

**REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
SEPTEMBER 28, 2023**

DCED Conference Room – A100
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 28, 2023 at 5:00 P.M. in the DCED Conference Room – A100 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:

Ronald Heckman
Christopher Spadoni (via phone)

The Chairperson called a quorum present.

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

Jennifer CruverKibi, of Maher Duessel, was also present at the meeting via Zoom.

RDA Board Member, Tracy Oscavich, contacted the RDA office prior to the meeting to indicate a conflict with her schedule. RDA Board member, Earl Bethel, did not attend the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Heckman made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 27, 2023 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 July 27, 2023 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority were approved.

Mr. Heckman made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2023 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 24, 2023 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority were approved.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

Since there were no members of the public in attendance, there were no comments during the Courtesy of the Floor portion of this meeting.

RDA AUDIT – FISCAL PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2022

Ms. Oscavich turned the meeting over to Ms. CruverKibi, who provided the RDA Board with a presentation of the RDA audit for the fiscal period ended June 30, 2022. Ms. CruverKibi provided the following highlights regarding the RDA audit:

- 1) The RDA financial statements were an unmodified opinion, which was explained to be the best opinion that the RDA could receive. An updated format was also used for the preparation of these financial statements due to new auditor standards.
- 2) RDA historical pension information is included within the audit report for the 2021-2022 fiscal period.
- 3) The RDA assets and liabilities were less during the 2021-2022 fiscal period when compared with the prior fiscal period primarily due to the ending of the Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) District and the repayment of all funds borrowed in connection with that financing.
- 4) Communication to Management noted that the RDA did not implement any new accounting standards or policies during the audit period. It was also noted that all significant transactions are recognized when they occur. This communication also indicated that the auditors did not experience any issues working with RDA management during the audit process.
- 5) Management Letter provided recommendations to improve the segregation of duties for RDA financial operations.
- 6) Disaster Recovery Plan – A recommendation was made to RDA that a Disaster Recovery Plan should be created. Ms. CruverKibi noted that the same recommendation is included in the City of Bethlehem audit and suggested the RDA work with the City in the creation of the RDA plan.

Ms. Karner noted that the RDA has begun further segregation of duties which were not reflective in the audit of the fiscal period ended June 30, 2022. She noted that RDA financial operations are being reviewed and evaluated and additional modifications would be made in areas identified as needing such attention.

Following the presentation by Ms. CruverKibi, and the additional information provided by Ms. Karner, Mr. Heckman made a motion to accept, as presented, the RDA audit and financial statements for the fiscal period ended June 30, 2022. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. As a result, the RDA audit and financial statements for the fiscal period ended June 30, 2022 were accepted, as presented.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Oscavich turned the meeting over to Ms. Karner for her Executive Director Report. Ms. Karner indicated she did not have anything to add beyond the agenda action items for the Board at this time.

APPROVAL OF COSTS – SEPTEMBER 2023

Ms. Oscavich indicated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval the invoice as outlined on the September 2023 invoice summary.

Mr. Heckman made a motion to approve the invoice as outlined on the September 2023 invoice summary. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and the following invoice was approved:

- 1) \$623.00 represents payment from the Authority Fund account for an on-going cost related to work done in the formerly designated Bethlehem Works / TIF District.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1505 – NORTHAMPTON / LEHIGH COUNTY LSA FUNDS – VETERAN MEMORIAL EXPANSION

Ms. Oscavich indicated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider Resolution Number 1505, which authorizes the RDA to apply for Northampton / Lehigh County Local Share Assessment (LSA) grant funds to be used toward the addition of the Spanish American War to the Persian Gulf War to the existing Steelworkers Veterans Memorial Association War Memorial.

Ms. Karner explained the LSA funds are funds received by specific Counties in Pennsylvania as a result of gaming funds. She noted that the RDA is requesting approval to apply for funds from both the Northampton / Lehigh LSA as well as the Monroe County LSA for the Veteran Memorial Expansion project. She added that the approval to apply for funds from each of these sources requires separate consideration and resolutions.

Ms. Karner added that she was approached by State Representative Samuelson regarding this Steelworkers project and the possibility of the RDA applying for the LSA funds to assist with its financing. Ms. Karner explained that the project will expand the existing memorial to include all who served in all wars ranging from the Spanish American War through the Persian Gulf War.

Ms. Oscavich inquired about the grant process, noting that both the Northampton / Lehigh County and Monroe County applications were for the same project. Ms. Karner explained that funds from each source are allocated to the State Representatives and Senators who evaluate and determine which projects to fund and how much to provide based upon their applications. It was also noted that the funds allocated each year for these LSA awards are based upon the prior gaming revenues. Ms. Karner also noted that there is no match requirement for these funds.

Mr. Spadoni indicated he has a strong commitment to always recognize Veterans for their service to our Country and noted that he fully supports this project.

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

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act (Act 2004-71) as amended has established the Pennsylvania Gaming Local Share Account (“Local Share Account”) under the Commonwealth Financing Agency (CFA) for the purpose of distributing revenue of certain licensed gaming facilities in an orderly and timely fashion to support and enhance community and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through the CFA, provides funding opportunities for eligible public interest projects; community improvement projects; economic development projects as well as reasonable administrative fees with such projects located in Lehigh and Northampton Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem desires to submit an application to the CFA for an economic development project to help add to the existing Steelworkers Veterans Memorial.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem, Northampton County, hereby request a Northampton / Lehigh County Local Share Assessment grant, in the amount of \$50,000, from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the addition of the Spanish American Way through the Persian Gulf War to the existing Steelworkers Veterans Memorial Association War Memorial.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Applicant does hereby designate Alicia Miller Karner, Executive Director, as the official to execute all documents and agreements between the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested funds.

(Resolution Number 1505)

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1506 – MONROE COUNTY LSA FUNDS – VETERAN MEMORIAL EXPANSION

Ms. Oscavich indicated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider Resolution Number 1506, which authorizes the RDA to apply for Monroe County Local Share Assessment (LSA) grant funds to be used toward the addition of the Spanish American War to the Persian Gulf War to the existing Steelworkers Veterans Memorial Association War Memorial.

Ms. Karner noted that this project is the same as was previously described as part of the Resolution Number 1505 discussion except the funds were from the Monroe County allocation of LSA funds.

Following this note, Mr. Heckman presented the following resolution to the Board and moved for its adoption by the Board.

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act (Act 2004-71) as amended has established the Pennsylvania Gaming Local Share Account (“Local Share Account”) under the Commonwealth Financing Agency (CFA) for the purpose of distributing revenue of certain licensed gaming facilities in an orderly and timely fashion to support and enhance community and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through the CFA, provides funding opportunities for eligible public interest projects; community improvement projects; economic development projects as well as reasonable administrative fees with such projects located in Lehigh and Northampton Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem desires to submit an application to the CFA for an economic development project to help add to the existing Steelworkers Veterans Memorial.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem, Northampton County, hereby request a Monroe County Local Share Assessment grant, in the amount of \$50,000, from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the addition of the Spanish American War through the Persian Gulf War to the existing Steelworkers Veterans Memorial Association War Memorial.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Applicant does hereby designate Alicia Miller Karner, Executive Director, as the official to execute all documents and agreements between the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested funds.

(Resolution Number 1506)

Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. As a result, Resolution Number 1506 was unanimously adopted by the RDA.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1507 – NORTHAMPTON / LEHIGH COUNTY LSA FUNDS – BLIGHT CERTIFIED PROPERTY

Ms. Oscavich indicated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider Resolution Number 1507, which authorizes the RDA to apply for Northampton / Lehigh County Local Share Assessment (LSA) grant funds to be used toward the renovation of a blight certified property located in the City of Bethlehem.

Ms. Karner explained that the RDA is requesting funds to be used toward the renovation of blight certified property located within the City of Bethlehem and asked Ms. Bambu-Weiss to provide additional information regarding this project. Ms. Bambu-Weiss indicated that this property has been one the RDA has been working to acquire for some time and anticipates its acquisition to be completed in the near future. She added that the LSA funds are being requested to assist with improvements to areas which will benefit the entire structure such as restoring the electrical, plumbing and other services to the site, structural and steel work, assist with replacement of

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doors and windows as well as the conversion of its composition to individual rental units. She also that because the property is blighted there is always the possibility of conditions being worse than anticipated and, as a result, the funds were also being requested to assist with any such costs which may be discovered and would require immediate attention.

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

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act (Act 2004-71) as amended has established the Pennsylvania Gaming Local Share Account (“Local Share Account”) under the Commonwealth Financing Agency (CFA) for the purpose of distributing revenue of certain licensed gaming facilities in an orderly and timely fashion to support and enhance community and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through the CFA, provides funding opportunities for eligible public interest projects; community improvement projects; economic development projects as well as reasonable administrative fees with such projects located in Lehigh and Northampton Counties; and

WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem desires to submit an application to the CFA for a community improvement and economic development project to be used for the renovation of a blight certified property located in the City of Bethlehem.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem, County of Northampton, hereby request a Northampton / Lehigh County Local Share Assessment grant, in the amount of \$750,000, from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the renovation of a blight certified property located in the City of Bethlehem.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Applicant does hereby designate Alicia Miller Karner, Executive Director, as the official to execute all documents and agreements between the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested funds.

(Resolution Number 1507)

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1508 – MONROE COUNTY LSA FUNDS – BLIGHT CERTIFIED PROPERTY

Ms. Oscavich indicated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider Resolution Number 1508, which authorizes the RDA to apply for Monroe County Local Share Assessment (LSA) grant funds to be used toward the renovation of a blight certified property located in the City of Bethlehem.

Ms. Karner noted that this project is the same as was previously described as part of the Resolution Number 1507 discussion except the funds were from the Monroe County allocation of LSA funds.

Following this note, Mr. Heckman presented the following resolution to the Board and moved for its adoption by the Board.

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act (Act 2004-71) as amended has established the Pennsylvania Gaming Local Share Account (“Local Share Account”) under the Commonwealth Financing Agency (CFA) for the purpose of distributing revenue of certain licensed gaming facilities in an orderly and timely fashion to support and enhance community and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, through the CFA, provides funding opportunities for eligible public interest projects; community improvement projects; economic development projects as well as reasonable administrative fees with such projects located in Lehigh and Northampton Counties; and

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WHEREAS, the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem desires to submit an application to the CFA for a community improvement and economic development project to be used for the renovation of a blight certified property located in the City of Bethlehem.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem, County of Northampton, hereby request a Northampton / Lehigh County Local Share Assessment grant, in the amount of \$750,000, from the Commonwealth Financing Authority to be used for the renovation of a blight certified property located in the City of Bethlehem.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Applicant does hereby designate Alicia Miller Karner, Executive Director, as the official to execute all documents and agreements between the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem and the Commonwealth Financing Authority to facilitate and assist in obtaining the requested funds.

(Resolution Number 1508)

GENERAL DISCUSSION – CENTER STREET PROPERTIES

The RDA Board inquired as to the status of the Center Street properties which were previously discussed and demolished by the City of Bethlehem. Mr. Riskin noted that one of the properties is currently in foreclosure at Northampton County. Ms. Karner indicated that it is her understanding the other property may be facing a similar situation in the future.

Ms. Karner noted that other properties in the neighborhood who exhibited similar signs were sent notification from the City of Bethlehem about their condition with the recommendation to have evaluations done. She added that these owners have had their properties evaluated by engineers and noted that the owners are currently working to have the necessary repairs made. She added that the conditions identified with any of these properties were as severe as those properties which required demolition.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Mr. Heckman made a motion to adjourn the September 28, 2023 RDA Board meeting. Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried. As a result, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Submitted by,

Heather M. Bambu-Weiss
Board Secretary