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**The City of New York  
Community Board 8 Manhattan  
Small Business Committee  
Wednesday, May 22, 2024 – 3:00pm  
This meeting was conducted via Zoom**

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** Bill Angelos, Gayle Baron, Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Alida Camp and Lindsey Cormack.

**Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 2**

**Item 1: Small Business Empowerment Summit: Navigating NYC Regulations & Resources: This topic reflects supporting small business owners and highlights the key aspects of the agenda: navigating regulations, accessing resources and empowering entrepreneurs. Below are two city agencies presenting on how they can support small businesses:**

The Small Business Committee invited four speakers to present on the above theme, the representatives from the New York City Department of Small Business Services were Deputy Commissioner Kitty Chan and Small Business Advocate Melody Li and the representatives from the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH) were Deputy Commissioner for Public Affairs & Communications Marisa Senigo and Deputy Commissioner for Legislative Affairs John Castelli.

Kitty Chan began with her presentation on the different free services or programs SBS offers to small businesses. She emphasizes SBS is not a regulatory agency meaning they don't perform any enforcement as their main goal is to educate the public about the free services they offer. The hotline was expanded to Spanish and Mandarin speaking as well as other languages. The business hotline is open from 9am-5pm during weekdays. The services offered is the following:

- a. NYC Business Solution Centers (BSC) – there are seven (7) centers located in all five (5) boroughs and they provide financing assistance, business education, legal assistance, business consultation, Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE), recruitment and training.
- b. Industrial Business Service Providers (IBSP) – there are nine (9) industrial business service providers, oversee 20 industrial business zones, industry focus: manufacturing, construction, wholesale trade, waste management, film production, and transportation.
- c. Capital Access – connecting small businesses to capital through free advising and investing in new financial products to fill market gaps.
- d. NYC Business Incentives – this unit promotes economic activity through a variety of federal, state, and city programs that include reductions in tax liability, tax credits and identifying energy savings. SBS provides customized consultation to identify incentives applicable to the businesses and help owners to navigate through the various programs.
- e. Relocating and Renovating – promotes business relocation and retention in NYC, encourages investment in NYC's aging infrastructure, reduces utility costs to be competitive with region and

lower cost to operate in NYC and aligns with Mayor's blueprint to supports capital investment and energy efficiency.

- f. WE NYC (Women Entrepreneurs NYC) is an initiative that is dedicated to helping women start and grow their businesses, this's not restricted to women as it's also open to men.
- g. FastTrac – is a series of multiple-session entrepreneurship bootcamps for aspiring and established entrepreneurs throughout NYC.
- h. Worker Cooperative Business Development Initiative (WCBDI) – this gives New Yorkers the opportunity to co-own a business, creating sustainable and dignified jobs while developing community wealth – particularly for people who lack access to traditional business ownership.
- i. Commercial Leas Assistance Program – provides free legal transactional counsel to small business owners on a range of non-litigation commercial lease matters.
- j. Business Preparedness and Resilience Program – small businesses prepare for emergencies and enhance the resilience of their operation, assets, and physical space in the event of a disaster.
- k. Emergency Response Unit & Intergovernmental Services – works closely with NYC Emergency Management and City, State, and Federal Agencies to assess the impact of small businesses and provide local to city-wide relief.
- l. NYC M/WBE Program and Services – helps Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises access to government contracts and grow their businesses and will assist free staffing needs.

Following the above presentation, Melody Li presented on NYC Business Express Service Team (BEST). This's SBS initiative connects business owners to a single point of contact who can help navigate various city and state regulatory agencies and utilities to open or run their storefront businesses for free. There are two services offered by NYC BEST:

1. Small Business Advocacy – assist in starting, operating, and growing small businesses storefront without delay.
2. Compliance Advisory – assist in understanding the rules and regulations in multiple languages.

The small business owner will be assigned a single point person to:

1. Guide small business owners to get licenses & permits faster.
2. Guide small business owners to avoid/reduce fines & violations

Following the conclusion of SBS's presentation, OATH, the administrative law court for the City of New York presented. Although they don't enforce, small businesses will go for adjudication of fines or violations. OATH mantra is fairness, impartiality, timely hearings, access to justice and due process.

OATH shared some statistics the kinds of cases they hear. In 2023, they received about 765,000 summonses of that summonses about 28% typically go to hearings, about 39% summonses were ignored. When summonses are ignored, it usually results in default judgment and penalties can be imposed at high at three times the initial penalty. OATH advised small businesses to attend the hearing as many summonses get dismissed and many are settled, this's the remaining 33% of the summonses.

The breakdown of the summonses by type for FY23:

1. General Quality of Life at about 87% - the breakdown are Sanitation, DEP, Police, Building, Health, Fire, Transportation and Parks.
2. Health and Restaurant at about 2.6% - breakdown are Restaurant, Day Care, Lead Poisoning, and others.
3. Consumer at about 2.2%
4. Vehicle for Hire at about 7.8%

The statistics of summonses are available on OATH's website. OATH does not hear parking, red light and speed camera tickets as those go to the Parking Violations Bureau. Violations in the NYS subway are adjudicated by the Bureau of the NYC Transit Authority. Any traffic infractions are adjudicated at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

About 94% of the respondents have their hearings by phone. To request a hearing in-person must do so within five (5) business days of the scheduled hearing. Some summonses may be contested online via OATH's website. What to do when responding to a summons at OATH:

1. Check your hearing date.
2. Decide how you want to respond: either admit and pay, cure or settle, or fight summons at hearing.

For some violations, small businesses may be able to cure the violation prior to their scheduled hearing or agree on a settlement with the issuing or enforcement agency. All penalties OATH imposes are set by the enforcement agency and are required by law. OATH does not have any discretion to alter or change a fine amount. If you're found in violation of a charge, a fine associated with that charge will be issued. At the back of the summons, there's a help center for free consultation prior to the scheduled hearing date.

At OATH's website, there are fact sheets for common issues/case types for more information such as to assist on responding to a summons, resources for researching the laws of NYC, what to do when small businesses have been found in violation by "default," how to certify the cure and other information for small businesses. Also, on OATH's website there's a help tab that can search decisions on cases with similar violations businesses received to understand why cases get dismissed or upheld or other summons help including for senior citizens and military veterans. Upon receiving summonses it's best to reach NYC BEST as they can assist businesses on the rules and regulations of the violations. OATH does a number of outreach events in the city.

Following the conclusion of the presentation there were Questions & Answers and comments from the member of the public and board members.

## **Item 2: Old Business**

No items of Old Business were discussed.

## **Items 3: New Business**

No items of New Business were discussed.

The meeting ended at approximately 5:00pm.

**Bill Angelos and Alida Camp, Co-Chairs**