



FITCHBURG REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
renewing • revitalizing • rebuilding

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MEETING MINUTES

October 16, 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
Maribel Cruz, Treasurer
Laura O’Kane, Member

OTHERS PRESENT: Andrew DeChristopher, Fitchburg Fiber
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 7:35 a.m.

2. READING AND APPROVAL OF REGULAR MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the regular meeting minutes from September 24, 2024 and enter them into the FRA’s minute book. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. The motion carried by 4-0 vote.

READING AND APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

Ms. O’Kane motioned to accept the executive meeting minutes from September 24, 2024 and enter them into the FRA’s minute book. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. The motion carried by 4-0 vote.

RELEASE OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 24, 2024

Ms. O’Kane motioned to release the executive meeting minutes from September 24, 2024. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. The motion held by 0-4 vote.

Mr. Roy left the meeting at 7:41 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 Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Telephone Poles

1. Andrew DeChristopher from Fitchburg Fiber to present – Discussion and vote

Mr. DeChristopher explained that Fitchburg Fiber’s interest in the telephone poles is because it would be a catalyst for them to begin their fiber network downtown and a step towards being able to provide service to the entire city. They are not able to provide wireless service to the entire city, so beginning to build out their fiber network is the best option to connect areas south of downtown to their network. They are also trying to work with Rollstone Bank to use their poles, which is necessary to make the project feasible. Ms. O’Kane asked if they had an alternate plan to using Rollstone Bank’s poles, and Mr. DeChristopher confirmed that they do, but it’s not preferred. Ms. Murphy said that she would talk to the mayor about this and try to arrange a meeting with her and Fitchburg Fiber. There was a discussion about options for new poles, different poles and site plans that may offer other options for Fitchburg Fiber to build out their fiber network. Ms. O’Kane suggested an easement when selling Building 3 so that the Fitchburg Fiber network can stay in place and not be interrupted if they need to use it as a contact point for the network. The Board agreed to continue the discussion as the plan becomes clearer, but that they are committed to helping the project move forward.

B. Proposal of New Grant Program

1. Discussion and vote

Ms. Donoghue introduced a new grant program that she would like the Board to consider which supports the FRA’s mission and Urban Renewal Plan’s mission to offer grant assistance to small businesses for internet setup at their business. The Small Business Internet Grant Program would offer \$100-\$1000 in reimbursement to small and micro-business owners in our Urban Renewal District.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve the creation of the Small Business Internet Grant Program. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

C. Funding Requests

1. Trick or Treat on Main Street

Ms. O’Kane motioned to donate \$500 to be a Mummy Sponsor for Trick or Treat on Main Street. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

D. Administrative Reports

1. Business Administrator’s Update

Ms. Stebulis continues to work with FinQuery on the implementation of the GASB software. She has provided the company with all our necessary lease information to begin the data entry process. She has done a major website update this month and made sure that everything is up-to-date and accurate.

2. Facility Manager Update

Mr. Hasche stated that a contract has been signed with IMEG Corp. for the switchgear engineering and they have already begun work on site. They already feel like we can reduce the size from 600 AMP to 200 AMP, which they will confirm with meetings with DRS and their needs in the future. Mr. Hasche has fired up the boilers for the first time this season and there has been some additional work necessary to get them working properly.

He is working with Deb at the library to move the steam turbine, for which she has set aside some money to move it from the new library site back to the Putnam Place property. Mr. Caron suggested getting it clean up and having a local artist paint it. The Board agreed that they want to restore it and bring it over to our site, as it is part of this property’s history.

Mr. Hasche discussed the DRS drain repairs with their facilities manager and she will be meeting with her team and discussing that option for next year’s CAPEX budget.

Ms. O’Kane motioned to approve roof repairs ahead of the winter which were discussed at a previous meeting. Seconded by Ms. Cruz. Motion carried by 3-0 vote.

3. Executive Director’s Update

Ms. Donoghue won a \$250,000 Community One Stop Grant for the demolition of the power plant on site. The appraisal for Building 3 came in at \$600,000. Tracy Sladen is working on the real estate listing for sale or lease, including doing drone footage. 66 North Street is now sold and the transaction was very smooth overall. Senator Cronin is assisting the FRA to ensure that we will receive the reimbursement of the funding that we provided to 298 Main Street last month. Ms. Donoghue is holding a community meeting at The Boulder to discuss potential uses and ideas for 866 Main Street with the property’s abutters.

5. PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Ms. Murphy gave the Board an update on various updates in the city, including the recent

Moran Square Community Input Meeting, 40U Implementation for code violations by the Health Department, the Section 108 loan program that the FRA may be able to utilize, the recipients of Community One Stop grants in Fitchburg, Boulder Drive road work updates, monetizing of parking downtown, and an update on the Iver Mills project.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Cruz motioned to adjourn the Regular Board meeting at 9:23 a.m. Seconded by Mr. Caron. Motion carried 3-0.

NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED: November 20, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah U. Stebulis
Business Administrator