

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

July 27, 2021

Chairman Glenn Yeager called the meeting of the Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks to order at 3:04 P.M. on July 27, 2021 via a Zoom meeting.

1. Roll Call:

The following Board members were present during the meeting:

Glenn Yeager, Chairman
Eileen Kastura, Vice Chairperson
Diodato Bassano, 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
Kyre Maxwell

2. Reading and approval of minutes of the meeting of 6/22/21:

Upon motion made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all members of the Board present voted to approve the June 22, 2021 minutes of the Board of this Authority.

3. Report of Treasurer:

Diodato Bassano presented the Profit & Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet as of June 30, 2021. A copy of said report is attached to these Minutes. Upon motion by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, 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:

Diodato Bassano presented the list of payments to creditors representing the period of July 1, 2021 through July 28, 2021. A copy of said report is attached to these Minutes. Upon motion by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, 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 Heckman advised that the three rental units located on Lancaster Avenue are under contract with Service Access Management and the Leases with the tenants began July 1, 2021.

b. Colebrookdale Railroad:

Mr. Pick advised that:

- i. The steam locomotive has arrived from Colorado. The locomotive is privately owned and will be restored and housed at the Colebrookdale Railroad. He expects the Railroad will be able to use the locomotive in the fall.
- ii. The passenger car "Diplomat" has also arrived and the restoration process will begin, which he expects to take about two years to fully restore.
- iii. The plans and specifications have been submitted to PennDOT for Phase 1 of the transload facility project.
- iv. Ken, Solicitor Becker and Nathaniel Guest continue to work on the Letter of Intent with respect to the \$40,000,000.00 loan.

c. Housing Projects:

Thomas Dachowski advised the following:

- i. 1011 Floret Avenue: This property is new construction and is currently less than a month away from being completed. Tom advised that they have run into a problem with extending the road and installing the water line. Once completed, this property will be the “mirror image” of the property located at 1007 Floret Avenue.
- ii. 544 S. 6th Street: The installation of the mechanicals has been completed. The plumbing and HVAC duct work are being installed. There was an issue with the structural integrity of the front façade. Consequently, the façade is currently being rebuilt.
- iii. 1951 Woodvale Avenue: This project is two to three weeks from being completed. The property was acquired through the Blighted Property Review Committee.
- iv. 921 Crestview Avenue: This property is currently being updated. It was previously being used to house homeless families who were quarantined due to COVID. After the property is updated, it will be sold.
- v. 615/617/619 Walnut Street: This property will be used for Veterans housing. Units 615 and 617 have been cleaned out, gutted to the frame and are ready for renovation. Mr. Dachowski is currently waiting for Olsen Design to submit their plans for the units. Unit 619 is currently being cleaned out, which should be done by the end of the week and thereafter it will be ready for rehabilitation.

d. Armorcast R.A.:

Mr. Pick advised that there is currently a Board of View scheduled for August 2, 2021 to set the just compensation for the land only (not the train station facility).

e. Emergency Rental Assistance Program (“ERAP”). Mr. Battaglia advised that in addition to the three ERAP programs currently in place, there is expected to be a fourth program from the State American Rescue Plan in the amount of \$12,000,000.00. There currently are 2,750 tenants and 1,152 landlords who have applied to the ERAP Program. Mr. Battaglia advised that there is ongoing demand for the ERAP programs. Mr. Battaglia also advised that there are 645 applications in progress, 434 are waiting for information and 408 have been approved and are

pending payment. Mr. Battaglia explained that he is still working with Neighborly Software to improve the functionality and reporting process. There has been a 93.96 approval rate with a 2.1% denial rate. Chairman Yeager asked Mr. Battaglia how Berks County and the City of Reading compare to other counties in the state. Mr. Battaglia advised that he would check to see if he could get that data and would share with the Board at the next meeting.

f. Hamburg Center. Mr. Battaglia advised that he has not received an update from DGS, and he has not received the contract from the State, which was expected to be received by the end of June.

7. **New Business:**

a. **Funding Agreement with BCNDC providing \$620,000 from the County CDBG Program towards a project to establish a job training center.** Mr. Pick advised that the training center will be a community kitchen to train individuals to work in a commercial kitchen and will also teach aeroponics. The property is located at 641 Gregg Avenue, which previously used as an autism school. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Funding Agreement.

b. **Resolution #2021-5 ratifying the sales agreement and authorizing the purchase of a portion of 81 Landis Lane, Colebrookdale for the purchase price of \$48,000.** Mr. Pick advised that this property contains pieces of the old Colebrookdale right-of-way which is being purchased for the railroad project. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve Resolution 2021-5.

c. **Resolution #2021-6 ratifying the sales agreement and authorizing the purchase of a portion of 641 Gregg Avenue, Reading, by BCNDC for the purchase price of \$450,000.** A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement.

d. **Funding agreement with BCNDC providing \$265,000 from the County HOME Program towards the project at 1007 Floret Avenue, Muhlenberg Township.** A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Resolution.

e. **Resolution #2021-7 authorizing the acquisition of 333 North Church Road, Lower Heidelberg Township.** Mr. Pick advised that this property was

acquired through the Blighted Property Review Committee. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Resolution.

- f. **Easy Does It, Inc.** Solicitor Becker advised that Easy Does It, Inc. (“EDI”) is undertaking a loan modification. EDI requested the Authority be act as the conduit for the financing, as it has been done in the past. With the refinancing, EDI would receive a reduction in interest rate from 4.25% to 3.25% and a modification of the payment terms from semi-monthly to monthly payments. Solicitor Becker received a Resolution from Dough Rauch, attorney for EDI, just prior to this meeting. Mr. Rauch indicated that EDI would like to close on the loan prior to the Board’s next meeting. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano to approve the Resolution conditioned upon Solicitor Becker’s and Mr. Pick’s review and concurrence of a satisfactory Resolution.

8. Executive Session:

The Board entered into Executive Session at 3:59 p.m.

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 Eileen Kastura and all members of this Authority present voted in the affirmative. The next meeting of the Board will be August 24, 2021. This meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Glenn Yeager, Chairman