

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE REDEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF BERKS**

February 23, 2021

Chairman Glenn Yeager called the meeting of the Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks to order at 3:06 P.M. on February 23, 2021 via a Zoom meeting.

1. Roll Call:

The following Board members were present during the meeting:

Glenn Yeager, Chairman
Eileen Kastura, Vice Chairperson
Theodore Bassano, Treasurer
Thomas Ruth, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

Also in attendance were:

Kenneth Pick, Executive Director
Peter Battaglia, Deputy Director
Kathy Heckman, Executive Assistant
Kathy Miller, Fiscal Officer
Thomas Dachowski, Housing Director
Daniel P. Becker, Esquire of Kozloff Stoudt, Solicitor

2. Reading and approval of minutes of the meeting of 1/26/21:

Upon motion made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all members of the Board present voted to approve the January 26, 2021 minutes of the Board of this Authority.

3. Report of Treasurer:

Theodore Bassano presented the Profit & Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet as of January 31, 2021. A copy of said report is attached to these Minutes. Upon motion by Thomas Ruth and seconded by Glenn Yeager, all Board members present voted to accept the report of the Treasurer, including said Profit & Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, subject to audit.

4. Bills and Communications:

Theodore Bassano presented the list of payments to creditors representing the period of February 1, 2021 through February 24, 2021. A copy of said report is attached to these Minutes. Upon motion by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted to approve the list of payments to creditors.

There were no communications.

5. Reports of Committees:

There were no committee reports presented.

6. Unfinished Business:

a. Rentals:

Kathy Miller advised that the tenant who lived in Apartment 521-B East Lancaster Avenue passed away. There are repairs to be done to the rental unit. Ms. Miller anticipates the unit will be available for new occupants by the middle of March.

b. Colebrookdale Railroad:

- i. Mr. Pick advised that he, Nathaniel Guest and Stone Consulting are working on the following grant applications:
 - A. The Boyertown transload facility. A grant in the amount of \$991,000 from PennDOT and an additional \$500,000 from the CDBC Program. The specifications are being finalized for the application.
 - B. The \$40,000,000 application. Mr. Pick advised that he intends to have this application submitted by August. However, he advised that the National Rail Association is requiring appraisals to be performed for the properties which will need to be acquired for the project. Mr. Pick advised that he will be sending letters to the landowners about the prospective acquisition of the properties and the need for appraisals.
- ii. Mr. Pick advised that the passenger Railroad is currently running at 50% capacity because of COVID and is currently fully booked.

- iii. Mr. Pick advised that freight hauling opportunities continues to come as projected, and Mr. Guest is currently looking for additional new freight customers.
 - iv. Chairman Yeager inquired as to the status of the damaged bridges that were hit by vehicles. Mr. Pick advised that the bridges have been repaired.
- c. Armorcast R.A.:
- Nothing to report.
- d. Rental Assistance Need Program. Mr. Battaglia advised that this program will end at the close of business on Friday, February 26, 2021. There were 145 applicants, of which 103 were approved. The 42 that were not approved were either not eligible or did not complete the application process.
 - e. Emergency Rental Assistance Program ("ERAP"). Mr. Pick advised that this Program replaces the Rental Assistance Need Program. The County will be receiving \$27,700,084.11. The funds will be used for rental assistance, rent arrearages, future rent, utilities and utility arrearages and some other rental costs related to COVID. The County has authorized the Authority to administer the grant. Mr. Pick advised that he, Mr. Battaglia and the Berks Coalition to End Homelessness ("BCEH") are working to open the application process on March 8th. Mr. Pick advised that the application process will be done online with BCEH overseeing the process. In order to reach as many applicants as possible who need assistance, there will be direct mailings to landlords and other social service agencies, as well as other marketing campaign efforts. Mr. Diodato inquired as to the director's and officer's insurance policy given the amount of money which will be passed through this Program. Ms. Miller advised that she will reach out to the insurer with respect to the director's and officer's insurance. Chairman Yeager advised that the Board is relying on BCEH and that the Authority is not making independent judgments on who receives the funds; they are a conduit of the funds. Mr. Pick advised that the term of the program ends December 31, 2021.
 - f. Subrecipient Grant Agreement with the County of Berks. Mr. Pick advised that he, Solicitor Becker and the County Solicitor worked on the Subrecipient Agreement, and the County will be signing the Agreement on Thursday, February 25th. Mr. Pick advised that it was agreed that the Authority will receive a fixed fee of \$325,000.00 plus \$150 per staff hour and reimbursement for all costs incurred with respect to the program. Chairman Yeager wanted to reflect that there was a lengthy discussion regarding the ERAP and that the

Board has great confidence in BCEH, and that the Board relies upon BCEH to fairly and properly administer the ERAP program. A motion was made by Theodore Bassano and seconded by Glenn Yeager, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Subrecipient Grant Agreement.

7. **New Business:**

- a. **Funding Agreement with YMCA for the Re-Connection Program allocating \$60,000 over the next five years.** Mr. Pick advised that this Program provides funding for family and friends of the homeless who may take them in and care for them. This program is funded by Act 137. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Funding Agreement.
- b. **Agreement with Berks Coalition to End Homelessness related to the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program.** Mr. Pick advised that this agreement is with BCEH to process and administer the ERAP program. Mr. Pick further explained that this Agreement is similar to the Subrecipient Grant Agreement with the County. There is a fixed fee of \$115,000.00, a \$200.00 application fee; and a \$25.00 fee for each application that is processed by a BCEH partner. A motion was made by Theodore Bassano and seconded by Glenn Yeager, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement.
- c. **Credit/Debit Card Policy.** Mr. Pick advised that there will be a credit/debit card which will be used to pay utility companies with respect to the ERAP program. The credit card fees are a reimbursable cost which can be written off through the ERAP program. The authorized users of the credit card would be Mr. Bassano and Ms. Miller. The Board agreed to table this matter until the March meeting.
- d. **Temporary Employee to assist Kathy Miller.** Mr. Pick requested the Board consider hiring a temp employee to assist Ms. Miller with her increased work load as a result of the many new COVID programs that have been initiated over the last year. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to authorize staff to hire a temporary employee to assist Ms. Miller at a rate not to exceed \$50.00/hour, plus temp agency fees.

8. **Miscellaneous:**

None

9. Adjournment:

There being no further business of this Authority, a motion was made by Glenn Yeager to adjourn the meeting of this Authority. The motion was seconded by Thomas Ruth and all members of this Authority present voted in the affirmative. The next meeting of the Board will be March 23, 2021. This meeting was adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

Glenn Yeager, Chairman