



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

166 Boulder Drive, Suite 104 | Fitchburg, MA 01420  
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## MEETING MINUTES

February 16, 2021  
Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority Office  
166 Boulder Drive, Suite 104 East, Fitchburg, Massachusetts

*Meeting held via Zoom*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom Donnelly, Chair  
Jay Roy, Vice Chair  
Charles Caron, Treasurer  
Bud Leonhardt, Member  
Laura Bayless, PhD, Member

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Tristan Taylor, Fitchburg Fiber Co.  
Andrew DeChristopher, Fitchburg Fiber Co.  
Tom Skierwarski, City of Fitchburg, Exec. Dir., Community  
& Economic Development  
Mary Jo Bohart, City of Fitchburg, Dir. Of Economic  
Development  
Meagen Donoghue, Executive Director, FRA  
Tony Amico, Facilities Manager  
Jennifer Zumwalt, FRA Consultant

### 1. **READING AND APPROVAL JANUARY 19, 2021 ANNUAL AND REGULAR MEETINGS AND JANUARY 27, FEBRUARY 4 AND 11, 2021 MEETING MINUTES MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Caron motioned to accept the meeting minutes as amended from January 19, 2021 Annual and Regular Meetings, and January 27, February 4, and 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes and enter them into the FRA's minute's book. Seconded by Mr. Leonhardt. The motion carried by 5-0 vote.

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## **2. BUDGET AND FINANCE**

### **(1) Approval of 2021 Budget**

Ms. Zumwalt summarized the proposed 2021 Budget and tenant CAM charges. She suggested when new lease opportunities become available to inform the prospective tenants of the expenses and will increase by three (3) percent annually. It was also discussed that the FRA would inform tenants of when capital projects occur prior to, rather than lumped into one summary at the end of the year.

Ms. Donoghue requested to earmark \$100,000 to create a revolving fund in the coming year.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the 2021 Budget as proposed and earmark \$100,000 for the creation of a revolving fund. Seconded by Mr. Leonhardt. Motion carried 5-0.

### **(2) Summary Report**

Ms. Zumwalt state the bills were all on normal course and asked to vote as amended.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the to approve payment of the attached list of bills as amended. Seconded by Mr. Leonhardt. Motion carried 5-0.

## **3. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **A. Zoning Updates**

#### **(1) Tom Skierwarski, Executive Director of Planning & Community Development**

Mr. Skierwarski summarized changes shown in an updated zoning map to the Board and explained the upcoming timeline. He noted the zoning updates were in the "home stretch" with the Planning Board and then it was off to the Legislative Affairs Committee of City Council. From there the entire City Council would be voting to approve the updates. Mr. Skierwarski stated he was still accepting comments and feedback and would welcome any from the Board.

*Agenda taken out of order.*

### **B. Putnam Place**

#### **(1) Facilities Update**

Mr. Amico updated the Board with DRS's proposed work on their garage door.

(2) **Fitchburg Fiber Co.**

Mr. Taylor and Mr. DeChristopher provided a PowerPoint presentation outlining their company which seeks to provide quality internet to all Fitchburg residents. After providing their business model, they outlined the use of the proposed leasable space; which includes the former City IT service room and office area, as well as use of the roof for their transmitters. Fitchburg Fiber is also proposing free internet and IT services to the FRA in exchange for the use of the space.

Mr. Leonhardt asked about line of sight with the roof equipment because of the various hills surrounding the property. Mr. Taylor responded with indicating that Putnam Place is just one of a few other proposed places, including Wallace and Sundial Towers to reach other areas within the downtown corridor.

Mr. Leonhardt asked about the market area. Mr. Taylor indicated they did a population study and found the downtown corridor of Fitchburg was the densest area, therefore this area would be their starting point, but they hope to expand at some point.

Mr. Caron asked if they have to dig underground. Mr. Taylor said since the City left their IT infrastructure, they may not have to install new fiber.

Mr. Caron asked about proposed internet speeds. Mr. DeChristopher explained their proposed speed and pricing structure.

Mr. Caron asked about the makeup of the rooftop system. Mr. DeChristopher explained the system was a twenty (20) foot tall Rohn 25G tower, which will have security cameras installed around the system. They will also be installing a back-up generator.

Mr. Leonhardt asked if the tower would penetrate into the roof. Mr. DeChristopher said they would attach the tower to a raised portion of the building. Mr. Amico added that there is already a tower installed on the roof in the same sort of fashion.

Mr. Taylor talked about the direct exchange of the swap of space for internet, web hosting, and IT services. Mr. Leonhardt asked why the FRA swap service would when the exchange was not equal. Mr. Taylor indicated they would be open to other negotiations.

Mr. Caron, referring to an aspect of the Fitchburg Fiber proposed lease that was distributed to the Board asked what if they sell the business? Mr.

Taylor indicated that was not their intention and they do not want to sell at any point.

Mr. Leonhardt asked if the company was for-profit or a corporation. Mr. Taylor indicated the company is currently set up as an LLC, but they may be an S-Corp in the future.

Mr. Leonhardt stated the swap of a ten (10) year lease in exchange for services may be too much.

Dr. Bayless proposed a three (3) year lease to allow them to get up and running.

Mr. Caron asked about how will utilities be divided. Mr. Amico indicated he had Batallis, our electrical contractor come in and identified that they can subtract from EMON DEMON, which is not a complicated project.

Mr. Donnelly stated the FRA should be more business friendly because of the focus on Fitchburg.

(3) **Eden Edibles**

Ms. Donoghue asked if they wanted to come to an agreement on the Letter of Intent. Mr. Caron suggested the Board allow a six (6) month build out period, then charge \$10.00/sf for the first two (2) years. On the third year, the rent would increase \$.25/sf each year moving forward.

**C. FRA Property Updates**

(1) **Costar/Loopnet**

Ms. Donoghue explained she had a presentation from a Costar/Loopnet representative to have the FRA properties listed on the site and discussed with the Board the various pricing tiers. After a spirited discussion on the pros and cons of the site, the Board asked to table the discussion.

(2) **520 Main Street**

Ms. Donoghue updated the Board with the wire transfer went through and is now in escrow and discussed the complications with the condo association documents at the Registry of Deeds.

(3) **49 Snow Street**

Ms. Donoghue explained that the prospective buyer, per an earlier FRA agreement, set out to remove the oil tank from the property, but when they found it was filled with concrete, it was decided that it would be

buried deeper. The proposed buyer paid for the work, and is sending the FRA the bill.

(4) **0 Airport Road**

Ms. Donoghue indicated Attorney Erb drafted the Disposition Agreement and is under review by the proposed buyer's attorney.

**4. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

Ms. Donoghue indicated she spent the previous Friday with State Senator Cronin, State Representative Kushmerek, and Mr. Skierwarski, where she drove them around to the various FRA properties and discussed how they can help in their new capacities.

**5. ADJOURMENT**

Mr. Caron made a motion and seconded by Mr. Leonhardt to go into Executive Session and not to return to the regular meeting at 9:02 A.M. The motion carried 5-0.

**6. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:** March 16, 2021

Respectfully submitted,

Meagen P. Donoghue  
Executive Director