



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

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

MEETING MINUTES

November 21, 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, Member
Laura O’Kane, Member

OTHERS PRESENT: Ruth Malkin
Harold Mateo
Roberto Colon
Leslie Colon
Liz Murphy, Community Development & Planning Director, City
of Fitchburg
Meagen Donoghue, Executive Director, FRA
Sarah Stebulis, Business Administrator, FRA
Bob Hasche, Facilities Manager, FRA

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

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

2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 17, 2023; VOTE TO APPROVE AND RELEASE EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 17, 2023.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from October 17, 2023 and enter them into the FRA’s minute book. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. The motion carried by 2-0 vote, Dr. Bayless abstained.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the executive session minutes from October 17, 2023 and enter them into the FRA’s minute book. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. The motion carried by 2-0 vote, Dr. Bayless abstained.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to release the executive session meeting minutes from October 17, 2023. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. The motion held by 0-3 vote.

Ms. Cruz arrived at 7:38 a.m.

3. BUDGET AND FINANCE

A. Summary Report

Ms. Stebulis stated all bills were on normal course. She noted that included is a 6-month payment for Sue Curley’s health insurance.

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. Iver Johnson Development Request - CONTINUED

At a previous meeting, IVJ Group requested to use Senator Cronin’s \$750,000 allocation to help close their fundraising gap. Ms. Donoghue spoke with Senator Cronin further and he strongly suggested that the allocation be used for this project due to its importance in Fitchburg. Ms. Murphy stated that the city is also giving IVJ Group the \$250,000 earmark that Senator Cronin secured for them to this project.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the Senator Cronin’s \$750,000 allocation to be given for development of the Iver Johnson Building, if funds are a reimbursement by the state. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

B. 866 Main Street

Monica McNamara to Present

Ms. McNamara did not attend the meeting, but Ms. Donoghue explained that she is the owner of the Boulder Café and has reached out to the FRA with interest in expanding her usable outdoor space to the adjacent parking lot that is currently for sale. Ms. Donoghue stated that the lot is listed for \$250,000 and could be a good property for us to pursue to activate Baker Street, use for downtown parking possibly through the creation of a FRA Parking Authority, and as a space to host evening events and food trucks. The Board noted that there are sink holes on the site and it will require site work to activate the property again.

Dr. Bayless motioned to approve securing 2 (two) appraisals of 866 Main Street. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

C. Funding Request

1. Fitchburg Art Museum Corporate Membership Renewal

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the contribution of \$1000 to Fitchburg Art Museum for a Patron Membership. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

2. Salvation Army Tree of Lights

The Board discussed a potential donation, but felt it was not necessary to fund since we have already donated space to them for several months for their operations.

3. Fitchburg Holiday Lights

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the contribution of \$1,000 as a Diamond Sponsor to the Fitchburg Holiday Lights. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 4-0 vote.

Ms. Malkin left the meeting at 8:10 a.m.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A. Business Administrator’s Update

Ms. Stebulis has been working on reviewing and cleaning out the FRA’s files stored in Suite 103 ahead of it being rented. She also presented the Board with a quote from Staples to scan, digitize with OCR and shred files. She stated she is working on getting another quote, as well as other options for digitizing our files, as it will be a large and expensive project. The Board suggested reaching out to the city to see what they do. Ms. Stebulis is working on the December Newsletter, which will be focused on the FRA’s giving for 2023.

B. Facility Manager Update

Mr. Hasche reported that the roof drain repair is almost complete. The HVAC system in the library space is now in and he is working with the contractors on placement. A comprehensive pest control system is now in place for the entire building. Unitil has postponed their power shut off again, a new date has not yet been proposed. The RFQ for the switch gear project is now ready to go out to bid. Mr. Hasche has been working with Burnell Controls on BMS concerns. Threshold repairs done last month have been successful. He is currently looking into what can be done this time of year to the sinkholes by the rear DRS loading dock. Using steel plates to cover them temporarily is an option, but they are very expensive to rent. Definitive repairs will need to be done, but they will be expensive and cannot be done until the spring. Mr. Caron suggested large crushed rock to fill the spaces as a possible solution.

Mr. Hasche continues to prepare Unit 103 for tenants, including have a junk removal company come in and clean out items. He is also getting quotes for installation of electrical and a btu monitor for gas, as well as installing emergency lighting and lighted exit signs.

C. Executive Director’s Update

Ms. Donoghue stated that she was recently on Cronin’s Corner on FATV. She also attended the groundbreaking for the Fitchburg Arts Community at the B.F. Brown building and the FRA was generously highlighted by Senator Cronin for our role. She also attended the Massachusetts Gateway Cities Innovation Conference at Fitchburg State and the Library Fundraising kick off. She is currently working with Liz Murphy on finding consultants to be

begin the Lower Cleghorn Urban Renewal District. She also reported that the FRA received a \$8,200 grant from the Community Foundation of North Central MA for “Connecting through Fiber” in partnership with Fitchburg Fiber.

6. PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Ms. Murphy stated that the city has received a Community One Stop grant for the redesign of Moran Square. They also received a grant for a Water Street Corridor Study which will help determine how to maximize our Urban Renewal Plan in that area. The Fitchburg Public Market has received \$90,000 in state funding, and the Iver Johnson project received an underutilized property grant. There is an MBTA Communities Plan in the works. The city has called for expressions of interest for non-aviation use of the airport site. The city is working on the storefront activation on 639 Main Street. Currently in progress is the potential Downtown Vitality Bill which could direct 5% of sale tax to downtown management which would be great for Fitchburg’s downtown if passed.

Liz Murphy left the meeting at 8:45 a.m.

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. M.G.L. c. 30A, §21 allows for any discussion of the lease of real property that may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to enter the executive session Board meeting at 8:48 a.m. and not reopen to the regular meeting. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. The motion carried 4-0.

8. ADJOURMENT

Ms. O’Kane motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 8:48 a.m. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried 4-0.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: December 19, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis
Business Administrator