



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

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MEETING MINUTES

August 23, 2022

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

Meeting held in person and via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Caron, Chair
Jay Roy, Vice Chair
Laura Bayless, PhD, Treasurer

OTHERS PRESENT: Meagen Donoghue, Executive Director, FRA
Tony Amico, Facilities Manager, FRA
Sarah Stebulis, Business Administrator, FRA

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Caron called meeting to order at 7:36 a.m.

2. READING AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES FROM JULY 19, 2022

Mr. Caron motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from July 19, 2022 and enter them into the FRA's minute's book. Seconded by Mr. Roy. The motion carried by 3-0 vote.

3. BUDGET AND FINANCE

(1) Summary Report

Ms. Donoghue stated all bills were on normal course. There was a discussion about in the future if tenants request a second copy of bills or documents which have already provided, that the FRA would charge an administrative fee for such documents.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the payment of the attached list of bills. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

Ms. Stebulis explained the status of creating a separate interest-bearing account for the deposit made by DRS in 2006. The account has been set up at Rollstone Bank, and DRS would like back interest owed to them from those years. After calculating what that would be at their current interest rate, the money due is \$400. Ms. Stebulis proposes offering \$500 to cover any fluctuations in interest rates over those years.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the payment/transfer of \$500 to in owed interest to DRS into their newly created bank account. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. 1 Wood Place

- (1) Vote to amend the Urban Renewal Plan to add 1 Wood Place

Ms. Donoghue stated that in order to move forward with the process of making an offer on 1 Wood Place, the Board needs to vote to amend our Urban Renewal Plan to add the property. This project has a lot of interest from Monty Tech, who would like to partner with the FRA to work on the building's masonry and ADA accessibility.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the addition of 1 Wood Place to the Urban Renewal Plan. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

B. River Styx

- (1) Discuss Mechanics Lien in regards to FRA Lease

We have received a letter from an attorney threatening a Mechanics Lien on River Styx for non-payment. Ms. Donoghue has been in touch with our attorney who stated that they needed to be put on notice as per their lease, no liens can be held on any property or part of their business. Ms. Donoghue called Jackie Cullen to inquire about the status and how they are proceeding and Ms. Cullen told her that they are working with their own attorney to come to an agreement, and that no lien is in place as of now. Mr. Caron asked Ms. Donoghue to write a formal letter of notice about our being contacted about this legal matter and that their lease states that no lien can be present, and to send via registered mail.

C. New FRA Grants

- (1) Review and Approve

Ms. Donoghue stated that she is still developing the framework for the \$50,000 grant program, but that she created new pamphlets for the Main Street Housing Program and the Design Grant Program. She would like to make these public and do a press release. Mr. Roy asked if the website address could be simplified on the pamphlet.

Dr. Bayless motioned to approve design and content of the Main Street Housing Program and Design Grant program with discussed edits. Seconded by Mr. Caron. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

D. Funding Requests

- (1) Fitchburg Veteran's Council

Ms. Donoghue stated that the Fitchburg Veteran's Council is looking for a donation toward their 5K and we have previously donated \$1000. Dr. Bayless suggested that we offer the race bibs that we receive with the donation to our tenants or the public as an outreach gesture.

Mr. Roy motioned to approve the donation of \$1000 to the Fitchburg Veteran's 5K. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

- (2) Fitchburg Open Studios

Ms. Donoghue stated that she also received a request from the Fitchburg Cultural Council for their 3rd Annual Fitchburg Open Studios. They do not have set donation levels or clear list of what a donation gives you as far as advertising. Dr. Bayless believes we should support the arts in Fitchburg, as they will be a huge factor in the city's redevelopment. Ms. Donoghue also stated that she could create a google form for future funding requests to know exactly what

local organizations are seeking from a donation. Dr. Bayless suggested a donation of \$750 based on the information we could find from their website.

Mr. Roy motioned to approve the donation of \$750 to Fitchburg Open Studios. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Facilities Update

Mr. Amico discussed that there was a maintenance ticket opened by DRS for leaks into their facility during a heavy rain, and he explained that it was due to how the drains are designed and unfortunately when rain comes down too fast, there can be overflow which cannot be remedied. He stated that the side windows by the Registry of Deeds have been repaired and the front windows are currently being worked on. It has been discovered that the reason for the leaks was that the previous windows were incorrectly installed. He also stated that Neon's door is being fixed as well and we are using two different companies to gain a knowledge of their work and so we hopefully can have more options of companies to call on in the future.

Mr. Amico stated that he got 3 quotes for the roof work, the lowest being \$182,000 for 16,250 sq. feet of roof repair which will be a 20 year roof. Mr. Caron asked when they can start and how long the work will take to complete. Mr. Amico said he would have to ask them, but he believes they could begin soon as long as they are able to get the materials. The Board asked Mr. Amico to look deeper into reviews of the two companies that came in at the lowest pricing and go with the better company, up to a \$190,000 price point.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the repair of the roof up to the cost of \$190,000. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. The motion carried by 3-0 vote.

Mr. Amico stated that this roof repair is only for 1/8 of the portion of our building's roof, and the rest of the roof will also need to be replaced in the next 1-2 years. Mr. Roy stated that we should starting planning on the replacement of the remainder of the roof within the next 5 years. The Board asked Mr. Amico to come up with a roof maintenance plan which we can use in budgeting over the next couple years to earmark money for this maintenance.

B. Business Administrator's Update

Ms. Stebulis stated that she is currently working on the next FRA Connector newsletter. She also took a course on QuickBooks through the Chamber of Commerce which was very helpful in learning more about functions we haven't previously used, such as annual budgeting. She believes utilizing the software to its fullest extent will allow for more streamlined and accurate financial reporting to the Board. She also updated the Board on the need to get current staff and Board members named on our Worker's Credit Union account, and that is something she and Ms. Donoghue will work with previous Board members to complete.

Ms. Stebulis expressed her interest in applying to participate in the North Central Chamber of Commerce's Community Leadership Institute. She stated that she thought it would be a great way to get more connected to the community and other organizations that serve Fitchburg. Ms. Donoghue agrees that it would be beneficial to her role and to the FRA. Mr. Roy and Dr. Bayless agreed that it was a worthwhile opportunity.

Dr. Bayless motioned to approve sponsorship and participation of Sarah Stebulis in the Community Leadership Institute, for a cost of \$1100, if accepted. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

C. Executive Director’s Report

Ms. Donoghue has been in touch with the Fitchburg Public Schools Maintenance Department about the space we sent a Letter of Intent regarding. They have a new manager who was unaware of the status of looking at this site and is coming next week to look at the space. The original Letter of Intent is still valid.

As of now, the Fitchburg Public Market has not signed the Letter of Intent drafted, even though they have been actively advertising the market and site at Putnam Place. The City wants all the vacant space for the Library to move into while their building is being renovated. Ms. Donoghue asked Mr. Rainford for the signed letter, and still has not received it. The City is being persistent and has inquired about the space numerous times. Ms. Donoghue has been committed to the Fitchburg Public Market coming, so she has honored her commitment to their need for the space and has consistently told the city the space is not available. The Public Market is now considering doing pop-ups in the unfinished space and is willing to pay rent and utilities for that space while in use. The City has 58 days to find a library space, and although they have received 3 responses from their RFP, none fully fits their needs. They need 14,000 square feet of space, and the entire space the Public Market planned to take is approximately 16,000 square feet. Mr. Caron suggesting letting the Public Market have the 6,000 sq feet of unfinished space and offer the remaining 10,000 square feet to the library with a hard deadline of 2 years occupancy. Ms. Donoghue also mentioned that historically public libraries deal with a population of homeless residents who linger in and around the building, and that is something we need to consider for our other tenants. Mr. Caron stated that the city has really been pushing the FRA to house the library and are making it seem like they won’t take no for an answer. By doing this, they are forcing us to not fulfill our mission by stalling redevelopment we are working on in the downtown area.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. To discuss and possibly vote on the potential purchase of 1022 Main Street

Ms. Donoghue described the two appraisals that have come back for the property. Attorney Christine Tree is doing a currently performing a title search on the property for the FRA.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Roy motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 8:50 a.m. Seconded by Mr. Caron. The motion carried 3-0.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: September 20, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis
Business Administrator