired about KBBC hiring a grant writer to identify grants available. Mayor Araneo said that may be part of the role of Executive Director as we explore what that roll might be if KBBC decides to go in that direction.

Donna Purcell - Asked how is the Borough QPA working for KBBC for no fee? Mr. Manfredi stated she had represented to him that she was available.

John Merla - Would help with solicitation of businesses for St Patrick's Parade t-shirts if KBBC decides to get involved. Also, Mayor Araneo stated that during the meeting, Susan Montanti contacted Hank Young from the Fire Department regarding the KBBC check from last year. He informed her \$1,000 was spent and the remaining \$4,000 would be returned to KBBC.

Mayor Araneo stated the Borough has purchased a new Menorah, and the lighting in the MiniPark will be December 26. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

MOTION to close public session by Joe Merla, second Jason Faltings
Voice vote, all approved.

MOTION to adjourn meeting by Joe Merla, second Jetmir Kacaj
Voice vote, all approved.

Next meeting Wednesday, January 8, 2025.