

**REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM
DECEMBER 17, 2020**

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, December 17, 2020 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:

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
Eric Evans, Business Administrator, City of Bethlehem
Jeff Ward, Reporter from WFMZ Channel 69

RDA Board member, Earl Bethel, contacted the RDA office prior to the meeting and indicated he was unable to participate due to an injury.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Grigsby made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 12, 2020 rescheduled, regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority. The minutes were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. Ms. Oscavich noted a duplication of information which Ms. Bambu-Weiss indicated she would correct for the record. As there were no other changes notes, Ms. Oscavich seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the minutes of the November 12, 2020 rescheduled, regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority were approved.

APPROVAL OF CASH REPORTS

Ms. Grigsby made a motion to approve the cash reports for the months ended August 31, 2020; September 30, 2020; and October 31, 2020. These cash reports were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. As there were no errors or changes reported, Mr. Spadoni seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the cash reports for the months ended August 31, 2020; September 30, 2020; and October 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.

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) **Local Shares Accounts Grant** – Mr. Hanna stated that a decision was made to wait to apply for funding pertaining to the Steel General Office Annex from the Pennsylvania Gaming Local Shares Account. He explained that a decision was made to wait until additional details were available for the remediation needed at the Annex so that the application would be more competitive. He noted that other funds are being sought by the developer at this time for this project and that the LSA application would be submitted during the next submission period in 2021.
- 2) **TIF Projects** – Mr. Hanna provided the Board with an update on the TIF 2020 Projects:
 - a. **National Museum of Industrial History** – Mr. Hanna stated that the plaza area is completed and essentially the entire TIF allocation toward this project has been spent by NMIH. He also noted that there are Bethlehem Parking Authority and Commonwealth grant funds available from the RDA to reimburse NMIH for some of additional project costs. Mr. Hanna noted that the NMIH is planning a dedication ceremony for this addition to occur during Spring/Summer 2021, provide the pandemic situation allows for such a gathering.
 - b. **Steel Stacks Campus – Street Lights** – Mr. Hanna reported that the installation of the new street lights has been started at the Steel Stacks Campus. He noted that approximately sixty (60) Of the lights have been installed to date.
 - c. **Hoover-Mason Trestle** – Mr. Hanna noted that the modifications to the Hoover-Mason Trestle plantings have been completed. He also noted that the maintenance issues have been completed at the HMT as well.
 - d. **Bethlehem Landing Visitor Center / Stock House** – Mr. Hanna stated that the interior work has been completed at the Bethlehem Landing Visitor Center. He noted that the exterior and masonry work needing to be done will be done when the weather allows. Mr. Hanna anticipates this work to be completed during Spring 2021.
 - e. **Steel Stacks Campus – Road Work** – Mr. Hanna stated that the road work at the Steel Stacks Campus has been completed. He added that since money was saved some additional crosswalks may be able to be installed and noted that he is waiting for estimated costs for such work.
 - f. **Founders Way Entrance Island** – Mr. Hanna noted that the work regarding the landscaping at the Founders Way Entrance Island has been put on hold until pricing is received for additional crosswalks at the Steel Stacks Campus and until the work at the Visitor Center is near completion. Mr. Hanna noted that this project is a low priority project but added that work can be done if the finances are available.
- 3) **Skyline West Project** – Mr. Hanna stated that prior to the meeting he and Mr. Riskin were informed that the deed has been received from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Mr. Hanna explained that a settlement will occur next week at Lehigh County to transfer the land parcel in the Skyline West project area to the RDA. Mr. Hanna also explained that after the RDA owns this property it will be sold to Skyline West since its ownership is necessary for the Skyline West project.
- 4) **RDA Audit – 2019-2020 Fiscal Period** – Mr. Hanna stated that the RDA audit for the fiscal period ended June 30, 2020 has been started. He noted that Ms. Bambu-Weiss has been provided the RDA auditors with the information they have requested to date and that she is the primary contact for matters involving the audit as it progresses.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 1484

Mr. Heckman stated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval Resolution Number 1484, which authorizes the RDA to enter into an agreement with the City of Bethlehem for an allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the 2020 CDBG allocation.

Mr. Hanna indicated that the RDA receives and allocation of CDBG funds each year from the City of Bethlehem to reimburse the RDA for costs associated with Ms. Bambu-Weiss providing various services to the City of Bethlehem CDBG programs. Mr. Hanna added that the total 2020 allocation amount is \$10,000.

Mr. Spadoni presented the following resolution to the Board and moved for its adoption by the Board.

WHEREAS, the City of Bethlehem is undertaking and carrying out a Community Development Program utilizing funds made available by the Federal Government under the provisions of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended;

WHEREAS, the City has designated the Department of Community and Economic Development to undertake planning, execution, and administration of eligible activities in conjunction with the Community Development Program; and

WHEREAS, the City, acting through the Director of Community and Economic Development, has previously authorized the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem to act as its agent within certain redevelopment; housing and Community Development Block Grant eligible programs as requested by the Department of Community and Economic Development; and

WHEREAAS, the City will provide reimbursements to the Authority pertaining to various administrative costs generally described as Redevelopment Authority Administration and Delivery costs, acquisition and demolition costs, and property maintenance costs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem hereby approves the attached Agreement with the City of Bethlehem which provides funds up to \$10,000 for various administrative costs generally described as Redevelopment Authority Administration and delivery costs, acquisition and demolition costs, and property maintenance costs and which the Chairman or Vice-Chairman shall be authorized to sign said Agreement, same to be attested to by the Secretary.

(Resolution Number 1484)

Ms. Grigsby seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted by the Board. As a result, Resolution Number 1484 was unanimously adopted by the RDA Board.

APPROVAL OF INVOICES – DECEMBER 2020

Mr. Heckman stated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval the invoices / reimbursements as outlined on the December 2020 invoice summary.

Mr. Spadoni made a motion to approve of the payments / invoices as outlined on the December 2020 invoice summary. Mr. Bethel seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved and the following payments were approved:

- 1) \$147,215.80 represents costs associated with On-Going and Maintenance Costs and payment of such costs to be made from the Authority Fund.
- 2) \$30,941.00 will be paid toward the TIF allocations to the National Museum of Industrial History (\$110,000.00 total authorized allocation; a balance available of \$2,593.63 remains available to NMIH from the allocation)

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- 3) \$4,290.44 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Administrative Expense Fund for various administrative costs associated with overall / general TIF project work.
- 4) \$12,086.07 represents reimbursement to the RDA from the Authority Fund account for various costs related to the Bethlehem Works / TIF District.

Mr. Spadoni asked Mr. Hanna about the status of the ArtsQuest lease for the Bethlehem Landing Visitor Center space. Mr. Hanna indicated that the lease was not able to be renegotiated but noted that almost all costs associated with the property is the responsibility of ArtsQuest per the terms of the lease.

Mr. Hanna stated that in the past the RDA has been lenient with enforcement of the lease due to the availability of TIF funds; however, with those funds no longer available ArtsQuest will be required to incur all costs per the lease terms. Mr. Hanna also noted that the only items which remain the responsibility of the RDA would be repairs to major capital items which is the reason the RDA is undertaking the roof and water seepage issue with the 2020 TIF allocation of funds.

Mr. Spadoni stated that he wants to ensure that ArtsQuest is clear the RDA no longer has any funds to assist them with the maintenance of the Visitor Center and per the terms of the lease costs associated with the general maintenance of this property is their responsibility. Mr. Hanna stated that the concerns of Mr. Spadoni have been noted and will be included in the minutes.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES – STATE OF EMERGENCY / NATURAL DISASTER / PANDEMIC

Mr. Heckman stated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval the accounting policies and procedures for the RDA when a State of Emergency / Natural Disaster / Pandemic occurs. Mr. Heckman indicated a desire to postpone any decision on this matter until more time is available to review the proposed addition to the RDA Accounting Policies and Procedures

Mr. Hanna explained that this proposed addition is the result of the RDA having prepared an Accounting Policies and Procedures manual and the recent pandemic has resulted in modifications in the way the RDA was able to conduct its financial operations. Mr. Hanna turned the discussion to Ms. Bambu-Weiss to provide more background information regarding this matter.

Ms. Bambu-Weiss explained that the RDA auditors suggested it develop an Accounting Policies and Procedures manual to detail the mechanics for the various aspects of financial operations by the RDA. She noted that included in this manual are instructions on performing any financial oriented task, including the RDA procurement policy, gift policy, bidding policy and even check processing and depositing of received funds. Ms. Bambu-Weiss explained that the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the RDA financial operations in ways that were not previously considered. As a result, the proposed addition to the RDA Accounting Policies and Procedures addresses the way to financially operate should such a situation occur again in the future.

Mr. Hanna suggested Ms. Bambu-Weiss forward a copy of the existing Accounting Policies and Procedures to all RDA Board members so they can review what currently is contained in them and can gain insight into how the addition would ‘fit’ into the process. Ms. Bambu-Weiss indicated she would forward the existing manual to all Board members after the meeting.

Mr. Spadoni made a motion to table the Accounting Policies and Procedures addition of a State of Emergency / Natural Disaster / Pandemic section for a later time. Ms. Grigsby seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously adopted and the Accounting Policies and Procedures addition of a State of Emergency / Natural Disaster / Pandemic section would be reviewed and discussed at a future RDA meeting.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Future RDA Activities – Mr. Heckman asked Mr. Hanna if he or any of the Board members wanted to discuss their recent meetings with the Mayor and City Administration about the RDA and post-TIF projects and activities. Mr. Hanna stated that he would like to have such a discussion in the new year when he has additional information available regarding the RDA finances, ownership of properties, and such. Mr. Heckman and the Board agreed to have such discussions in 2021.

2021 RDA Meeting Schedule – Mr. Riskin asked the RDA Board about their thoughts about the meeting time and dates for 2021. The RDA Board unanimously agreed to set the 2021 meetings for the fourth (4th) Thursday of each month at 5:00 P.M. These meetings will occur in Town Hall, at Bethlehem City Hall., or virtually depending upon the pandemic situation requirements at the time of each meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no further business, Ms. Oscavich made a motion to adjourn this December 17, 2020 RDA Board meeting. Ms. Grigsby seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried. As a result, the meeting adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

Submitted by,

Heather M. Bambu-Weiss
Board Secretary