

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

January 25, 2022

Chairman Glenn Yeager called the meeting of the Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks to order at 3:33 P.M. on January 25, 2022 via a Zoom meeting.

1. Roll Call:

The following Board members were present during the meeting:

Glenn Yeager, Chairperson
Eileen Kastura, Vice Chairperson
Diodato Bassano, Treasurer
Thomas Ruth, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer
Jorge Diaz

Also in attendance were:

Kenneth Pick, Executive Director
Kathy Heckman, Executive Assistant
Kathy Miller, Fiscal Officer
Thomas Dachowski, Housing Director
Daniel P. Becker, Esquire of Kozloff Stoudt, Solicitor
Joshua Lewis, Facilities & Housing Manager
Kyre Maxwell, Redevelopment Generalist
Ben Murphy, Intern

2. Reorganization:

Chairman Yeager opened the annual reorganization of the Authority Board and appointed Daniel P. Becker, Esquire as Chairman Pro Tem. After a brief discussion of the process, Attorney Becker opened the floor to nominations for the office of Chairperson of the Authority. In response, Eileen Kastura nominated Glenn Yeager as Chairperson. Hearing no further nomination, the floor was closed to nominations. Upon motion duly made by Diodato Bassano and seconded by Jorge Diaz, all Board members present voted to approve Glenn Yeager as Chairperson. Mr. Yeager then assumed the office of Chairman of the reorganization meeting.

Mr. Yeager opened the floor to nominations for the office of Vice Chairperson. Mr. Yeager nominated Eileen Kastura as Vice Chairperson. Hearing no further nominations, the floor was closed to nominations. A motion was made by Mr. Yeager and seconded by

Mr. Bassano to approve Eileen Kastura as Vice Chairperson. All Board members present voted to approve Eileen Kastura as Vice Chairperson.

Mr. Yeager opened the floor to nominations for the office of Treasurer. Mr. Yeager nominated Diodato Bassano as Treasurer. Hearing no further nominations, the floor was closed to nominations. A motion was made by Mr. Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura to approve Diodato Bassano as Treasurer. All Board members present voted to approve Diodato Bassano as Treasurer.

Mr. Yeager opened the floor to nominations for the office of Secretary. Mr. Yeager nominated Thomas Ruth as Secretary. Hearing no further nominations, the floor was closed to nominations. A motion was made by Mr. Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano to approve Thomas Ruth as Secretary. All Board members present voted to approve Thomas Ruth as Secretary.

Mr. Yeager opened the floor to nominations for the office of Assistant Secretary/Treasurer. Mr. Yeager nominated Jorge Diaz as Assistant Secretary/Treasurer. Hearing no further nominations, the floor was closed to nominations. A motion was made by Mr. Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura to approve Jorge Diaz as Assistant Secretary/Treasurer. All Board members present voted to approve Jorge Diaz as Assistant Secretary/Treasurer.

Mr. Yeager opened the floor to nominations for the office of Executive Director. Mr. Yeager nominated Kenneth L. Pick as Executive Director. Hearing no further nominations, the floor was closed to nominations. A motion was made by Mr. Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura to approve Kenneth L. Pick as Executive Director. All Board members present voted to approve Kenneth L. Pick as Executive Director.

Mr. Yeager opened the floor to nominations for Solicitor to the Authority. Mr. Yeager nominated Daniel P. Becker and the firm of Kozloff Stoudt as Solicitor. Hearing no further nominations, the floor was closed to nominations. A motion was made by Mr. Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano to approve Daniel P. Becker and the firm of Kozloff Stoudt as Solicitor. All Board members present voted to approve Daniel P. Becker and the firm of Kozloff Stoudt as Solicitor.

The officers and professional staff nominated for calendar year 2022 are as follows:

Chairman:	Glenn Yeager
Vice Chairperson:	Eileen Kastura
Secretary:	Thomas Ruth
Treasurer:	Diodato Bassano
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer:	Jorge Diaz

Solicitor: Daniel P. Becker, Esquire & the law firm of
Kozloff Stoudt, P.C.
Executive Director: Kenneth L. Pick

The reorganization meeting was adjourned and the Authority Board moved into its regularly scheduled monthly Board meeting.

3. Reading and approval of minutes of the meeting of 12/14/2021:

Upon motion made by Eileen Kastura and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all members of the Board present voted to approve the December 14, 2021 minutes of the Board.

4. Report of Treasurer:

Diodato Bassano presented the Profit & Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2021. A copy of the 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.

5. Bills and Communications:

Diodato Bassano presented the list of payments to creditors representing the period of December 27, 2021 through January 27, 2022. A copy of the report is attached to these Minutes. Upon motion by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Jorge Diaz, all Board members present voted to approve the list of payments to creditors.

There were no communications.

6. Reports of Committees:

There were no committee reports presented.

7. Unfinished Business:

- a. Rentals. Ms. Heckman advised that the rentals located in the Borough of Shillington require an annual inspection that must be completed by the end of April 2022. Mr. Dachowski is currently scheduling the inspections with Kraft Code Services.

- b. Colebrookdale Railroad:
- i. EDA Grant. Mr. Pick advised that the application for the \$5,500,000.00 grant from the Economic Development Administration to finish the Pottstown Transload Station was submitted on January 24, 2022.
 - ii. \$40,000,000.00 U.S. Department of Transportation Grant. Mr. Pick advised that the Authority will learn in April the amount received from the U.S. Department of Transportation grant, and will then be able to determine the amount of the loan which will be needed for the Boyertown transload facility project.
 - iii. Colebrookdale Railroad Train. Nathaniel Guest advised Mr. Pick that the railroad had a great fall and winter season despite COVID. The trains were fully booked. Mr. Guest further advised that the dinner trains are popular and do well.
 - iv. Boyertown Transload Facility. Mr. Pick advised that the Notice to Proceed was issued for Phase 1 of the Boyertown transload facility. Mr. Pick further advised that he and Solicitor Becker are continuing to work on acquiring parcels which are needed for the Boyertown transload facility project.
 - v. Diplomat Car. Mr. Pick advised that work continues on the Diplomat car.
- c. Housing Projects. Mr. Dachowski advised the following:
- i. 544 S. 6th Street. The drywall is being installed. There was a delay due to mechanical issues which have been resolved.
 - ii. 614 Spruce Street. The plumbing is currently being roughed in. New duct work for the heating and air conditioning is being installed.
 - iii. 616 Spruce Street. The interior framing is almost complete. The roof joists needed to be replaced due to a major roof leak before the Authority took possession of the property.
 - iv. 1007 Floret Avenue. The property is new construction. The application process is almost complete. Mr. Dachowski advised the new township engineer had additional requirements, which were not needed for the 1011 Floret Avenue property. He expects to receive the permit in the next week or two.

- v. 730 Birch Avenue. This property was previously a rental, and has been cleaned up and will be listed for sale today or tomorrow.
- d. Armorcast R.A. Mr. Pick advised that he is still waiting for the written agreement.
- e. Commercial Projects. Mr. Lewis advised the following:
 - i. Gregg Avenue. The food bank, Helping Harvest is working on their design plan.
 - ii. Oley MDJ Office Property/South Campus Property. The County Commissioners have approved the spaces for new MDJ offices.
 - iii. Authority Office - South Campus. The date for the Authority to move in to the space has been pushed back to the last week of February.
- f. Emergency Rental Assistance Program ("ERAP"). Mr. Maxwell advised that the Authority has received a total of 4,067 applications. There have been 739 applications withdrawn, 257 applications pending, 67 applications pending payment, 306 applications denied, 354 applications currently being paid by the Authority, 377 being paid by the Berks Coalition to End Homelessness, 147 where rental assistance has ended and 37 currently on the wait list.
- g. Blighted Property Review Committee. Ms. Heckman advised the Blighted Property Review Committee had a productive meeting today. There were five property review hearings held.

There were four (4) determination hearings for three (3) properties located in Cumru Township and one in Mt. Penn. The next step in the process will be for these four properties to have certification hearings.

There was one (1) certification hearing held for a property located in Maidencreek Township. The Blight Determination Resolution will be sent to the owner of the property.

Ms. Heckman advised that the Declaration of Taking was filed on December 20, 2021 for the McKinley Avenue property located in the Township of Spring. The property owner has 30 days from the filing of the Declaration to respond. There has been no response at present. There will also be a Declaration of Taking filed for the property located in Lower Heidelberg Township.

8. New Business:

- a. Resolution 2022-1 seeking \$1,750,000 from the Pennsylvania RACP for the Lexington: End-Use Packaging in Reading, PA project of ByHeart, Inc. Mr. Pick advised that ByHeart, Inc. received a grant and the Authority was asked to be a conduit. The project will improve packaging in Berks County and will create approximately 45 new jobs. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Resolution. **Board member Thomas Ruth abstained because of joining the meeting late.**
- b. Cooperation Agreement between the Authority and ByHeart, Inc. for the Lexington: End-Use Packaging in Reading, PA Project. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement.
- c. Agreement between the Authority and the County of Berks related to the RACP grant for the Lexington: End-Use Packaging in Reading, PA project of ByHeart, Inc. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement.
- d. PTO exception to policy. Mr. Pick advised that due to COVID and the various assistance programs being administered by the Authority, several employees were not able to use their Paid Time Off (“PTO”) and have too many days to carry over per the terms of the PTO Policy and requested the Board to pay employees for the PTO not used. Mr. Pick advised the total amount of PTO not used and to be paid would amount to approximately \$5,000.00. A lengthy discussion ensued during which the Board expressed its position that employees should be encouraged to utilize their PTO so they do not “burn out” and remain a productive employee for the Authority. The Board advised that it is disinclined to pay out PTO in the future. A motion was made by Diodato Bassano and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the payout of unused PTO time.
- e. Lease termination for 606 Court Street. Mr. Pick advised that a lump sum payment for early termination of the lease in the amount of \$35,050.05 will need to be made per the terms of the agreement. A motion was made by Diodato Bassano and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Lease Termination.
- f. Stipend rate for intern. Mr. Lewis advised that he spoke to the Intern Coordinator at Kutztown University with respect to an appropriate stipend

rate for the new intern, Ben Murphy. Mr. Lewis was advised that the average stipend rate for an intern is approximately \$11.00/hour. Mr. Pick recommended to the Board the stipend of \$11.00/hour for Mr. Murphy. A motion was made by Thomas Ruth and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the stipend rate of \$11.00/hour for Mr. Murphy.

- g. Future Meetings. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members presented voted in the affirmative to move the time of future meetings to 4:30 p.m., to be held by Zoom until further notice.

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 February 22, 2022. This meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Glenn Yeager, Chairperson