



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

166 Boulder Drive, Suite 104 | Fitchburg, MA 01420
978.345.9602 | www.fitchburgredevelopment.com

MEETING MINUTES

May 16, 2023

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

Meeting held in person and via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Caron, Chair
Maribel Cruz, Treasurer
Laura Bayless
Laura O’Kane

OTHERS PRESENT: Russ Karlstad, Director of Facilities, City of Fitchburg
Tony DiLuzio, City of Fitchburg
Matt Bruan, City of Fitchburg
Deb Hinkle, Director, Fitchburg Public Library
Desiree Moreno, River Styx
Jackie Cullen, River Styx
MaryJo Bohart, Community Development Director, City of Fitchburg
Liz Murphy, Director of Housing and Development, City of Fitchburg
Meagen Donoghue, Executive Director, FRA
Sarah Stebulis, Business Administrator, FRA

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Caron called meeting to order at 7:37 a.m.

2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 21, 2023 AND EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM: APRIL 27 & MAY 9, 2023.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from April 21, 2023 and enter them into the FRA’s minute’s book, and accept the minutes from the Executive Session Meetings on April 27 & May 9, 2023. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. The motion carried by 3-0 vote.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to release the minutes from Executive Session Meetings on April 27 & May 9, 2023. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. The motion held by 0-3 vote.

Mirabel Cruz arrived at 7:40 a.m.

3. BUDGET AND FINANCE

A. Summary Report

Ms. Stebulis stated all bills were on normal course.

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

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Fitchburg Public Library

1. Discussion on temporary library lease

With the absence of any decision-making authorities, the Board asked to postpone this until the mayor is able to join the meeting.

2. Discussion and vote on design plans

Mr. Karlstad updated the Board that the space where the library will be moving into has hit some unexpected circumstances which has slowed their progress, including the area being zoned as an Assembly Place which needs to meet different code requirements and lead paint that needs to be remediated. He stated that the window for bids closes June 20th and they hope to start work in July. With the longer timeline, the city is requesting a reduced rent rate on the remainder of the lease. Ms. O’Kane asked if the reclassification of the space has increased costs, and they confirmed that it has. Mr. DiLuzio stated that he would have the final design plans to the FRA by the end of the week, which needs to be accepted to move forward. Ms. Donoghue stated that the Board can hold a special meeting to review those plans.

Tony DiLuzio, Matt Bruan, and Russ Kirkstad left the meeting at 8:10 a.m.

B. River Styx

1. Request for reimbursement of Mold Assessment Test

River Styx is requesting the FRA reimburse them for testing that their insurance company has denied, and they say the remediation company told them that it was a required test due to the flood. The Board requested River Styx work with their insurance adjuster to understand why this isn’t being covered and to request more information before they request our assistance.

Jackie Cullen and Desiree Moreno left the meeting at 8:26 a.m.

C. Main Street Housing Grant

1. 759 Main Street, Rosario Nicotra

Ms. Donoghue stated Rosario Nicotra has applied for the Main Street Housing Grant for the completion of 4 units at 759 Main Street, for a total of \$20,000 requested.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve \$20,000 Main Street Housing Grant to Rosario Nicotra for the completion of 4 units at 759 Main Street. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by a 4-0 vote.

D. Design Grant

87-91 River Street, IVJ Group

Ms. Donoghue stated \$2,000 from our Design Grant program is being requested for plans of the Iver Johnson Building. The Board had a brief discussion about this project.

Dr. Bayless motioned to approve a \$2,000 Design Grant to IVJ Group for plans of 87-91 River Street. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. Motion carried by a 4-0 vote.

E. Funding Requests

1. Fitchburg Public Library Owl Capital Campaign (Continued)
Ms. Cruz expressed that she thought the FRA should contribute \$50,000 for the naming rights to the Welcome Center. Dr. Bayless agreed that it was an important cause to support and would be a high-profile area to show our support downtown for years to come.

Ms. Cruz motioned to approve the contribution of \$50,000 to the Fitchburg Public Library’s Owl Capital Campaign for the naming rights of the Welcome Center. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

MaryJo Bohart left the meeting at 8:45 a.m.

2. StageWorks Performing Arts

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the contribution of \$350 to StageWorks Performing Arts. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

F. Employee Manual

1. Discuss and vote to approve
Ms. Stebulis stated that this is still being edited and will be sent to the Board well ahead of the next meeting for approval.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Business Administrator’s Update

Ms. Stebulis stated that will be participating in an Advanced QuickBooks course through the North Central Chamber of Commerce.

B. Executive Director’s Update

Ms. Donoghue stated that the MEPA process is being updated to a Notice of Project Change, which will allow us to extend our initial approval from our last Urban Renewal Plan.

6. PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Liz Murphy updated the Board on the latest downtown development. An ADA Grant has been given to repair the building back to code where Strong Style was located. She questioned if the Board is interested in partnering with the city on an EV charging station grant through Mass DOT, to leverage our investment and allow for more EV charging stations to be located downtown.

Laura O’Kane left the meeting at 9:23 a.m.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Caron motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 9:25 a.m. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried 3-0.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: June 20, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis
Business Administrator