

**CITY COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

**Meeting Date:** Monday, February 10, 2025

**Agenda Item:** Resolution in support of Eau Claire Business Improvement Districts and continuing a culture of collaboration in service of downtown businesses, downtown patrons, Eau Claire tourists, and all of Eau Claire.

**SUMMARY / BACKGROUND**

This resolution was provided by Council Members Felton and Brewster. A staff memo is provided in response.

**ACTION / ATTACHMENTS**

**Action:** Resolution  
**Attachments:** Resolution  
Staff Memo

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF EAU CLAIRE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS AND CONTINUING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION IN SERVICE OF DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES, DOWNTOWN PATRONS, EAU CLAIRE TOURISTS, AND ALL OF EAU CLAIRE**

WHEREAS, the city of Eau Claire has historically been a leader in the state of Wisconsin in downtown development, being the first community to create a BID, the South Barstow BID in 1985 and

WHEREAS, there are four Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) within the city of Eau Claire—South Barstow BID, North Barstow & Medical BID, Water Street BID, and West Grand BID; and

WHEREAS, since 1985 downtown businesses have voluntarily chosen to tax themselves, generating over \$350,000 in 2025 in funds that are otherwise unavailable to the city, to pay for promotion of the districts, beautification, and essential services, like public garbage collection and snow removal, all that serve the entire community; and

WHEREAS, BIDs are a branch of the City of Eau Claire, governed by State of Wisconsin Statutes, City of Eau Claire policies, and BID operating plans and bylaws; and

WHEREAS, BID budgets are public dollars segregated to be used only by the BID and are administered by boards of each BID, members of which that are nominated by the BID and confirmed by the City Council, currently 42 volunteer board members in total; and

WHEREAS, Downtown Eau Claire has gone through a renaissance in the last 20 years, resulting in a vibrant downtown and bustling local economy, due to the investment made by BIDs, the City of Eau Claire, and other stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, according to the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Eau Claire County is projected to be the third fastest growing counties in Wisconsin in the next 20 years, one of only 13 counties projected to grow out of 72; and

WHEREAS, it is commonly recognized that the city of Eau Claire's success is credited in part to the success of downtown Eau Claire; and

WHEREAS, the city of Eau Claire's budget is dependent on growth, net new construction being one of only very few mechanisms to raise city revenue; and

WHEREAS, due to an inadequate state shared revenue formula, the city of Eau Claire needs to continue to increase net new construction to continue current the current level of public services;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Eau Claire City Council expresses appreciation for the investments the BIDs have made and continue to make in downtown Eau Claire for the

benefit of all over the last nearly 40 years, as well as the time volunteered by current and past BID board members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, pursuant to state statute 66.1109, the Eau Claire City Council supports a BID board-led update of BID Operating Plans to reduce confusion and ambiguity for board members and city staff; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eau Claire City Council supports a policy handbook, created in cooperation with BIDs, with state statute and local policies that the BIDs are governed by to increase clarity, reduce missteps and conflict with staff, and make their work with city staff and the community more efficient and effective; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eau Claire City Council supports the following policies impacting BIDs:

1. The City of Eau Claire will continue to offer staff services that are required by state statute at no cost to BIDs, as is done with every other city board, committee, and commission
2. BID board composition will follow state statute which allows all board members to be a property or business owner, occupier, or representative within BID boundaries; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Eau Claire City Council acknowledges, and advises city staff to acknowledge, that BIDs have the right to:

1. Hire their own legal counsel, if the BID board identifies it as a need
2. Contract services with providers outside of the city. Consistent with other city operations, contracted services are subject to city purchasing policy and subcontracted services are not subject to city purchasing policy
3. Write and manage their own agendas. Agenda items will not be removed from BID board meeting agendas without legal reason and consultation with BID board chair
4. Work on projects outside of meetings, as long as that work is being done by individual BID members in accordance with Wisconsin open meeting statutes (Wis. Stat. §§ 19.81 to 19.98) and is directed by the BID board