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# MEETING MINUTES

August 15, 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  
Jay Roy, Vice Chair  
Maribel Cruz, Treasurer  
Laura Bayless, Member  
Laura O’Kane, Member

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Elisha Erb, Attorney, Erb & Southcotte  
Bill Krikorian (arrived at 7:36 a.m.)  
Jordan Low, The Break (arrived at 7:55 a.m.)  
Josh Merchant, The Break (arrived at 7:55 a.m.)  
John Berlinger, The Break (arrived at 7:55 a.m.)  
Liz Murphy, Executive Director, Community Development & Planning, 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 7:33 a.m.

## 2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM JULY 18, 2023.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from July 18, 2023 and enter them into the FRA’s minute’s book. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Dr. Bayless abstained. The motion carried by 4-0 vote.

### **3. BUDGET AND FINANCE**

#### **A. Summary Report**

Ms. Stebulis stated all bills were on normal course and that some items which are outside of our regular monthly expenses were for building maintenance and repairs.

Ms. Cruz motioned to approve the payment of the attached list of bills. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

### **4. GENERAL BUSINESS**

#### **A. Discussion on Building 3**

1. Bill Krikorian to present.

Mr. Krikorian presented the Board with his proposal to purchase 200 Boulder Drive (Building 3) for Industrial or Commercial use. Mr. Caron stated without knowing the specific use of the building, we don't know how its use will affect traffic, parking, noise, etc. for the rest of our tenants. The Board stated that before they could agree to any purchase of the building, they had to know what its exact use will be. Mr. Krikorian stated that he expects it will have 30-50 employees on one shift and there would be delivery truck traffic. He also stated that reconnecting the railroad to the site is possible, but would be quite expensive. Mr. Krikorian is proposing 90-day due diligence period, and 30 day Purchase & Sale with \$100,000 non-refundable deposit. The Board stated they would discuss it further in executive session.

*Bill Krikorian left the meeting at 7:53 a.m.*

#### **B. Discussion regarding 0 Airport Road**

1. Discussion and vote on Environmental Remediation

Ms. Donoghue and Atty. Erb updated the Board on the contamination status of 0 Airport Road. It has a contamination history from the 1970's when paper sludge was dumped there that at the time was considered "clean." Now with more knowledge of contaminates, it is an issue with PFAS and other chemicals. When the contamination was found and reported, it triggered a 120-day report that was due to the DEP. Mr. Erb stated that when we entered into an agreement with the purchaser, no parties knew about the contamination. Now that it has been reported to the DEP, it is important to note that Redevelopment Authorities are exempt from enforceable clean-up unless clean-up is started. Once clean-up has begun, the party that started it must complete it. The site is currently not stable enough to build on top of it without remediation. Ms. Murphy added that there is Brownfields money available to determine how much of the site is contaminated.

Atty. Erb made a suggestion to the Board, now knowing the site is not clean. The Board could reduce the price by how much it costs to clean it up and the purchaser takes all legal responsibility. Atty. Erb could act as the fiscal agent to reimburse the purchaser. Doing it this way would remove any environmental responsibility from the FRA and allow us to complete our objective of redeveloping the site. If they

decide not to move forward with cleaning the site, we would at least have the data of the contamination of the site and the FRA hasn't changed their exemption status.

Ms. Murphy stated the FRA needs to talk to the DEP about if the organization is exempt, or if the FRA is already responsible for potential sparked clean up. The Board agreed to hold off on any further movement until we hear from the DEP.

*Liz Murphy & Elisha Erb left the meeting at 9:00 a.m.*

### **C. Putnam Place**

#### **1. Proposed Lease for Suites 102 & 103**

##### **a. Josh Merchant, John Berlinger and Jordan Low to present.**

The Break presented the Board with a history of their business and their goal to continue to grow by adding more community involvement and outreach as they expand. They also want to continue to promote the history that has made Fitchburg a bicycle destination. The Break is interested in leasing Suite 103, and Jordan Low is interested in leasing Suite 102. They are two separate businesses and would require two separate leases, but do overlap and compliment each other. They are looking for a 10-year lease and ideally would like to be all in for around \$1,000 per month. They estimate a 3-month turnaround to be moved into the space. The Board said they would discuss a lease structure in executive session and get back to them with some options.

*Josh Merchant, John Berlinger, and Jordan Low left the meeting at 8:21 a.m.*

#### **2. River Styx Loan Request**

##### **a. Scott and/or Jackie Cullen to Present**

River Styx has requested to pay interest only on their loans for the next 6 months beginning immediately. Ms. Donoghue stated that we did this in the past and it was an auditing nightmare. She spoke with our auditor and if they chose to do that, the loan would need to be amortized and interest recalculated from their current 2% to current market rate. The Board discussed that this would hurt their business and they would be more in favor of offering assistance by helping potentially helping to fund an industry business consultant to assist them.

*Dr. Bayless motioned to approve interest only payments on River Styx's two (2) loans for a period of six (6) months. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Motion held by 0-5 vote.*

*Mr. Roy motioned to offer to contribute financially for an independent industry business consultant to help River Styx with best business practices. They would be required to present the FRA with quotes for that service and what would be offered to them. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.*

After Board votes were taken, Ms. Donoghue received an email from River Styx rescinded their request.

## **D. Funding Requests**

1. InTown Fitchburg's Trick or Treat on Main Street

Dr. Bayless motioned to approve the contribution of \$350 to InTown Fitchburg's Trick or Treat on Main Street event (\$300 for sponsorship and \$50 for vendor registration.) Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

2. Fitchburg Veteran's Council Annual 5K  
Ms. Donoghue stated that last year we donated \$1,000.

Dr. Bayless motioned to approve the contribution of \$250 to the Fitchburg Veteran's Council Annual 5K. Seconded by Mr. Roy. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

3. Stratton Players 50 Day Fundraising Challenge for Lucy's Barn

Dr. Bayless motioned to approve the contribution of \$250 to the Stratton Players 50 Day Fundraising Challenge for Lucy's Barn. Seconded by Ms. O'Kane. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

## **5. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT**

### **A. Business Administrator's Update**

Ms. Stebulis stated that she has been working with the auditors on the beginning steps of our 2022 audit. She also updated the Board that the mail issue has been resolved and we are again receiving mail as properly addressed. She had a meeting with Staples to start the process of getting a quote to scan, digitize and shred hard copy files that need to be kept in perpetuity.

### **B. Facility Manager Update**

Mr. Hasche reported that temporary repairs of roof drains over DRS appear to be successful. He is still waiting for a quote on the installation of new roof drains throughout DRS's space. He is also waiting for quotes to repair deficiencies found by Johnson Controls in the sprinkler system inspection. Parking spaces for Registry of Deeds have been moved and restriped and stenciled, and we will continue to make parking lot improvements as we anticipate more traffic with the opening of the library. He has a meeting with Johnson Controls set up to discuss them taking over the BMS system, as he has not had sufficient support or response from Burnell Controls who currently manages it. The biggest challenge continues to be getting vendors and contractors to provide quotes and show up to do the work.

### **C. Executive Director's Update**

Ms. Donoghue stated that Senator Cronin successfully earmarked \$750,000 for the FRA in the budget this year, which is great news for us and the city. She organized and led a successful walking tour at the recent MEDC event in Fitchburg, highlighting the changes we have had downtown. She is also very happy to report that final MEPA approval has been granted and she suggested the Board decide to meet as a whole or form a subcommittee to discuss projects and properties that are a priority. She also noted that 480 Water Street has

been recently listed for sale and it is identified as a property of interest in our Urban Renewal Plan.

**6. PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

Ms. Murphy had to leave the Board meeting early and said she would email the Board with City updates.

**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.

*Dr. Bayless motioned to enter the executive session Board meeting at 9:41 a.m. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane The motion carried 5-0.*

**8. ADJOURMENT**

*Dr. Bayless motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 10:18 a.m. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried 4-0.*

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED:** September 19, 2023

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis  
Business Administrator