

Pittsfield Economic Development Authority
January 9, 2013

Meeting Minutes

In attendance were Chairman Callahan, Dan Bianchi, Mike Matthews, Pam Green, George Whaling, Christina Barrett, Patrick Reuss, Paul Dalton, and Mike Filpi, Board Members.

Also in attendance was Beth Goodman, legal counsel, Cory Thurston, Executive Director, and Colleen Hunter-Mullett, Clerk.

I. Administration

Call to Order

Chairman Callahan called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM, reminding all present that the meeting was being both audio and video recorded.

Approval of December 11, 2012 meeting minutes

There was a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 11, 2012 as presented, seconded and carried.

II. Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Mr. Thurston stated that this committee had not met since the last Board meeting.

Special Projects – Ms. Green stated that her committee has also not met since the last Board meeting and she had no updates but asked Mr. Thurston to share his update. Mr. Thurston informed the Board that he had received a response from EPA and that the response was positive and he hopes to schedule a meeting with them within the next month in Boston. Both Ms. Green and Mr. Whaling stated that they would be happy to attend the meeting in Boston.

Finance – Mr. Matthews stated that he had not received any feedback from the proposed budget that was distributed at the last meeting and he would like to have the budget formally approved.

There was a motion to approve the budget as presented, seconded and carried.

Mr. Matthews informed the Board that PEDDA had received an engagement letter from the auditor, which was nothing out of the ordinary. Mr. Thurston informed the Board that the cost is less than last year. Chairman Callahan stated that the auditor has provided a good service to PEDDA in the past and recommended retaining them again.

There was a motion to approve the engagement letter with Adelson Moynahan, seconded and carried.

Mr. Matthews informed the Board that he would be giving quarterly reviews of the budget at Board meetings in the future. Chairman Callahan stated that if meetings were going to be longer because of this review, he will try to let Board members know ahead of time so that they can plan their schedules.

Marketing – Mr. Whaling stated that this committee is status quo and that Winstanley will be at PEDa the last week of January to meet with him.

Mayor Bianchi asked Mr. Whaling to explain his plans for an internet marketing effort. Mr. Whaling stated that Winstanley had submitted a price to do an internet marketing effort which was more than PEDa could handle. They Mayor asked if Mr. Whaling had any indication how effective internet marketing would be. Mr. Whaling stated that he believes internet marketing is more effective than traditional marketing based on conversations he's had with Nate Winstanley.

Mr. Whaling informed the Board that the William Stanley Business Park (WSBP) is listed on LoopNet and CoStar, which are highly utilized sites with millions of hits daily. He stated that he had no hard numbers as to how many people have searched WSBP. Chairman Callahan encouraged Board members to look at the sites.

Mr. Thurston stated that WSBP is also on Facebook. Ms. Barrett stated that this is good, as long as PEDa has someone to manage the Facebook page. Mr. Thurston informed the Board that he has a group that is developing a database of life science companies within a 100 mile radius to send direct mail marketing or email blasts.

III. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Thurston informed the Board that the responses to the strategic vision statement are currently being evaluated and a second version will be prepared.

Mr. Thurston informed the Board that a letter had been sent to MA Life Sciences requesting funding assistance but he has not heard back from them as of yet. He stated that Senator Downing will also be following up on it as well.

Mayor Bianchi informed the Board that he's putting together a life sciences task force to assist PEDa in demonstrating synergy with education and life sciences in Berkshire County in order to get the earmark released. He explained that he's going to different companies to explain what he's trying to do with a regional initiative. He believes that once synergy is demonstrated the earmarked money will be released to PEDa. He stated that he believes that agriculture has a real relationship to the life sciences and he'd like to see PEDa join with the agricultural program at UMASS.

Mr. Whaling wondered if PEDa has enough resources behind this effort or should PEDa consider hiring someone for 3-6 months to spearhead this work. Mr. Thurston informed him that he's looking to obtain funding from UMASS for this purpose. Mr. Whaling suggested taking a trip to visit another location that has already been through this.

Chairman Callahan asked if PEDA is still on the timeline to have its application submitted in February. Mr. Thurston confirmed that the City will be filing the application in February. Mayor Bianchi informed the Board that the City has some good people assisting with the application process. Chairman Callahan asked how much money was being requested. Mr. Thurston informed him that PEDA had requested \$125,000.

Silver Lake Shoreline – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that the agreements have all been signed and the dedication is scheduled for the spring of 2014.

MassDOT-Bridge – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that they are extending the scope of work for the bridge beyond the intersection with Woodlawn and Kellogg St. for 500 feet in each direction, which will save the City a good deal of money. They expect to break ground in late summer.

Project Matrix – submitted for Board review.

Mr. Thurston informed the Board that annual reports will be submitted to the Board for review at next month's meeting.

Mr. Thurston reviewed some objectives for the coming year and informed the Board that everyone must submit their open meeting and ethics paperwork to the City Clerk's office as soon as possible.

Mr. Filpi informed the Board that he is still seeking funding from the AFLCIO, as well as three other groups he plans to tap.

Mr. Thurston informed the Board that with the resignation of Mr. Grunin, the Finance Committee is in need of another member. He asked Board members to consider it.

Chairman Callahan stated that David Curtis is the new head of 1Berkshire and believes that there is currently good synergy between 1Berkshire and PEDA. Mr. Matthews asked if there was a central database of information because PEDA should be tracking those people that came from Berkshire County and try to recruit them to return to the Berkshires with their businesses. Mr. Whaling stated that Downtown Inc., 1Berkshire and PEDA should all be working on a central database for prospect management. Mr. Matthews stated that if it was a funding issue, he'd like the opportunity to use PEDA funds to take lead role in an effort such as this.

IV. Executive Session

There was unanimous roll call vote taken to enter into executive session for the purposes of discussing acquisition, lease and value of real property.

Ms. Barrett left the meeting before exiting executive session.

There was a unanimous roll call vote to exit executive session.

There was a motion to adjourn at 9:10 AM, seconded and carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Hunter-Mullett, Clerk