



# SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

## Meeting Minutes

TUESDAY, January 27, 2026

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Location: Civic Center Plaza, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room –  
1200 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, San Diego, CA 92101

**Chair:** Austin Evans | **Co Vice Chairs:** Natasha Salgado and Sunny Lee

**Board Members:** Austin Evans, Brandon S. Johnson, Christian Gomez, Jenna Hanson, Juliet Terramin, Michael Sovacool, Natasha Salgado, Sarah Mattinson, and Sunny Lee.

**Staff Liaisons:** Alex Southard and Sean Karafin.

- Item 1: Call to Order (Co Vice Chair Lee)
- Meeting was called to order at 8:37 AM.
- Item 2: Roll Call (Co Vice Chair Lee)
- In Attendance: Brandon S. Johnson, Christian Gomez, Jenna Hanson, Juliet Terramin, Sarah Mattinson, and Sunny Lee.
  - City Staff: Sean Karafin, Alex Southard, Nick Stephens, and Viridiana Quintana.
  - Guests: Daniel Enemark.
  - Members of the Public: Irma Soria and Jennifer Medeiros.
- Item 3: Non-Agenda Public Comment
- None.
- Item 4: Action: Approval of December Meeting Minutes (Co Vice Chair Lee)
- With a motion by Juliet Terramin and a second by Jenna Hanson, the Board voted to approve the December 2, 2025 minutes.
    - Yes: Brandon S. Johnson, Christian Gomez, Jenna Hanson, Juliet Terramin, Michael Sovacool, Sarah Mattinson, and Sunny Lee.
    - Abstain: Sarah Mattinson.
    - Absent: Austin Evans and Natasha Salgado.
- Item 5: Action: Approval of 2026 Meeting Calendar (Co Vice Chair Lee)
- With a motion by Sarah Mattinson and a second by Brandon S. Johnson, the Board voted to approve the 2026 Meeting Calendar.

- Yes: Brandon S. Johnson, Christian Gomez, Jenna Hanson, Juliet Terramin, Michael Sovacool, Sarah Mattinson, and Sunny Lee.
- Abstain: None.
- Absent: Austin Evans and Natasha Salgado.

Item 6: Discussion: FY27 Councilmember Budget Memorandas

- The board reviewed each Councilmember’s budget memos and discussed budget priorities that align with the board.
- Conversations were had regarding the impact and return on investment that small businesses contribute to San Diego.
- Interest was raised in learning more about the vacant property tax.
- Priority items identified include:
  - Infrastructure like streetlights improvements/repairs
  - Public safety – homelessness
  - Pursuing state and federal grants
  - Small Business Enhancement Program funding

Item 7: Presentation from Dr. Daniel Enemark with the Policy & Innovation Center on Economic Climate Projections

- Dr. Enemark, Chief Economist with the Policy and Innovation Center, presented on 2026 economic climate projections for San Diego.
- The Policy and Innovation Center is a local organization that was founded in 2021 with the support of the San Diego Foundation, the County of San Diego, and the Bookings Institution.
- The Center’s core areas of focus are economy, environment, and community.
- In last 50 years, the number of firms in San Diego more than doubled.
- About half the workforce works for large firms.
- The unemployment rate in San Diego is currently higher than the US rate.
  - Impacting factors can include the changes to tariffs and the ability to delivery competitive pricing as well as immigration enforcement and the affects it has had on the workforce.
- Data shows minority owned businesses are at a disadvantage when accessing lines of credits, programs, etc.
- The Regional EDC shares small business resources and information on a regular basis including the following data points:
  - Job growth is flat but 1/3 of small businesses expect to increase hiring.
  - Challenges with hiring qualified staff.
  - Significant number of small businesses plan on leaving the County.
- The largest industry in San Diego is professional and business services but it is also a declining industry.
- Questions were asked and conversation followed.
  - Access to economic opportunities should be increasing and more people joining the labor market to increase workforce talent.

- Discussions around alleviating burden on small businesses in relations to the high regulations and taxes.
- An assessment of state and local regulations might help prioritize what is actually needed.
- The annual Economic Roundtable San Diego will take place February 5<sup>th</sup> from 8:30-11:30AM at the University of San Diego.

Item 8: San Ysidro Business Improvement District Advisory Committee (Liaison Southard)

- Alex Southard shared an update on the San Ysidro BID activities.
- At the December meeting, the newly elected board approved the Executive Officer Positions Role Descriptions and elected the following slate:
  - Board President/Chair – Jose Alfredo Ripa
  - Vice President/Chair – Norman Jester
  - Secretary – Carol Kang
  - Treasurer – Marni Levy Wilton
- The board also approved the Financial Report to Date and signing a Memorandum of Understanding with APEX for business trainings.
- In the January meeting, the board heard presentations from a speaker with CalNonprofits Insurance Services and the U.S.-Mexico Border Philanthropy Partnership.
- A draft FY27 San Ysidro BID Budget was shared with the group which reflects spending primarily on the services agreements with Civic Community Partners and Hearts & Hands Working Together.
- The tentative schedule for FY27 BID Budgets is Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations Committee on March 4, City Council on April 7, and the Noticed Public Hearing on May 12.

Item 9: Staff Report

a. Economic Development Department (Liaison Southard)

- Alex Southard provided an update from the Economic Development Department.
- Sean Karafin shared there has been an update to the Brown Act at the State level primarily involving virtual meetings flexibility. This update requires local action which City Council has not yet taken.
- Effective January 1, the City's minimum wage increased from \$17.25 to \$17.75 an hour. The change is in accordance with the City's Earned Sick Leave and Minimum Wage Ordinance, approved by voters in 2016. Please visit the Compliance Department webpage for more information: [www.sandiego.gov/compliance/minimum-wage](http://www.sandiego.gov/compliance/minimum-wage).
- The Small Business Advisory Board currently has two vacancies on the board. Interested business owners or small business advocates can apply online. The board currently meets in-person on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. Feel free to share with others and visit the SBAB website for more information: <https://onboard.sandiego.gov/board/3397>.

- Our department fields inquiries daily primarily through [sdbusiness@sanidiego.gov](mailto:sdbusiness@sanidiego.gov). The inbox is always covered, and we work as a team to respond to inquiries in a way that's as helpful as possible. For the month of December, 40 business-related inquiries were received with an 95% response rate within 2 business days.

Item 10: Action: Draft Advising Letter (Co Vice Chair Lee)

- With a motion by Sarah Mattinson and a second by Jenna Hanson, the Board voted to draft an advising letter regarding the board's FY27 budget priorities which will be reviewed at the February meeting.
  - Yes: Brandon S. Johnson, Christian Gomez, Jenna Hanson, Juliet Terramin, Michael Sovacool, Sarah Mattinson, and Sunny Lee.
  - Abstain: None.
  - Absent: Austin Evans and Natasha Salgado.

Item 11: Board Member Discussion

- a. Suggested items for future meetings
  - Sarah Mattinson suggested creating a list of all required employer workplace postings that encompasses requirements from agencies of all levels.
  - Alex Southard shared the San Diego Workforce Partnership will present on workforce and small business trends at the February meeting.

Item 12: Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 AM.

## REQUESTS FOR ACCESSIBILITY MODIFICATIONS OR ACCOMMODATIONS

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