

Pittsfield Economic Development Authority

Board Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2015

The following Board Members were in attendance: Vice Chairman, Christina Barrett, Michael Matthews, Pam Green, Larry Tallman, Paul Dalton, Doug Crane and Mayor Dan Bianchi. Also in attendance Cory Thurston, PEDAs Executive Director, Beth Goodman, Legal Counsel.

I. Administration

Call to Order: In the absence of Chairman Mick Callahan, Vice Chairman, Christina Barrett called the meeting to order at 8:01 am. She reminded everyone that the meeting was being audio and video recorded.

Executive Director Cory Thurston was acting clerk for the meeting.

Approval of September 9th meeting minutes: **A motion was made and seconded to approve the September 9th minutes; VOTE unanimous**

II. Committee Reports

Finance

Committee Chair Mike Matthews reported that the 3rd quarter financials were not complete and the finance committee would be meeting to review these before the next board meeting.

Mike then reported on behalf of Chairman Callahan, that he had selected Ryan Killeen, CPA to recommend to the Board for appointment as Treasurer of the organization. Mike reviewed Ryan's background; He has had over 9 years working with Fenton, Pinsonnault & Quinn, P.C. and had also worked for almost 5 years as a Senior Planning Analysis with Berkshire Life. He is a graduate of MCLA. The finance committee has recommended a stipend of \$2000 for the position.

In response to a question the appointment process was explained and Cory reiterated the requirement for a Treasurer and the fact by statute, the Treasurer was not a voting member of the board and not an employee of PEDAs. The appointment does not have a term of office and any evaluation of performance is up to the board. The job description provides the basis for any future performance review. Being no further comment or questions;

Mike Matthews made a motion to approve the appointment of Ryan Killeen as Treasurer and to approve an annual stipend of \$2,000 for that position. Pam Green seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Marketing

Cory reported on the first online ad campaign with the Albany Business Review. I ran for one week and reached over 23,000 email addresses twice each day. The “5 Reasons” teaser, resulted in 29 click thrus but no registrations. Not sure how to judge this but think email exposure is a good way to build awareness and he believes that it’s important to maintain exposure in the Albany area.

Facebook activity is encouraging; the bridge construction pictures are popular and received a number of new likes. We also cross promoted the BIC with facebook postings following the Berkshire Bank sponsorship announcement. We have also posted the new 1Berkshire “Life Is Calling” video on our web site. In response to a question from the Mayor, Thurston said that once the BIC had established its own web site we would be sure to link the sites and cross promote events where appropriate.

Executive Committee

Christina Barrett reported that she, Patrick Reese and Mick Callahan had conducted a Directors performance review and had solicited input from board members and community leaders. She outlined the Directors strengths and reviewed the committees focus areas for the New Year. They include strategic planning, a broader communication outreach and expanded marketing in Albany, the Pioneer Valley, Worcester and Boston. The committee will meet again in January to set goals and then follow up a year later with another formal review.

Cory paused to introduce Janis Akerstrom, the new Community Development Director for the City of Pittsfield, who had just joined the meeting.

Cory announced that there have been two new prospect inquiries. One has visited 3 times and is looking at the 40’s site because of the existing slab. The other may not be suitable for the WSBP but they are looking to move here from another state and we organized a meeting in the Mayor’s office to offer support. The lead on this prospect has been turned over to Janis on behalf of the City and everyone’s cooperating to help find an appropriate location for this business.

III. Executive Directors Report

Christina discussed the BIC progress on marketing. She displayed the new BIC logo that has been designed and explained that their web site is being developed now and will include a member section and space/equipment reservation space. She also displayed the latest building rendering. Cory had attended the BIC board meeting and reiterated the excitement for the Berkshire Bank donation and how a portion of the pledge was a matching program to encourage internships at member companies. He highlighted the BIC annual report which was included in the board books. Their yearend financial reports will be available by the December meeting.

The construction bids have been received and are under review by the BIC and the OPM for the City. A statement is expected soon.

I continue to work on site design and utility work that will support the BIC and be available to other tenants. We have applied for an EDA Grant to cover the cost for the majority of this work. The grant application was well received but we have been advised to reapply in the new fiscal year which has just begun. The equipment request will be removed from the submission and applied for later. Essentially the EDA will not consider this until we have secured the facility to house the equipment.

The Mayor express concern that some BIC board members were still confused as to the location of the facility and wondered if we could erect a sign on the property? Cory replied that, yes it's in the plan we been waiting for the official logo and the type style so the sign will conform. That is now complete so as soon as the BIC approves our design we'll have a sign in the ground.

The Woodlawn Bridge effort continues to move forward, the steel is to be installed the end of the month and then the deck will be poured. Beth Goodman is still working with the City on the easement but all is going well. Cory expects a lot of traffic hence, great exposure, for the park once it's open to the public.

There was nothing new to report on the EPA issue. We continuing to peruse improvements to the stormwater system and I have engaged a consultant for a second opinion.

Tyler St. TDI community interviews held and the planning process is underway with a planning firm from Saratoga, NY. The Mayor commented on the value of this project in growing and revitalizing this unique mixed use neighborhood.

IV. Other Business

The next meeting date is December 9th. The Finance and Marketing committees will meet prior to then.

I. Adjournment

Being no further business, **Mike Matthews made a motion to adjourn at 8:42, seconded by Paul Dalton passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted:

Corydon L Thurston, Acting Clerk