

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

May 25, 2021

Chairman Glenn Yeager called the meeting of the Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks to order at 2:59 P.M. on May 25, 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  
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  
Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt  
Imelba Rodriguez, Strive Real Estate, LLC  
Detra Harris, Strive Real Estate, LLC

**2. Reading and approval of minutes of the meeting of 4/27/21:**

Upon motion made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all members of the Board present voted to approve the April 27, 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 April 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 April 1, 2021 through April 30, 2021 and asked the Board to ratify the list of payments to creditors. 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 ratify the list of payments to creditors.

Diodato Bassano presented the list of payments to creditors representing the period of March 29, 2021 through May 28, 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. Visitors**

Commissioner Kevin Barnhardt attended the meeting and explained that he was present to listen to the meeting.

Imelba Rodriguez of Strive Real Estate, LLC and Strive Wealth Builders, LLC attended the meeting and explained that she was present to listen and learn.

**7. Unfinished Business:**

a. Rentals:

Kathy Heckman advised that there are two properties in Muhlenberg Township which the Authority is offering to sell to Berks Housing Authority. A walk thru of the properties is scheduled for May 27, 2021 and a decision will be made at that time by Berks Housing Authority. Ms. Heckman then advised that there are two vacancies at the East Lancaster Avenue properties. Both of the apartment units are under contract with Service Access Management (SAM) and will be rented to a SAM consumer.

Mr. Dachowski advised that Kraft Codes inspected Apartment Unit #1 located on E. Lancaster Avenue. Mr. Dachowski advised that no work is need on Apartment #1. Mr. Dachowski advised that he will inspect Apartment #4 next

week. Mr. Dachowski explained that he is not expecting any repairs as the previous tenant took good care of the rental unit.

b. Colebrookdale Railroad:

- i. Mr. Pick advised that he, Nathaniel Guest and Solicitor Becker are working on the documents for the \$40,000,000.00 loan and pursuing the acquisition of the properties needed to expand the transload facility. Tom Bellairs is still in the process of appraising the properties which will need to be purchased. Mr. Pick advised that one of the required parcels was purchased on May 21, 2021.
- ii. Mr. Pick advised that Boyertown Oil and Propane Company is looking forward to the extension of the rail so propane may be delivered to their facility by rail car in the future. Boyertown Oil and Propane Company anticipates the need of 1 - 3 rail cars of propane each week.
- iii. Mr. Pick advised that the Berks County Commissioners will be visiting the Railroad on Friday, May 28, 2021 to see freight being unloaded.
- iv. Mr. Pick is working with Stone Consulting for the transload facility in Boyertown. It is expected that the \$1,600,000.00 transload project will be bid this summer.
- v. Mr. Pick advised that passengers are back on the train and purchasing tickets.
- vi. Nathaniel Guest has advised Mr. Pick that he is having difficulty finding people to work on the trains as a result at the present time.

c. Housing:

Thomas Dachowski advise of the following:

- i. 615/617/619 Walnut Street. These units will be housing for Veterans. The units have all been cleaned out. The office unit was turned over to Opportunity House last week.
- ii. 544 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street. This is a single family home property. The rehabilitation process has begun with the framing of interior walls.

- iii. 1951 Woodvale Avenue. This property was acquired by BCRA through the Blighted Property Review Committee. The drywall has been installed and is currently being taped and spackled. Mr. Dachowski expects the rehabilitation to be completed in July.
- iv. 1011 Floret Avenue. This property is a new build. The siding and drywall have been completed and the electric is installed. The excavator will be meeting with UGI in order to lay out the gas lines within the next few weeks.

d. Armorcast R.A.:

Mr. Pick advised that Attorney London is working with the landowner's attorney to have BCRA purchase the property. Mr. Pick explained that the plan is to disassemble the building and then turn the lot over to the Borough.

e. Emergency Rental Assistance Program ("ERAP"). Mr. Battaglia advised that there are currently three programs: the Federal ERAP, the State ERAP and the American Rescue Plan for a total of \$40,356,594. Mr. Battaglia advised that it was brought to the Authority's attention that BCEH is not able to process the applications as quickly as expected which is causing a "bottleneck" in the system due to the demand of the programs and BCEH is understaffed. Mr. Battaglia explained that between March 29, 2021 and April 30, 2021, 92 households received funding, between May 1<sup>st</sup> and today (May 25<sup>th</sup>), 97 applicants received ERAP funds. As of this meeting, the American Rescue Plan funds have not been used. Mr. Battaglia advised that 20 applicants received utility assistance. Mr. Battaglia explained that 65% of the Federal ERAP funds must be obligated by September 30, 2021; 65% of the State ERAP funds must be obligated by July 1, 2021; and 50% of the American Rescue Plan funds must be used by March 21, 2022. Mr. Battaglia advised that on average, 100 applications are received each week and only 30 to 35 per week are approved. In order to overcome the current challenges of quickly processing the applications, consideration is being given to hiring more staff at BCRA and/or BCEH, and possibly finding another local administrator. This program has generated three times more the volume of the Rental Relief Program. There are currently 1,966 applications in various stages of which 368 applications are in review for payment. Mr. Pick advised that a new FAQ was issued to answer questions relating to fraud. There is a provision to report fraud to federal authorities which the Authority will do should the need arise.

8. New Business:

- a. First Amendment to Act 137 funding agreement with BCEH increasing funds from \$70,000 to \$143,000. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the First Amendment.
- b. Agreement with the County of Berks related to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program funded by the American Rescue Plan. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement, subject to Solicitor Becker's final review.
- c. Agreement with BCEH related to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program funded by the American Rescue Plan. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement, subject to Solicitor Becker's final review.
- d. First Amendment to the agreement with BCEH related to the federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program. A motion was made by Diodato Bassano and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the First Amendment.
- e. First Amendment to the agreement with BCEH related to the Pennsylvania Emergency Rental Assistance Program. A motion was made by Eileen Kastura and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the First Amendment.
- f. Resolution #2021-5 authorizing a loan from the Berks County Industrial Development Authority for the Exeter MDJ Office. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve Resolution #2021-5.
- g. Resolution #2021-2 authorizing the acquisition of 2438 McKinley Avenue, Spring Township. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve Resolution #2021-2.
- h. Approval of \$1,000,000 funding agreement with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the West Run Business Park. Mr. Pick advised that this Agreement is a take it or leave it agreement and Solicitor Becker need not review the Agreement. Mr. Bassano inquired of Mr. Pick as to whether or not the Authority can comply with the contractual requirements and Mr. Pick

advised the Authority is able to do so. 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.

**9. Miscellaneous:**

Mr. Pick advised that the Berks County Non-Profit Development Corporation will be purchasing 574 Oley Road to relocate MDJ Chieffo's office. The property currently has an auction house, caterer, bingo hall and a single-family home.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business of this Authority, a motion was made by Eileen Kastura to adjourn the meeting of this Authority. The motion was seconded by Diodato Bassano and all members of this Authority present voted in the affirmative. The next meeting of the Board will be June 22, 2021. This meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

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**Glenn Yeager, Chairman**