

Pittsfield Economic Development Authority  
January 15, 2014

Meeting Minutes

In attendance were Board Members Mick Callahan, George Whaling, Pam Green, Mike Filpi, Mike Matthews, Paul Dalton, Doug Crane, Dan Bianchi, and Larry Tallman.

Also in attendance was Doug Clark, Pittsfield DCD Director, 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 those present that they were being both audio and video recorded.

Approval of December 10, 2013 Minutes – **There was a motion to approve the December 10, 2013 meeting minutes as presented, seconded and carried.**

**II. Committee Reports**

Finance – Mr. Matthews informed the Board that PEDA had received the letter of engagement with Adelson & Company for auditing services for 2013, at a cost of \$13,500, which included a modest increase. Mr. Matthews reviewed the auditing process for the benefit of new Board members.

**There was a motion to approve the auditing services of Adelson & Company, PC at a cost of \$13,500.00, seconded and carried.**

MBTA Railcar Initiative – Mr. Crane informed the Board that there were eight or nine interested bidders that he was aware of competing for this business, each with their own objectives. The project is estimated at 850 million dollars, will generate approximately 200-250 manufacturing jobs and is estimated to be a 10-year contract. Mr. Crane stated that he feels good about Berkshire County's chances in getting potential bidders to locate here.

Mr. Crane stated that he was looking to supplement the existing literature materials in an effort to attract these bidders. He informed the Board that initial bids are due at the end of February.

Mr. Thurston reminded Board members that the Board approved offering \$1,000,000.00 as an incentive to these bidders in an effort to get the successful bidder to locate on the 40's parcel. Mr. Thurston informed the Board that he is working on a "supply chain" effort and would be attending a meeting to discuss on January 28, 2014.

Mr. Thurston informed the Board that he believes Fall River, Chicopee and either Westfield or West Springfield are also competing with sites of their own. He informed the Board that credits are being offered for the location that offers the most economic impact in Massachusetts and that he is talking with companies from China and Korea.

Mr. Whaling asked if the site needed to be identified by bidders in the Pre-Bid. Mr. Thurston stated that he believed that was the case. Mr. Whaling asked if Sabic was a component supplier. Mr. Crane confirmed that they were.

Mr. Thurston informed the Board that an award is scheduled for December 2014 or January 2015. Mr. Matthews asked Mr. Thurston if there were any reactions from candidates that had seen the site. Mr. Thurston informed him that there was some concern expressed about the construction of a building in such a short period of time and the relatively small size of the parcel, but he is still flushing out potential concerns.

Mr. Filpi stated that the lower labor costs in this area are a benefit to potential bidders, as well as the potential for WMECO industrial/commercial electrical distribution costs being reduced in the near future.

Chairman Callahan stated that there is an opportunity for Mr. Whaling's marketing group to work with 1Berkshire on the supplier network.

Mayor Bianchi in discussions with Sabic, if there was any discussion of using unused portions of their building. Mr. Thurston confirmed that these discussions had begun and that Sabic is willing to explore them.

Pittsfield Life Sciences Initiative – Mayor Bianchi informed the Board that the City Council approved the acceptance of \$64,500 from PEDDA to cover the cost of Phase II of the study. He stated that Mr. Jané had done a good job of identifying the innovation link in the Phase I report, but expressed his disappointment in the length of time it's taking the MA Life Sciences to award the money for the project. He informed the Board that he is exploring other funding options, including private investment.

Mr. Thurston stated that the Center should be able to be used by the public for startup companies or mentoring options in order to take advantage of the expertise in the Berkshires. Mr. Thurston informed the Board that it will be Mr. Jané's job to now turn letters of intent into letters of commitment in Phase II of this project.

Mr. Thurston informed the Board that Senator Downing has had a discussion with MA Life Sciences and a meeting has been scheduled for the end of the week. Mr. Thurston informed the Board that the Phase II report is due before April in order to get the final ask to MA Life Sciences in May.

### III. Executive Director's Report

40's Foundation Study – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that the survey is underway and the scope has been written. The cost is under \$7,000. He also informed the Board that he had contracted for a couple of artist rendering to show what a building might look like on this site.

Mr. Whaling asked when the analysis would be completed. Mr. Thurston informed him that it should be done within two weeks. Mr. Thurston confirmed for Mr. Whaling that the site is 120,000 sq. ft.

Woodlawn Avenue Bridge – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that the final hurdle was the City Council approval of the land taking, which had been approved that last night's council meeting and that the project should still make this spring's construction season.

Silver Lake ERE's – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that this should be completed within sixty (60) days.

Storm Water Basin – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that testing had been done during a rain storm and the results showed nothing unexpected. Mr. Thurston also informed the Board that work on the fore-bay was completed at the end of December 2013 and that the spillway dam was armored with new material to prevent erosion.

Northeast Utilities Lease – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that the agreement is complete and ready for Board vote. Ms. Goodman informed the Board that there were some changes that WMECO wanted to the agreement. Mr. Thurston reviewed the changes requested, stating that they were not substantive. Chairman Callahan reviewed for the Board what WMECO will be doing on this parcel.

**There was a motion to approve the lease with Northeast Utilities as submitted, seconded and carried.**

Mr. Thurston distributed "Build it in the Berkshires" business cards for each Board member to hand out to potential companies.

Chairman Callahan informed the Board that he and Doug Clark and Mr. Thurston had met with representative of MassDevelopment to discuss a possible collaborative relationship and the possibility of entering into a contract with Mass Development for the purposes of identifying the advantages and disadvantages of sites in Berkshire County. Mayor Bianchi stated that this is the kind of inventory of knowledge that the City needs and he's glad that MassDevelopment is willing to participate.

Mr. Clark stated that, in his opinion, the more information the City has at its fingertips on all sites and all opportunities will be extremely beneficial to the areas economic development

plan. Mr. Clark reviewed what he felt some of the hurdles might be. Mr. Clark stated that there may be a need to re-vision the campus plan that came out of the original Master Planning process.

Chairman Callahan stated that MassDevelopment, the City's Department of Community Development and PEDDA would share the costs of developing this detailed inventory list.

2013 Review – Mr. Thurston informed the Board that he would send out the 2013 review via e-mail to Board members.

There was some discussion between Mr. Tallman and Mr. Thurston regarding where the proposed rail cars would be delivered to. Mr. Thurston stated that they would be delivered to Boston or just outside of Boston by either truck, by rail with a special permit or flatbed by rail.

#### **IV. Meeting Calendar**

The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2014 at 8:00 AM.

#### **V. There was a motion to adjourn at 8:50 AM, seconded and carried.**

Respectfully submitted,



Colleen Hunter-Mullett  
Clerk