

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

December 15, 2020

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 December 15, 2020 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
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 11/17/20:

Upon motion made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all members of the Board present voted to approve the November 17, 2020 minutes of the Board of this Authority.

3. Report of Treasurer:

Diodato Bassano presented the Profit & Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet as of November 30, 2020. 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 November 20, 2020 through December 15, 2020. A copy of said report is

attached to these Minutes. Upon motion by Eileen Kastura and seconded by Glenn Yeager, all Board members present voted to ratify the list of payments to creditors.

There were no communications.

5. Reports of Committees:

There were no committee reports presented.

6. Unfinished Business:

a. Next Step Program:

Kathy Heckman advised that this program ended December 31, 2020. The last payments were processed in December 2020.

b. Colebrookdale Railroad:

Ken Pick advised that the Railroad continues to receive freight from two customers and Nathaniel is working on providing services to a third customer. Mr. Pick advised that according to Nathaniel Guest, the passenger rail service is fully booked at 50% capacity through the end of the year. Mr. Guest is providing customers the option to get credit for next year if they cancel due to COVID related issues.

c. Armorcast R.A.:

No report.

d. BCNDC Housing:

Thomas Dachowski advise of the following:

- i. 921 Crestview Avenue. This property is part of the program to provide housing for the homeless who are being tested or have tested positive for COVID. The property is ready to occupy. Opportunity House will have a family placed in the property by Friday, December 18, 2020.
 - ii. Travel Trailers. The Authority purchased three travel trailers which have been delivered to the Hope Rescue Mission to provide shelter to homeless persons who need to quarantine.
- e. Small Business Restart Grant (“SBRG”) Program: Peter Battaglia began his presentation notifying the Authority Board that there have been some discrepancies in the grant pool allocation numbers which he did not find until

preparing for this meeting. Mr. Battaglia will report to the Authority Board next month with an explanation as to the source of the errors. Mr. Battaglia advised that a total of 88 applications were received, of which 28 were approved (with 1 application being withdrawn), and 60 were denied. The total grant monies awarded was \$496,632 for 27 grants.

f. Rent Relief Program: Kathleen Heckman advised that this program ended on November 30, 2020. There were 700 applications received, of which 379 were approved and 321 denied (some were denied due to missing the required documents). The total amount paid was \$1,390,041.00.

g. Miscellaneous Items: None

7. New Business:

a. 2021 Meeting Schedule. It was agreed to change the publication of the meeting schedule to have the meetings be held via Zoom through the end of 2021 due to COVID. If it is determined to be safe to hold in-person meetings, the schedule will be re-advertised. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to publish the meeting schedule with the change requested.

b. Agreement with BCNDC providing \$75,000 from the federal HOME Program towards the development of 1951 Woodvale Avenue, Mount Penn, PA. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement.

c. Agreement with BCNDC providing \$160,000 from the federal HOME Program towards the development of 211 Taft Avenue, Muhlenberg Township. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement.

d. First amendment to funding agreement with Berks Coalition to End Homelessness providing an additional \$40,000 for hotel/motel vouchers. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the first amendment.

e. 2021 Budget. Mr. Pick advised that the tentative budget has been prepared and presented to the Board. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the tentative 2021 budget.

- f. **Review of R.L. Banks Study.** Mr. Pick advised that the National Rail Consulting Group reviewed the report prepared by R.L. Banks & Associates and concluded that the report was accurate and that the Authority could move forward with the loan process. Mr. Pick advised that the Authority will submit a letter of interest to U.S. Transportation, after which an outside consultant looks over the financial information provided and if approved, a loan proposal would be made to the Authority. The Board asked if the National Rail Consulting Group report was forwarded to the County Commissioners for review. Mr. Pick advised that it was not. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members voted in the affirmative to forward the National Rail Consulting Group report to the County Commissioners.

8. Miscellaneous:

- a. **PTO.** Mr. Pick advised that due to COVID and the demand for employees to work and not be able to take paid time off, he requested that employees be permitted to carry over PTO (paid time off) pursuant to Authority policy, and that they be paid for any remaining PTO. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to carry over PTO pursuant to the Authority's policy and to pay any remaining PTO through payroll disbursement.

9. Executive Session.

At 4:12 p.m., the Board entered into executive session.

10. 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 January 26, 2021. This meeting was adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Glenn Yeager, Chairman