



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

166 Boulder Drive, Suite 104 | Fitchburg, MA 01420  
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# MEETING MINUTES

May 15, 2024

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  
Mirabel Cruz, Treasurer  
Laura O’Kane, Member  
Laura Bayless, Member

**OTHERS PRESENT:** 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 7:37 a.m.

## 2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 17, 2024

*Ms. Cruz motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from April 17, 2024 and enter them into the FRA’s minute book. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. The motion carried by 5-0 vote.*

## READING AND APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 17, 2024 AND APRIL 30, 2024

*Ms. Cruz motioned to accept the executive meeting minutes from April 17, 2024 and April 30, 2024 and enter them into the FRA’s minute book. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. The motion carried by 5-0 vote.*

## **RELEASE OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM APRIL 17, 2024 AND APRIL 30, 2024**

Ms. Cruz motioned to release the executive meeting minutes from April 17, 2024 and April 30, 2024. Seconded by Ms. O’Kane. The motion held by 0-5 vote.

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

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

Ms. Stebulis stated all bills were on normal course. There were some larger checks presented to the Board for signatures which were payment of Grant and State Earmarked funds that were ready for distribution.

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. On-Call Real Estate Broker RFP**

##### **1. Discussion and Vote**

Ms. Donoghue stated there was only one response was received for the RFP for a dedicated On-Call Real Estate Broker, from Rubric. Ms. Cruz asked how long the contract was that we are offering, and Ms. Donoghue stated it was 3 years. Both Mr. Caron and Ms. O’Kane said that they believe the fee structure presented seems a bit high and is usually around 4% of the base rent lease term. Ms. O’Kane also stated that 3 years is too long to be locked into a contract if we are unhappy with their services, she suggested 6 months to start. She also stated that we would want to clearly note that no fees will be paid on future options. Ms. O’Kane asked if real estate posters can be hung in available units and have available units also posted on the FRA’s social media and LinkedIn. Ms. Donoghue asked the Board if they would like her to start again with a new RFP that reflects these edits. Dr. Bayless stated that she doesn’t want to discourage business with Rubric as we edit our requirements and asked that Ms. Donoghue reach out to them to have a conversation to explain the Board’s reasoning for changes. Ms. O’Kane suggested contacting a local realtor who is knowledgeable with Fitchburg specifically to be on contract to just lease units at 166 Boulder to start, and with the potential to help sell and buy properties in the future. Ms. Donoghue stated that she would reach out to the state ethics commission for clarity on procurement laws and if an RFP is necessary.

#### **B. Helpsy Hosting**

##### **1. Discussion and Vote**

Ms. Donoghue stated that she recently discovered the company Helpsy, which provides specific donation bins for textiles, which are illegal to throw in the trash. Helpsy pays property owners a price per ton for the donations they collect on your site. The initial contract would be for 1 year, with the option to end early with 60 days’ notice if we are not satisfied. Mr. Caron stated that he would be worried about dumping and mess. Ms. Donoghue suggested placing it in the paved alcove at the end

of our parking lot near the path to the Rollstone Building. The Board agreed it was worth trying with minimal risk.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the addition of a Helpsy donation bin to the property at 166 Boulder Drive, with the exact location to be determined by Ms. Donoghue and Mr. Hasche. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

### **C. Critical Building Needs (2022) Grant Update**

#### **1. 297 Main Street**

Ms. Donoghue stated that the Critical Building Needs Grant awarded for 297 Main Street has met all the requirements and the \$50,000 has been released to the awardee.

### **D. Fundraising**

#### **1. Chamber Annual Meeting & Business Expo**

Ms. Donoghue presented the Board with the options for sponsoring the North Central Mass Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting in June. She noted that last year we donated \$1,000.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the donation of \$1,500 as a sponsor for the NCMCC Annual Meeting. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried by 5-0 vote.

#### **2. Create a campaign to save Building 3**

Ms. Donoghue stated that she has been thinking of creative ways to save and redevelop building 3. She has spoken to Roy Nascimento at the Chamber about whether he would support us turning it into a destination conference center, which he fully supports and stated has been lacking in this area with hotel closures and ownership changes. The idea for fundraising would be a capital campaign that would include a silent phase and a public phase. Ms. Donoghue is already looking into and applying for grants to support this project. All Board members agreed this was a great idea and direction to go in to redevelop that building.

### **E. Administrative Reports**

#### **1. Business Administrator’s Update**

Ms. Stebulis stated that after the last meeting and in further discussion with Rollstone Bank, they have increased our checking account APY from 2.5% to 4% with no agreement changes. She also stated that she has been maintaining the FRA website and keeping it updated in house, with posted RFP’s and approved minutes/agendas. She is working with the auditors who will be coming in soon to start the 2023 audit. There are new reporting regulations with respect to leases for government agencies that we will have to abide by and potentially purchase dedicated software for.

#### **2. Facility Manager Update**

Mr. Hasche stated that the RFP for switch gear engineering has been posted and is due at the end of May. The library has been doing invasive HVAC work due to failures on new

and old systems. He met with a contractor at 866 Main Street, and it is believed that the sink holes are due to breaks in the pipes below. Until they are onsite to fix it, they won't know the full extent of damage, but the general cost of their services per day is \$1500-2000. He is waiting for a quote on landscaping on that lot, has not yet reached out for a fencing quote, and has spoken to Unitil and it appears that power can be brought to that site, but a transformer will be needed which will cost \$15,000-\$20,000 to install. Ms. O'Kane stated that before any more time and energy is put into the property, our purchase of it needs to be completed. Ms. Donoghue agreed and stated that 21E Environmental Study is currently being conducted on it. Finally, Mr. Hasche stated that he has ordered replacement ceiling tiles to be installed in areas where leaks have been corrected, and both the elevator inspections and spring landscaping clean up have been recently completed.

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

Ms. Donoghue stated that the environmental study will be completed on 866 Main Street next week. DCAM has put out a request for available sites and the FRA will be applying and offering Suite 102 & 103. She stated that the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission is asking for help to restart the Southbridge Redevelopment Authority and she is assisting with that. Word has just come in from Senator Cronin that he will be earmarking an additional \$750,000 for the FRA for housing projects in Fitchburg.

### **5. PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

No representative from Planning & Community Development was able to attend.

### **6. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Ms. O'Kane motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting and not return and enter into Executive Session at 8:53 a.m. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried 5-0.

### **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. O'Kane motioned to adjourn the Executive Session meeting at 9:29 a.m. Seconded by Dr. Bayless. Motion carried 5-0.

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: June 19, 2024**

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis  
Business Administrator