



SMALL BUSINESS ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

TUESDAY, February 24, 2026

8:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Location: Civic Center Plaza, 14th Floor Conference Room –
1200 3rd 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 (Chair Evans)
- Meeting was called to order at 8:29 AM.
- Item 2: Roll Call (Chair Evans)
- In Attendance: Austin Evans, Brandon S. Johnson, Christian Gomez, Jenna Hanson, Juliet Terramin, Michael Sovacool, Natasha Salgado, Sarah Mattinson, and Sunny Lee.
 - City Staff: Sean Karafin, Alex Southard, and Viridiana Quintana.
 - Guest: Teddy Martinez.
 - Members of the Public: Amir Rezai and Irma Soria.
- Item 3: Action: Approval of January Meeting Minutes (Chair Evans)
- With a motion by Jenna Hanson and a second by Sarah Mattinson, the Board voted to approve the January 27, 2026 minutes.
 - Yes: Austin Evans, Brandon S. Johnson, Christian Gomez, Jenna Hanson, Juliet Terramin, Michael Sovacool, Natasha Salgado, Sarah Mattinson, and Sunny Lee.
 - Abstain: None.
 - Absent: None.
- Item 4: Presentation on the San Diego Workforce Needs and Assets Data Tool from Teddy Martinez with the San Diego Workforce Partnership
- Teddy Martinez, Vice President of Strategic & Policy Initiatives with the Workforce Partnership, presented on a data tool that examines needs and assets around workforce trends and how it relates to small businesses.

- An overview of the data toll was given and can be found in their website- <https://workforce.org/explore-needs-and-assets-in-san-diego/>.
- Data shows that the majority of firms in San Diego are small businesses.
- The demand for AI skills is increasingly important in the workforce.
- There are geography barriers with a large separation of where workers reside and where jobs are centralized.
- The board asked questions and conversation followed.
 - The Workforce Partnership has 4 career centers where a job seeker can complete the intake and eligibility process.
 - There are opportunities for the organization to partner with local partners as well as launch a mobile unit.

Item 5: San Ysidro Business Improvement District Advisory Committee (Liaison Southard)

- Alex Southard shared an update on the San Ysidro BID activities.
- In the January Committee Meeting, the group highlighted the importance of having a strategic fundraising plan to raise about \$150,000. They will schedule a board retreat / strategic planning meeting to discuss further.
- In the February Board Meeting, the group had a presentation from the County on “Know Your Rights” information for businesses as well as the Urban Land Institute on their Technical Assistance Panels and opportunities in San Ysidro.
 - The organization is waiting to receive insurance quotes.
 - The FY26 budget spending to date and the FY27 draft BID Budget were presented. The tentative schedule for FY27 BID Budgets is EDIR Committee on March 4, City Council on April 6, and the Noticed Public Hearing on May 11.

Item 6: Action: Election of New Chair (Chair Evans)

- Austin Evans announced his transition from Chair to board member.
- Sunny Lee expressed interest in being Chair to continue the existing term.
- With a motion by Natasha Salgado and a second by Sarah Mattinson, the Board voted to have Sunny Lee as Chair for the remaining term.
 - Yes: Austin Evans, Brandon S. Johnson, Christian Gomez, Jenna Hanson, Juliet Terramin, Michael Sovacool, Natasha Salgado, Sarah Mattinson, and Sunny Lee.
 - Abstain: None.
 - Absent: None.

Item 7: Action: Draft Advising Letter (Chair Evans)

- The board reviewed the draft FY27 City Budget letter and discussed incorporating additional information regarding how investments are being made into small businesses as well as the importance of reinstating and fully funding the Small Business Enhancement Program policy.
- With a motion by Natasha Salgado and a second by Jenna Hanson, the Board voted to approve the advising letter regarding the FY27 City Budget with the additional information incorporated.

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

Item 8: Staff Report

a. Economic Development Department (Liaison Southard)

- Alex Southard provided an update from the Economic Development Department.
- EDD can help with permitting and technical support such as assistance with conducting zoning research, navigating permitting with Development Services, and connect businesses with appropriate incentives programs.
- The State’s Office of Business has several incentives programs for businesses such as financing & bonding, energy savings programs, research & development tax credits, workforce hiring & trainings programs, and more. Visit their website for more information- <https://business.ca.gov/>.
- EDD fields inquiries daily primarily through sdbusiness@sandiego.gov. 38 business-related inquiries were received in January with a 100% response rate within 2 business days.
- EDD held several Business Walks the past few months visiting over 900 businesses throughout San Diego.

Item 9: Board Member Discussion

a. Suggested items for future meetings

- Interest was expressed for an update on the City’s streetaries regulations.
- Jenna Hanson shared some businesses may qualify for a refund for certain prior tariffs.
- Mike Sovacool shared that the Diverse Chamber of Commerce named San Diego the 2nd best place for small business.
- Sarah Mattinson and other members highlighted the opportunities of using the City’s social media for business spotlights.

Item 10: Non-Agenda Public Comment

- A public comment was submitted online on 2/12/26 regarding short term rentals in Mission Beach and its impact.
- Amir Rezai introduced themselves, he is the owner of IQ Graphics in the College Area since 2012.

Item 11: Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 AM.

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