

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

January 26, 2021

Chairman Glenn Yeager called the meeting of the Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks to order at 3:13 P.M. on January 26, 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 12/15/20:**

Upon motion made by Glenn Yeager and seconded by Theodore Bassano, all members of the Board present voted to approve the December 15, 2020 minutes of the Board of this Authority.

**3. 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 officer of the Authority. In response, Thomas Ruth made a motion nominating the 2020 slate of officers and professional staff to remain the same for calendar year 2021, with the exception that the Secretary and Assistant Treasurer positions will remain vacant until such time as the County Commissioners appoint a new member to the Authority Board position left vacant by Pellegrino Orlando's resignation in October 2020.

The officers and professional staff nominated for calendar year 2021 are as follows:

Chairman:	Glenn Yeager
Vice Chairperson:	Eileen Kastura
Secretary:	Vacant
Assistant Secretary:	Thomas Rudy Ruth
Treasurer:	Theodore Bassano
Assistant Treasurer:	Thomas Rudy Ruth
Solicitor:	Daniel P. Becker, Esquire & the law firm of Kozloff Stoudt, P.C.
Executive Director:	Kenneth L. Pick

Mr. Ruth's motion was seconded by Eileen Kastura. Upon motion duly made and seconded, all Board members present voted to approve the presented slate of Authority officers and professional staff for calendar year 2021.

**4. Report of Treasurer:**

Theodore Bassano presented the Profit & Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2020. 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 accept the report of the Treasurer, including said Profit & Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, subject to audit.

**5. Bills and Communications:**

Theodore Bassano presented the list of payments to creditors representing the period of December 17, 2020 through January 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.

**6. Reports of Committees:**

There were no committee reports presented.

**7. Unfinished Business:**

a. Rentals:

Kathy Heckman advised that there was nothing to report. Mr. Pick advised that only 6 of the 32 residential tenants were in arrears with their rent. Three (3) of the six (6) delinquent tenants are enrolled in the rental program (RAN) that the Authority will be administering, as discussed in Section f. below. One of the six moved out of the rental unit at the end of December.

b. Colebrookdale Railroad:

- i. Mr. Pick advised that the Authority has been chosen to receive a \$991,250 grant from PennDOT for the transload facility in Boyertown. The total construction cost for the transload facility is \$1,600,000.00. The remaining funds will come from the \$40,000,000.00 loan.
- ii. Mr. Pick advised there is a new (fourth) customer interested in using the Colebrookdale Railroad transload facility to ship coal products from Virginia to supply its customers in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland. Mr. Pick advised that the grant money and the Authority's matching funds will be used to improve the transload facility in order to accommodate this new customer.
- iii. A discussion was held regarding the National Rail Consulting Group report which estimates that there will be enough traffic after the railroad renovations and the two transload facilities are completed to pay back the \$40,000,000.00 debt.
- iv. Mr. Pick requested the Board authorize him and Nathaniel Guest to begin the process applying for the \$40,000,000.00 loan. Chairman Yeager noted that the Board now has two independent professional reports confirming that the proposed \$40,000,000.00 railroad renovations are finally viable. A motion was made by Glenn Yeager, and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted to authorize Mr. Pick and Mr. Guest to begin the process to apply for a \$40,000,000.00 loan, and to engage engineering and other professionals that may be necessary in order to complete the application process.

c. Armorcast R.A.:

Mr. Pick advised that there is some movement by the owner to sell the freight station. He anticipated he will have more information to report at the next Board meeting.

d. BCNDC Housing:

Thomas Dachowski advise of the following:

- i. 1408 Meade Street. Rehabilitation of this property is complete, and there is a buyer for the property.
- ii. 367 Mohrsville Road. Rehabilitation of this property is completed, and there is a buyer for the property at the price of \$160,000.00, which is a \$75,000.00 shortfall. The buyer is a family of six who have been renting housing for the last 15 years.
- iii. Floret Avenue. This is a new construction project. Excavation started and the foundation is completed.
- iv. 10 Mayberry Street. Settlement occurred on this property. Opportunity House will utilize this property.
- v. 2253 Raymond Street. Settlement occurred on this property. Family Promise will utilize this property.
- vi. 615/617/619 Walnut Street. These are multi-unit buildings.
  - i. 615/617 Walnut Street. These properties will be future projects for veterans' housing.
  - ii. 619 Walnut Street. This property is being cleaned, emptied and repaired. It will be available next week to Opportunity House for their use of providing shelter to the homeless with COVID-19.

e. Blighted Property Review Committee:

Thomas Dachowski reported that the Committee took the following action:

- i. 333 N. Church Street. Authorized the second Blight Determination Resolution (BDR) and letter sent to Lower Heidelberg Township. The BDR will be posted at the property.
- ii. 2438 McKinley Avenue. Authorized issuance of a letter to the County Planning Commission and the Township of Spring Planning Commission for the reuse of the property.

- iii. 1951 Woodvale Avenue. Mr. Dachowski advised that the property at 1951 Woodvale Avenue, which the Authority acquired through the Blighted Property Committee, is moving forward. He explained the interior reframing is finished and the mechanical “ruff-ins” are currently underway. The project should be completed in a few months.
  
- f. Rental Assistance Need (RAN) Program. This program is a short-term rental assistance program. Eligible applicants may receive \$1,000.00 a month for 3 months, a maximum of \$3,000.00. Mr. Battaglia advised that only 64 of the 147 applicants have been approved. Mr. Battaglia advised that the program is more streamlined than the original Rent Relief Program. The RAN program is an extension of the RRP for tenants living in Berks County but outside of the City of Reading. Under the RAN, the applicants need only verify that they are in arrears or will need assistance in the future because they are still unemployed or have had a reduction in income. The amount expended so far for this program is \$144,454.01. If all 147 applicants qualified and were approved, \$441,000 would be expended. The deadline for submitting an application is February 1, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Ms. Heckman advised that she believes some tenants may not understand that program is based on either employment status or income eligibility.
  
- g. Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Program. Mr. Pick advised that the County was granted \$12,549,393.60 from the Treasury Department for rental assistance, rent arrearages, future rent, utility arrearages and other rental costs. The County has authorized the Authority to administer the grant. Mr. Pick and Mr. Battaglia have been working with non-profits and social service agencies to craft this program for the citizens of Berks County who have been affected by COVID. Mr. Pick advised that 10% of the funds are available for administration. Mr. Pick and Mr. Battaglia are working on the details and will present a program outline to the County Commissioners on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Authority has 12 months to administer and disburse the funds. Mr. Battaglia advised that he and Mr. Pick are in the process of identifying a software company to structure the program. The goal is to have the program operating by March 1, 2021.

8. New Business:

- a. Subrecipient Grant Agreement with the County of Berks. Mr. Pick advised that he, Solicitor Becker and the County Solicitor are in the process of preparing a Subrecipient Grant Agreement (“Agreement”) for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. As a result of the short deadline to approve and execute the Agreement, Mr. Pick asked Chairman Yeager to approve the Subrecipient Agreement conditional upon his, Solicitor Becker and the administrative staff’s

completion of a satisfactory agreement and any comments from 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 execution of the Agreement once finalized.

**9. Miscellaneous:**

None

**10. Executive Session.**

At 4:16 p.m., the Board recessed and entered into executive session. The Board concluded the executive session and reconvened the regular meeting at 4:42 p.m.

**11. Adjournment:**

There being no further business, 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 23, 2021. This meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

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**Glenn Yeager, Chairman**