



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

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MEETING MINUTES

November 15, 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, Treasurer
Laura O’Kane, Member

OTHERS PRESENT: Jay Bry, Fitchburg State University
Kristin Patenaude, Power Options
Patrick Mahoney, Guardian Energy Management
Liz Murphy, Director of Housing and Development, City of Fitchburg
Mary Jo Bohart, Economic Development Director, City of Fitchburg
(arrived at 7:42 a.m.)
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 7:33 a.m.

2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 18, 2022

Dr. Bayless motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from October 18, 2022 and enter them into the FRA’s minute’s book. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. The motion carried by 4-0 vote.

READING AND APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 1, 2022

Mr. Caron motioned to accept the executive session meeting minutes from November 1, 2022 and enter them into the FRA’s minute’s book. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Dr. Bayless Abstained. The motion carried by 3-0 vote.

Mr. Caron motioned to release the executive session meeting minutes from November 1, 2022. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. Dr. Bayless Abstained. The motion held by 3-0 vote.

3. BUDGET AND FINANCE

A. Summary Report

Ms. Stebulis stated all bills were on normal course. She stated that there was one addition to the list of bills to pay, which is an invoice for Sitka Creations for \$60 for our monthly website maintenance.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the payment of the attached list of bills with addition of Sitka invoice. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

B. Discuss and vote to switch CD account

Ms. Stebulis requested more information from Rollstone bank regarding our current CD’s rate and commitment upon finding our current rate is significantly below what is offered today. They have offered us a new 11-month CD at a rate of 3.06%. We would have to break our current term and would be charged a penalty of approximately \$300, but we would make that back and more in one month. By switching rates, we stand to make approximately \$6,000 per year, versus \$900 with our current rate.

C. Discuss transfer of savings account

We have finally finalized the transfer of our Workers Account to our current Staff and Board representatives. At this point we can now change banks and see what competitive rates are. Enterprise Bank has offered us a rate of 1.5% on a Money Market, which is better than our current 1.24% with Workers. We have also had months of difficulty with the customer service at Workers, which has spurred the interest in moving the account.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the change in the Rollstone Bank CD to the new 11-month 3.06% rate, and to close the savings account at Workers Credit Union and move the funds to a money market at Enterprise Bank. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Fitchburg State University

1. Jay Bry to Present Memorandum of Understanding for Parking Deck
Dr. Bayless recused herself from the entirety of this discussion.

Mr. Bry presented a Memorandum of Understanding between the FRA and FSU for a parking deck downtown. In the MOU, the FRA will cover the outstanding mortgage balances of the remaining three (3) lots/buildings. Mr. Roy asked if the remaining balances was appropriately \$100,000 and Mr. Bry confirmed. Mr. Roy asked which buildings were coming down and Mr. Bry stated that it would be 15 Central Street, the current vacant lot and the adjacent lot to the theater. Ms. Donoghue stated that the FRA would act as the project manager in order to apply for the Mass Works grants and for the building of the parking deck, and once completed the FRA will give it back to Fitchburg State University. Mr. Roy asked what was the chance that we will secure the grant and what happens if we are not selected for the grant. Ms. Donoghue stated that the grants are competitive, but since this is just an MOU, any land transfer or payment would only be made after grants are secured. If they are not secured, no land transfer or payment from or to FRA is necessary. Ms. O’Kane

and Mr. Roy expressed interest in looking at the plans for the parking deck, and Ms. O’Kane added that she believes this is an important partnership between the FRA and FSU.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the Memorandum of Understanding. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Dr. Bayless abstained. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

Mr. Roy motioned to approve Ms. Donoghue to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Board. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. Dr. Bayless abstained. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

B. Car Charging Stations

1. Kristin Patenaude from Power Options to present.

Ms. Patenaude gave an introduction about Power Options services and negotiated discounts for members. She stated that level 2 charging stations are the most affordable and highly available at this time, and that there are also numerous state, federal and utility incentives. An example of pricing difference is a 4-port level 2 station costs about \$99,000 while a 2-port fast charge station costs about \$121,000. Mr. Caron asked what the software they use is. Ms. Patenaude stated that the software allows you many options to manage your stations, and costs range from \$250-300 per year, per port. There are also maintenance costs and yearly contracts that can reduce the maintenance over numerous years. Mr. Caron stated that there is a gap for fast charging stations from Leominster to Gardner and that all of the state funding ran out very quickly last time it was available since fast charging is in high demand. Ms. Patenaude stated that her opinion was that level 2 chargers seem more in line with FRA’s location. Mr. Roy agreed. Dr. Bayless added that she thought it was short-sighted to install level 2 chargers and thought we should start with the fast-charging stations. The Board talked about the option of one of each.

Ms. Patenaude stated that it would be harder to recover the cost of the fast chargers as it effects electric kilowatt usage and the high usage periods on which you’re billed on. Mr. Caron stated that if the car charging spikes our electric usage for the entire building that will be a huge problem, so any units will need to be on new, separate electrical panels.

Kristin Patenaude and Patrick Mahoney left the meeting at 8:42 a.m.

The discussion of car charging stations continued. Ms. Donoghue mentioned that there will need to be a LSP on site to make sure soil isn’t contaminated and to create a plan if it is. Dr. Bayless said that she is not in favor of installing one of each type of charger and that we should pick one and move forward with it. Ms. Donoghue suggested starting with one fast charger and data test how in demand it is and run the piping to expand to more if the demand is there and additional grant funding becomes available. Ms. Murphy stated that perhaps there is a way the FRA and City can partner to expand the program and add more chargers to the downtown. Dr. Bayless stated that she thinks we should start with 2 stations if we are going through the process of getting one. She stated that the 2 charging stations at FSU are always in use, and she said Jay Bry is in charge of them. Ms. Donoghue stated she would reach out to Mr. Bry for more information about the maintenance and software.

C. FRA URP Identified Properties

1. Prioritization of URP identified properties, subgroup

Ms. Donoghue stated that she would like the Board to form a subgroup to prioritize the URP identified properties, and it would also be great to have information on what the city

views as priority properties. Ms. Bohart stated that many difficulties come from who owns the blighted properties. Ms. Murphy agreed that it would be great to work together on this.

D. Library / Fitchburg Fiber

1. Revision of Square Footage
Discussion is no longer necessary as a solution was agreed upon before the meeting.

E. FRA Design Grant

1. Review and approval of application from FATV
FATV has applied for a \$2,000 Design Grant. Ms. Donoghue disclosed that she is on their Board of Directors. She explained that they are in the process of moving their office and studio to the Rollstone Building and working on a full buildout, for which they are applying.

Mr. Caron motioned to approve the granting of \$2,000 Design Grant to FATV. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

F. Funding Requests

1. MOC – 400 Children
Making Opportunities Count is looking to raise \$10,000 for gifts for 400 children this holiday season. It is a regional program serving our area. Mr. Caron suggested a donation of \$1,000.

Mr. Caron motioned to donate \$1,000 to MOC – 400 Children campaign. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Facilities Update

Mr. Amico stated that a plumber has been secured to flush the DRS roof drains. Mr. Caron asked for an update on the condition of the roof. Mr. Amico stated that the entire roof does need to be done. Mr. Caron asked if the part over DRS that was completed recently when down to the subsurface and Mr. Amico confirmed that it did. Mr. Caron asked if there were any additional insulation options, Mr. Amico didn't believe so.

Mr. Amico talked about needing to move or get rid of cubicles in the units where the Library will be occupying, as well documents and storage in the raw space we are looking to rent. Mr. Roy stated we should have a dedicated space for document storage for the future.

Mr. Amico said that glycol has not yet been put in the system yet, as he was waiting for prices to come down on materials and they never did. He also said the fence out back is being repaired. Mr. Caron asked if Mr. Amico can figure out how to separate the parking lot and overhead building signs so each unit has control over their own signage.

Ms. O'Kane left the meeting at 9:23 a.m.

Mr. Amico stated that the old Putnam Place blueprints are being converted for our use in a new program that required a one-time purchase, which is similar to Auto CAD. He will be able to adjust measurements and major components of the prints to reflect the space now.

B. Business Administrator's Update

Ms. Stebulis stated that much of her update was covered in the financial report. She is working on researching and updating the current Tenant and Employee handbooks.

C. Executive Director's Update

Ms. Donoghue is working on the MEPA approval process for the Urban Renewal Plan, which has been a challenging process. She said that MRPC won a Brownfields Award and asked the FRA to give them 3 properties to consider, for which she provided 1022 Main Street, 846 Main Street, and 866 Main Street.

She has had some interest in the vacant suites 102 & 103. She is talking to a Brazilian food wholesaler who is already established in the Worcester area and looking to expand, as well as an interested party looking to build out lab space.

Attorney Erb has written a new Purchase and Sale for 200 Boulder Drive for the price of \$900,000, since the \$100,000 deposit has been paid. It is the hope that this reduced price will help secure funding and grants. The appraisal through Fidelity Bank was not usable. There is a 3-month deadline to finalize the P&S, and if that is not completed in that timeframe, the contract with them will end.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Caron motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 9:51 a.m. Seconded by Mr. Roy. The motion carried 3-0.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: December 20, 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis
Business Administrator