

REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
FEBRUARY 25, 2021

Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting
Bethlehem, PA 18018

MINUTES

The Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem met for a rescheduled, regular meeting on Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 5:00 P.M. via GoToMeeting. The place, the hour and the date duly noted for the holding of this meeting was publicized.

Chairman Ronald Heckman called the meeting to order and the following members were present:

Earl Bethel
Lea B. Grigsby
Tracy Oscavich
Christopher Spadoni

The Chairman called a quorum present.

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

Guests present were:
Eric Evans, Business Administrator / City of Bethlehem
Alicia Karner, Director of Community & Economic Development / City of Bethlehem

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Bethel made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2021 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 January 28, 2021 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority were approved.

APPROVAL OF CASH REPORTS

Mr. Spadoni made a motion to approve the cash reports for the month ended December 31, 2020. These cash reports were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. As there were no errors or changes reported, Mr. Bethel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the cash reports for the month ended December 31, 2020 were approved.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Due the Covid-19 situation, the RDA meeting was conducted virtually via GoToMeeting. To provide an opportunity for guests to share any thoughts about the RDA agenda items, or other Authority business, the virtual meeting information was posted on the RDA website prior to the meeting and included instructions to contact the RDA office if any members of the community had any thoughts about RDA business to share with the RDA Board during this meeting. The RDA phone line was available and monitored during the meeting by the Administrative Coordinator. No phone calls were received during meeting. In addition, no messages to be shared at the meeting were provided to the RDA prior to or during the meeting.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Heckman turned the meeting over to Mr. Hanna for his Executive Director Report. Mr. Hanna provided updates to the RDA Board regarding the status of recent projects and issues the RDA has been involved.

- 1) **TIF Projects** – Mr. Hanna stated that with the improved weather the work was able to begin again on some of TIF 2020 projects. He noted that the additional crosswalk work is scheduled to begin soon and should be completed approximately 3-weeks from its start. He added that the work at the Bethlehem Landing Visitor Center / Stock House continues but noted that the exterior masonry work will have to wait until warmer temperatures. Mr. Hanna also indicated that work is still being done with regards to the pricing and planning for the updated landscaping to the Founders Way entrance island.
- 2) **Hoover-Mason Trestle** – Mr. Hanna stated that he anticipates the Hoover-Mason Trestle opening in late spring / early summer. He explained that the HMT will likely be open in conjunction with activities of ArtsQuest and others at the campus. He added that he would work with the City of Bethlehem Public Works department regarding the opening / closing and security of the HMT.

RDA POST-TIF TRANSITION

Mr. Heckman noted the next item of business was the discussion regarding the transition of the RDA and its post-TIF operations.

Mr. Hanna explained that discussions regarding the transition of RDA assets to the City of Bethlehem have been occurring. He noted that Mayor Donchez was present at a meeting that occurred on February 19, 2021 regarding these issues. Mr. Hanna added that he hopes to have a number of items available for the RDA Board at the next meeting, including a consulting agreement between himself and the RDA.

Mr. Hanna added that additional meetings are planned with the next occurring on Friday, February 26, 2021. He explained this next meeting will be a more internal meeting to discuss some of the personnel and staffing issues involving this transition. He noted that Mr. Bethel and Mr. Heckman have been invited, as RDA Board members, to attend the planning meetings this transition.

Mr. Hanna asked Ms. Karner to discuss this RDA transition from the perspective of the City of Bethlehem with the RDA Board. Ms. Karner indicated that it is imperative the RDA remains viable in the City of Bethlehem as well as within the City Department of Community and Economic Development. She noted that the RDA is needed to do blight activities and reminded the Board of the Blight Remediation and Mitigation Study that was done in 2018 of which the RDA was a partner with the City to complete.

Ms. Karner added that while the role in blight remediation is a key function of the RDA, there are other areas in which the involvement of the RDA may be needed by the City since it can provide a variety of services, including assist with various state and other programs. She noted that ending of the TIF does create a void and cautioned that it is unlikely any future TIF would be anywhere near the size and scope of what was previously created. She stated that the assets transition will continue to be a large discussion item for the RDA and City, including plans for moving forward with maintenance and even possible transfer.

Mr. Spadoni indicated that it was refreshing to hear the RDA described as ‘critical’ but added that the Board needs some program presented to it as to what kind of future the RDA will have. Mr. Spadoni also questioned what would happen to the funds the RDA has available. Ms. Karner stated that if the RDA continues on its current path it will only be able to be self-sustaining for a few years. She added that for the immediate future she does not anticipate the role of Mr. Hanna with the RDA changing even though he will retire from the Executive Director position and become a Consultant for the RDA effective April 1, 2021. Ms. Karner asked the RDA Board for patience as this transition is navigated in the coming months.

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Mr. Heckman questioned if the RDA would continue to have a separate Solicitor. Mr. Heckman also inquired if the RDA Solicitor should be involved in discussions regarding this transition. Ms. Karner indicated that it is her understanding that the RDA would keep a separate Solicitor and added that when appropriate the RDA Solicitor and City of Bethlehem Solicitor would both be included in discussions regarding this transition as progress is made.

Mr. Hanna stated that he will keep the RDA Board well informed of the results of the transition meetings and added that he will send a copy of agreements, when available, to them for their review. Mr. Hanna also assured the Board of his involvement with RDA activities until at least the end of 2021.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES – FEBRUARY 2021

Mr. Heckman stated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval the invoices / reimbursements as outlined on the February 2021 invoice summary.

Ms. Oscavich made a motion to approve of the payments / invoices as outlined on the February 2021 invoice summary. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and the following payments were approved:

- 1) \$63,691.48 represents costs associated with On-Going and Maintenance Costs and payment of such costs to be made from the Authority Fund.
- 2) \$6,103.69 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Administrative Expense Fund for various administrative costs associated with overall / general TIF project work.
- 3) \$781.25 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Authority Fund account for various costs related to the Bethlehem Works / TIF District.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Mr. Bethel made a motion to adjourn this February 25, 2021 RDA Board meeting. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried. As a result, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 P.M.

Submitted by,

Heather M. Bambu-Weiss
Board Secretary