



**City of San José  
Small Business Advisory Task Force**

**VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES & SUMMARY  
Thursday, February 11, 2021**

Consistent with the California Governor’s Executive Order No. N-29-20, Resolution No. 79450 from the City of San José and the Santa Clara County Health Officer’s March 16, 2020 Shelter in Place Order, the Task Force meeting was not physically open to the public and Members participated via teleconference from remote locations.

Members of the Public were noticed to submit comments during or before meeting via zoom or email to [raania.mohsen@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:raania.mohsen@sanjoseca.gov)

**Call to Order & Order of the Day**

PRESENT: Chair Chappie Jones, Vice Chair Dennis King, Members Carl Davis Jr, Ken Kelly, Allie Lopez, Bettie Owen (arrived 4:08 pm), Nga Nguyen (arrived 4:15 pm)

ABSENT: Helen Wang

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS PRESENT: Eddie Truong, Annie Tsai

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Frank Rosenblum	Underwood & Rosenblum, Inc.
Kelly Kline	Office of Mayor Sam Liccardo
Toby Corey	Get Virtual
Aaron Huang	Get Virtual
Vic Farlie	Office of Economic Development, City of San Jose
Nasrine Lakabi	Council Aide, District 1, City of San Jose
Raania Mohsen	Deputy Chief of Staff, District 1, City of San Jose

**Public Comment**

- Frank Rosenblum shared recent experience in submitting an application for a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) with the City, which resulted in losing the opportunity to work with the City to larger organizations. Task Force Members recommended participation in the next Construction Academy, scheduled to begin in Spring 2021, to learn about the bidding process with the City.
- Updates from Kelly Kline from the Mayor's Office included the following:
  - Paycheck protection program playbook that includes best practices and resources.

- Ramping up #shoplocal campaign, which has increased significantly since the holidays and is continuing.
- Silicon Valley Strong website continues to be one of the City's best resource to access information on small businesses with new updates.

### **Consent Calendar**

**ACTION:** Motion to approve Consent Calendar and Minutes of January 14, 2021. Motion made by Vice Chair Dennis King and seconded by Member Ken Kelly. Motion passed unanimously (7:0:1. Absent: Wang).

### **New Business**

#### **A. Impact of COVID-19 on Small Business: Update (Vic Farlie)**

- Vic Farlie of the Office of Economic Development provided update on COVID-19 impacts on small businesses.
- 44% of businesses are small businesses that have not re-opened or only partially opened.
- This has been consistent from April 2020 through January 2021 despite the various opening, closings and shelter in place.
- San Jose is considered a consumer economy; 70% of everything we do is consumption based.
- We are consuming 10% less than where we were pre-COVID.
- Restaurants and hotels have been impacted heavily; while, groceries sales have increased by 28%.
- Restaurant, hotel, entertainment, apparel retail found in local neighborhoods have been the most impacted by COVID-19.
- It is a city wide impact and is not confined to one zip code or one council district.
- It is in particular in downtown and in malls due to shelter in place rules.
- More businesses are closed in areas with higher COVID cases.
- What do we hear from small businesses about their needs?
  - Need for financial support both short term survival and long-term recovery
  - Clear guidance on safe reopening
  - Landlord tenant rent negotiation to prevent eviction; there are more attempts to negotiate instead of resulting to litigation.
  - Advice on how to pivot/change the business going forward
    - A lot of businesses in particular in the retail area have had to rethink how to generate sales and increasingly go online.
    - More and more microbusinesses have had to shift their business online in order to generate sales.
  - Closing a business with the minimum amount of damage and debt and encouraging a new business to be established

- There are many businesses that have closed and are looking to start a new business but do not have the resources.
- We are working on providing this information in more languages: Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, etc.
- Over 700 businesses have attended weekly webinars; businesses are able to collaborate and share ideas and information to help one another.
- 500 local businesses have been able to benefit from grant programs.
- One thing that has made a really big difference to small businesses since COVID is PPP.
  - Close to 13,000 businesses have been able to receive a loan.
  - A quarter of these loans went to sole proprietors.
  - About 75% of all applications today under round #2 are from businesses that applied in round #1.
  - Program expires on March 31.
- California loans:
  - 1100 businesses have been able to get a grant in Santa Clara County in the last two weeks.
  - 60% or 700 businesses were able to receive the grant totaling \$7 million.
  - Once the PPP expires on March 31, there won't be another loan program like it for businesses.

**B. Mayor's Office: Presentation on Get Virtual Services fo Local businesses (Aaron Huang, Toby Corey)**

- Founder Toby Corey reviewed the inception story of Get Virtual.
- When the pandemic hit it became clear that small businesses were going to be impacted because they don't have the cash, the balance sheets, or access to resources that other businesses have and have been really slow to adopt a digital strategy.
- Get Virtual was started to provides a way to promote and create social entrepreneurship at the college level.
- Get Virtual utilizes no-code software tools; tools that are incredibly helpful and does not require users to know how to write one line of code.
- Get Virtual creates a curriculum for college students on how to utilize no-code tools in three key service areas:
  1. web development
  2. e-commerce, how to help businesses start generating revenue online
  3. digital marketing (with a focus on four core areas) e.g. email marketing campaign, social media campaign.
- Once students finish the Get Virtual Course (which takes 2-3 weeks) they begin to work with groups like the Small Business Advisory Task Force.
- Students are paired with small business owners; students get college credit for their work and businesses get volunteer interns that provide the following benefits:

- Expert evaluation of available technologies; there are hundreds of technologies for a business owner to evaluate.
- Time; business owners are often too busy to explore new strategies while running a business.
- Free service.
- Students help business owners include a new digital platform that is very inexpensive; they show them the tools, how to add content, and the basic digital marketing campaigns.
- The goal is to not only have businesses survive, but thrive by augmenting their retail physical business with a compelling online presence.
- The curriculum is free for any school and any student that wants it.
- Get Virtual teaches students how to create a proposal and partner up with small and local businesses, including non-profits.
- Get Virtual has created 67 projects since they launched in May; 16 current projects are in progress and they have capacity for 10 more business projects.
- Each project takes about 2-4 months to complete.
- For Businesses to get partnered up with a student, they can go to <https://www.getvirtual.org/sign-up> and submit an interest form to be evaluated.

**C. Discussion on San Jose City Council’s February 5, 2021, Community Healing and Economic Recovery Listening Session (Chair)**

- At the recent Special City Council Meeting, each council member and the Mayor provided their vision on community healing and economic recovery for the City.
- Chair/Vice Mayor Jones’ vision statement included a recommendation to reinstate the Small Business Commission to provide a forum for small businesses to communicate with the City on policies and programs.
- Other council members expressed support for the suggestion.

**D. Member Check-In Re: COVID-19 Crisis (All)**

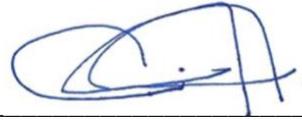
No comments provided.

**Announcements**

- Member Nga Nguyen noted that Lunar New Year, Year of the Ox, begins February 11, 2021.

**Adjournment**

**Meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.**



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HON. CHAPPIE JONES, CHAIR

ATTEST:

ADVISORY TASK FORCE SECRETARY



RAANIA MOHSEN, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF