

**REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF BETHLEHEM  
MARCH 23, 2023**

Town Hall at 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, March 23, 2023 at 5:00 P.M. 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:

Ronald Heckman  
Tracy Samuelson

The Chairperson called a quorum present.

Also present were:

Alicia Karner, Executive Director  
Hillary Kwiatek, City Council Liaison to the RDA  
Heather M. Bambu-Weiss, Board Secretary  
Michael E. Riskin, Esq., Solicitor

RDA Board Member, Christopher Spadoni, contacted the RDA prior to the meeting and indicated he was unable to attend the meeting. Board Member, Earl Bethel, was not present at this meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Heckman made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2023 regular meeting of the Redevelopment Authority. The minutes were emailed earlier to each member of the Board. Ms. Samuelson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the minutes of the January 26, 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.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Ms. Oscavich turned the meeting over to Ms. Karner for her Executive Director Report. Ms. Karner provided the following update to the Board:

**New Board Member** – Ms. Karner introduced and welcomed the newest member to the RDA Board, Tracy Samuelson. Ms. Karner reminded the Board that Ms. Samuelson has replaced Ms. Grigsby who resigned when she was appointed to the City of Bethlehem Zoning Hearing Board. Ms. Samuelson introduced herself to the Board and expressed her excitement to be a member of the RDA.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

**Blight Update** – Ms. Karner explained that Ms. Oscavich requested the RDA Board be provided an update on the 2017 Blight Study done by the City of Bethlehem, in partnership with the RDA. Ms. Karner provided the Board members copies of the summary of the Bethlehem Blight Betterment Initiative - Blight Study of 2018. Ms. Karner highlighted portions of the study during her presentation to the Board. Ms. Karner noted that importance of and the critical tool the RDA has with addressing blight in the community.

Mr. Heckman asked if the median sale prices have increased since the study was conducted. Mr. Karner noted that while the categories of the market value analysis (MVA) from the study remains applicable, the affordability of housing in the City of Bethlehem has drastically changed with practically none of it currently being affordable. data remains applicable, indicated that sale prices have increased approximately 60% since the study was done.

Mr. Heckman expressed his concerns about affordable housing in the City and entire Lehigh Valley as well as the impact all the housing development has had upon the infrastructure of the City and Valley. Ms. Karner indicated the role of the RDA with more challenging properties is important since the abilities of the RDA can put more properties back into a productive state. She noted one such role is the RDA being a land bank which may be explored in the future.

Ms. Samuelson questioned what the quality-of-life ticketing is that is referred to in the blight study. Ms. Karner explained that the quality-of-life ticketing process allows tickets to be written for various maintenance and other property issues such as overgrown grass, shrub trimming, garbage removal and such. She added that the City has evaluated this process as well as other ticketing processes the City utilizes to determine if the process should be implemented based upon the results obtained. Ms. Oscavich noted that sometimes the goal of the process may be of greater value than the fees received for noncompliance.

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 1503**

Ms. Oscavich indicated that the RDA Board has been asked to review and consider for approval Resolution Number 1503, which authorizes the RDA to enter into a contract with the City of Bethlehem for 2022 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. She noted that this resolution authorizes the RDA to enter into an Amendment No. 1 to this Contract, which extends the contract period until December 31, 2023.

Ms. Karner noted that some details of the contract presented to the Board for review and approval at this meeting are being finalized with the Department of Community & Economic Development and its consultant for the CDBG program. She noted that if approved the contract and amendment would not be signed until all details are finalized and the RDA Solicitor reviews the final document.

Following this presentation, Mr. Heckman 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 Department 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

**BETHLEHEM REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**MINUTES – MARCH 23, 2023**  
**PAGE – 3**

**WHEREAS**, the City will provide reimbursement to the Authority pertaining to blight remediation program delivery costs.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Bethlehem hereby approves the attached Contract and Amendment No. 1 with the City of Bethlehem which provides funds up to \$35,000 as reimbursement for costs incurred as part of the blight remediation process and which the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson shall be authorized to sign said Contract, same to be attested to by the Secretary.  
(Resolution Number 1503)

Ms. Samuelson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. As a result, the RDA Board unanimously adopted Resolution Number 1503 with it being noted that the Contract and Amendment No. 1 will be executed upon the receipt of a finalized documents and after such documents are reviewed and approved by the RDA Solicitor.

**ADJOURNMENT**

As there was no further business, Mr. Heckman made a motion to adjourn the March 23, 2023 RDA Board meeting. Ms. Samuelson seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously carried. As a result, the meeting adjourned at 5:42 P.M.

Submitted by,

Heather M. Bambu-Weiss  
Board Secretary