

**REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
SEPTEMBER 26, 2024**

Town Hall
Bethlehem City Hall
10 East Church Street
Bethlehem, PA 18018

MINUTES

The Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem met for a regular meeting on Thursday, September 26, 2024 at 5:00 in Town Hall, at Bethlehem City Hall; 10 East Church Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The place, the hour and the date duly noted for the holding of this meeting was publicized.

Chairperson Tracy Oscavich called the meeting to order and the following members were present:

Tracy Samuelson
Christopher Spadoni

The Chairperson called a quorum present.

Also present were: Sean Ziller, Executive Director
 Heather M. Bambu-Weiss, Board Secretary
 Michael E. Riskin, Esq., Solicitor

RDA Board member, Ronald Heckman, contacted the RDA office prior to the meeting and indicated he had a conflict and would not be able to attend.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Samuelson made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2024 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority. The minutes were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the minutes of the August 22, 2024 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority were approved.

CASH REPORTS

Ms. Samuelson made a motion to approved the cash reports for the months ended June 30, 2024; July 31, 2024; and August 31, 2024. These cash reports were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the cash reports for the months ended June 30, 2024; July 31, 2024; and August 31, 2024 were approved.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

There were no comments during the Courtesy of the Floor portion of this meeting.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Oscavich turned the meeting over to Mr. Ziller who provided an Executive Director Report. Mr. Ziller updated the RDA Board on various activities and projects involving the RDA. He noted the following:

- **CRFP Grant** – Mr. Ziller indicated that the RDA will be submitting an application for financing from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency – CRFP (Community Revitalization Fund Program) Grant program. He indicated that the funds requested will be for the blighted property at 401-403 East Fourth Street / 405 East Fourth Street. Mr. Ziller reminded the Board that the RDA has sought grant funds from other sources for this project and is hoping to receive an award from these CRFP funds. It was noted that the CRFP grant application will be for a combination of both hard renovation costs as well as some pre-construction soft costs, such as engineering and architectural fees. It was also noted that the CRFP funds are to assist with for mixed use properties and that priority is being given to third-class cities in Pennsylvania.
- **401-403 East Fourth Street / 405 East Fourth Street** – Mr. Ziller stated a hearing scheduled, for September 26, 2024, regarding the valuation of this property had been canceled due to medical issues by the previous owner. It was noted that the RDA is current owner of this property. Mr. Ziller added the hearing is in the process of being rescheduled.
- **726 Shields Street** – Mr. Ziller stated that the ownership of this blight certified property has changed since its original certification. Mr. Ziller noted that the RDA has been in discussions with the owner of this property regarding plans for the site. He added that recently the plans changed from the property being renovated to it becoming a demolition / new construction project. Mr. Ziller indicated that the RDA would encourage affordable housing units be incorporated into the development at this site. Mr. Ziller indicated that he will be scheduling a meeting with the owner / developer of this property and City staff members to discuss these updated plans for the property.
- **Blighted Properties** – Mr. Ziller noted that the RDA continues to monitor the current list of blight certified properties. He added that recently restricted appraisals were done on some of the properties included on this list. He noted that the RDA intends to begin action on additional properties in the coming months.

USE PERMIT AGREEMENT – NIGHT MARKET

Ms. Oscavich indicated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider entering into a Joinder Addendum to a Use Permit Agreement with Christmas City Spirits, LLC for the use of the RDA portion of the Sun Inn Courtyard property as part of the Night Market, scheduled for the period of October 5 to 19, 2024. She added that if acceptable, the approval of this agreement can be done via motion.

Ms. Samuelson made a motion to authorize the RDA to enter into a Joinder Addendum to a Use Permit Agreement with Christmas City Spirits, LLC for the use of the RDA portion of the Sun Inn Courtyard property as part of the Night Market during the period of October 5 to 19, 2024.

Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. As a result, the RDA Board unanimously authorized the RDA to enter into a Use Permit Agreement with Christmas City Spirits, LLC for the use of the RDA portion of the Sun Inn Courtyard property as part of the Night Market event, as scheduled for the period of October 5 to 19, 2024.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1515

Ms. Oscavich indicated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval Resolution Number 1515, which accepts a proposal and authorizes the RDA to enter into an agreement with Buckno Lisicky & Company for the audit of the RDA fiscal period ended June 30, 2024.

Mr. Ziller stated that the RDA received five (5) proposals in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) for auditing services. He reminded the Board that the current RDA auditor was Maher Duessel and noted that they submitted a proposal in response to the RFP. He added that, through the RFP, Maher Duessel was made aware of the criteria which would be used to evaluate all proposals received through this process.

Mr. Ziller stated that in addition to cost, experience and the incremental increase of fees for services were considered when the proposals were reviewed and evaluated. Mr. Ziller indicated that after all criteria was considered, the proposal from Buckno Lisicky & Company is being recommended for acceptance.

Mr. Ziller explained that this recommendation is based upon the cost of the current audit period, as well as their proposal of year-to-year cost for the future. He explained that Buckno Lisicky stated in their proposal the cost of future audits could be negotiated based upon the financial activity level of the RDA. Mr. Ziller also noted that Buckno Lisicky is located in Bethlehem while none of the other firms who submitted proposals were located within the Lehigh Valley. He also noted the experience Buckno Lisicky has with other entities similar to the RDA.

Ms. Oscavich reminded the Board that she is an employee of the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission and stated, for the record, that Buckno Lisicky & Company are the auditors used annually by the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission. Mr. Ziller added that he spoke with the RDA Solicitor regarding this situation. Mr. Riskin indicated that he did not consider Buckno Lisicky auditing the RDA to create any conflict of interest.

Mr. Spadoni asked if the current RDA auditors submitted a proposal. Mr. Ziller stated that yes, Maher Duessel submitted a proposal in response to the RFP. He added that the Maher Duessel proposal was the 2nd most expensive proposal received.

Following this presentation and discussion, Ms. Samuelson presented the following resolution to the Board and moved for its adoption by the Board.

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem has sought proposals from qualified certified public accountant firms to audit its financial statements for the fiscal period ended June 30, 2024, with an option to extend for three (#) additional fiscal periods ending June 30, 2025, 2026, and 2027; and

WHEREAS, Buckno Lisicky & Company, CPAs is an experienced qualified certified public accountant firm with locations in Allentown and Bethlehem, PA and has submitted a proposal to conduct such an audit for the Authority; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has reviewed all proposals received and determined that Buckno Lisicky & Company, CPAs has submitted an acceptable proposal in terms of qualifications and fees.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem accepts the proposal submitted by Buckno Lisicky & Company, CPAs for the total amount of Twelve Thousand Dollars (\$12,000.00) for the fiscal period ended June 30, 2024, with the option to extend said services for three (3) additional fiscal periods ending June 30, 2025, 2026, and 2027.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem is authorized to enter into an agreement with Buckno Lisicky & Company, CPAs for the purpose of providing an independent audit of the Authority for the fiscal period ended June 30, 2024 and that the Chairperson or Executive Director be authorized to sign said agreement, to be attested to by the Secretary.
(Resolution Number 1515)

Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. As a result, Resolution Number 1515 was unanimously adopted by the RDA.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Ms. Samuelson made a motion to adjourn the September 26, 2024 RDA Board meeting. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried. As a result, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M.

Submitted by,

Heather M. Bambu-Weiss
Board Secretary