

READING PARKING AUTHORITY

Minutes of Reading Parking Authority Board Meeting – May 19, 2020

1) **Meeting Called to Order.**

The Reading Parking Authority's regular board meeting was called to order on May 19, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. by Frank Denbowski, Chairperson. It was held at the Reading Parking Authority, 613 Franklin Street, Reading, PA 19602, pursuant to notice published and posted according to law.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in conformity with CDC guidelines, some of the RPA Board members and staff participated in the meeting remotely via telephone. The physical meeting was closed to the public but notice published and posted prior to the meeting provided members of the public with access via telephone to listen to and take part in the meeting. A recording of the meeting was made and is available on the Authority's website.

Individuals Present.

RPA Board Members:

Frank Denbowski, Chairperson

Timothy J. Profit, Vice-Chairperson

Julia Domena, Treasurer (*participated remotely*)

Nate Rivera, Secretary (*participated remotely*)

Daniel Laws, Assistant Secretary (*participated remotely*)

Others Present: Nathan L. Matz, RPA Executive Director; Michael McGrath, RPA Director of Finance; Kristen Stubblebine, RPA Office Manager; Bart Ganster, PEO Supervisor; Mahlon J. Boyer, Esquire, General Solicitor (*participated remotely*); and Danielle Reardon.

Members of Public: Jeremy Long, Reading Eagle (*participated remotely*); Meggan Kerber, Berks Art Council (*participated remotely*) and Mike Miller (*participated remotely*).

2) **Pledge of Allegiance.**

3) **Moment of Silence.**

4) Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

5) Approval of Minutes.

Mr. Profit made a motion to approve the April 21, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes. Second by Ms. Domena. Motion passed unanimously.

6) Approval of Accounts Payable.

Mr. Laws made a motion to approve the Authority's accounts payable invoices for May 2020 via the Authority's general fund in the total amount of \$103,694.77. Second by Mr. Profit. Motion pass unanimously.

7) General Solicitor Report.

a) RTK Resolution.

Mahlon J. Boyer, Esquire, Authority Solicitor, addressed the Board. He presented Resolution 2020-11 to the Board for the proposed adoption of a Right-to-Know Policy. Mr. Boyer confirmed that there is already a Right-to-Know process in place for the Authority. He currently serves as the Authority's Open Records Officer. The proposed Policy mirrors the current procedure of the Authority and confirms its compliance with the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law. Mr. Denbowski said that the proposed Policy is not meant to change the current Right-to-Know procedure of the Authority but reaffirms what that procedure is and that the Authority is complying with the current Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law. Mr. Laws made a motion to approve the Resolution. Seconded by Mr. Profit. Motion passed unanimously.

b) DID PILOT Agreement.

Mr. Boyer said that he had been in contact with the Downtown Improvement District's ("DID") solicitor, Joan London, Esquire to discuss a proposed PILOT Agreement between the Authority and DID. Mr. Matz confirmed that he had spoken to DID's Executive Director to discuss terms of a PILOT Agreement. Mr. Denbowski said that the Authority currently provides parking spaces to DID in the Convention Center Garage and that there will be one space provided to DID at the State Lot. These spaces are provided in lieu of any monetary payment by the Authority to DID. Mr. Denbowski said that this current agreement between the parties needs to be memorialized in a PILOT agreement for the benefit of future boards. He said that the Authority is not obligated to pay taxes but wants to be a good community partner. Mr. Boyer said that he would provide an update regarding the agreement after hearing from Ms. London.

c) Parking Agreement with RSD.

Mr. Boyer said that the Authority had previously discontinued enforcement of street sweeping violations due to the COVID-19 pandemic and in agreement with the City to forego such enforcement. The enforcement did not occur because it was thought that more residents would need parking due to the ongoing stay-at-home order. Subsequently, the City noted a need to restart enforcement due to the accumulation of debris and the effect of accumulating debris on the sewer system. Therefore, the Authority asked if the Reading School District would allow residents to park in the School District's parking lots to permit the street sweeping to occur. In that regard, a Limited Use Parking Agreement was developed between the Authority and the School District. Residents were permitted use of specified School District parking lots during street sweeping enforcement times and pursuant to requirements more fully set forth in the Limited Use Parking Agreement. A consensus was reached between the Authority and the School District to approve the Limited Use Parking Agreement and to permit the use of the School District parking lots. Mr. Profit made a motion to ratify the Limited Use Parking Agreement. Second by Ms. Domena. Motion passed unanimously.

d) Front & Washington Garage Title Insurance.

Mr. Boyer said that the Reading Redevelopment Authority was required to transfer the real property known as 27 N. 2nd Street to the Authority based upon a prior lease buyout. The question of whether to obtain title insurance for the transfer was addressed and it was decided to permit the property transfer from the Redevelopment Authority to the Reading Parking Authority without title insurance. Mr. Profit made a motion to proceed without title insurance. Mr. Denbowski seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

8) Labor Solicitor Report.

No report.

9) Executive Director Report.

a) COVID-19 Update.

Nathan Matz, Executive Director, addressed the Board. He said that the Authority's maintenance staff had returned to full-time employment. The Authority has undertaken several measures to protect against COVID-19 and in conformity with CDC guidelines. Employee temperatures are taken and there is a strict cleaning process in place at the Authority.

b) Desman/contractor for Nathan Contracting.

Mr. Matz said that Nathan Contracting, Inc. had submitted a proposed contract for its work on the Garage Improvement Project. The Board had previously issued a Notice of Intent to Award to Nathan's Contracting, Inc. Mr. Matz said that Nathan's Contracting will

cover the general contracting portion of the project. They have submitted a standard contract, which Mr. Boyer reviewed and approved. Nathan's Contracting also submitted the required Insurance Certificate naming the Authority as an additional insured and provided the required Performance and Payment Bonds. Mr. Boyer recommended approval of the proposed contract with Nathan's Contracting and to issue a Notice to Proceed to Nathan's Contracting. Mr. Denbowski asked if there is a procedure for change orders during the project. Mr. Boyer confirmed that change orders will have to be submitted to and approved by the Board. Mr. Profit made a motion to approve the contract with Nathan's Contracting and to issue a Notice to Proceed. Second by Mr. Laws. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Matz reviewed the timing of the Project. The contractors will generally work on two garages at the same time. Work will start at the South Penn Garage and a yet to be chosen garage. Mr. Matz was going to meet with Nathan's Contracting later in the week to discuss the Project. Mr. Denbowski noted that the Project is set to end in December 2021 although Mr. Matz said work on the Project will be weather dependent.

Mr. Matz also confirmed that new RFP's have been issued for the mechanical and plumbing portions of the Project. There was a pre-bid meeting two weeks prior to the Board Meeting.

c) Downtown Art Project

Meggan Kerber, Executive Director of the Berks Arts Council addressed the Board. She was accompanied by Mike Miller, a muralist. Mr. Matz introduced Ms. Kerber and referred to an email of May 12, 2020 from Ms. Kerber to Mr. Matz that addressed a public art initiative for the City of Reading. Ms. Kerber has requested a partnership with the Authority to utilize several of its garages for art installations. 4th and Cherry Street, South Penn and the Chiarelli Garages have been suggested for the installations. Mr. Denbowski welcomed Ms. Kerber and noted her plan presentation presents an exciting initiative for downtown Reading.

Ms. Kerber noted the revitalization effort is meant to inspire and unite the community. She has had discussions with several community leaders. She wants to create a mural corridor from 7th and Cherry Street to Judy's on Cherry and proceeding over to Court Street. She said that the RPA's parking garages are key for foot traffic. The murals would beautify the noted area. There is a planned installation of approximately 20 murals, which would be temporary. The murals would be attached to the parking garages with plywood and not painted on the physical structure. The work would be done in consultation with the Authority and Mr. Mike Miller.

Mr. Miller addressed the Board. He said that he helped create the West Reading art corridor. The proposed murals are not large scale but are more like paintings in a gallery. They will be individual works of art. They are meant to appeal to pedestrian traffic. They will be approximately 4' x 4'. The artists will work from home and a small crew will attach the paintings to the parking garages. The paintings can be moved or removed. The Greater Reading Chamber Alliance is going to partner in this initiative.

A call for artists will be issued after the plans for the murals are solidified. There will be meetings held with the Authority to determine which works of art should be displayed. Mr. Profit asked how long the murals will last. Mr. Miller said that the use of plywood and specific paints would permit a life span of approximately 15-20 years without maintenance.

Mr. Denbowski asked if there is a proposed timeline. Ms. Kerber hopes to have a call for artists in June with the mural installation to occur in August or September. She said that the murals will make the garages look better and more welcoming. This will also be good for the community.

Mr. Rivera asked if there is a cost to the Authority for the planned installation. Ms. Kerber suggested a cost of approximately \$2500-\$3500 to support the installation of the murals. Mr. Rivera asked if there will be local artists utilized for this work. Ms. Kerber confirmed that the project will focus on local artists and will include City artists if they respond to the call for artists. She plans to reach out to City artists. Ms. Kerber also noted the murals may last approximately 15 years but the goal is to replace them every five years with new works of art.

Mr. Denbowski asked what Ms. Kerber needs to move forward. She said that she needs a verbal commitment with a future approval of the design plan. Mr. Denbowski polled the Board to determine if there was a consensus to proceed with the mural project. Each Authority Board Member noted their support for the project. Mr. Denbowski said that the Authority is committed to be a partner in the project.

d) Standardized Pricing for Monthly Contracts

Members of the Board were presented with a spreadsheet listing the Authority's monthly parking contracts. It is an internal document for accounting purposes. Mr. Denbowski confirmed that there is no action needed by the Board at this time, but the information is being provided for their edification and to know the status of current and past contracts. He suggested that members of the Board should contact Mr. Matz if they have any questions. Mr. Denbowski said that the spreadsheet was very well done and complimented the Authority's management team. Mr. Matz said it is the Authority's goal that all customers should be paying a standard price. Mr. Denbowski agreed and said there needs to be consistency in pricing.

e) Mobile Parking Provider.

Mr. Matz said that the mobile parking provider used by the Authority has ceased operations. Due to that, the Authority plans to switch its mobile payment provider. This will not cause a disruption as there is no meter enforcement at this time. A new provider will be in place by the time meter enforcement restarts. Mr. Denbowski complimented Mr. Matz and said that he acted quickly to resolve the situation. Mr. Matz also confirmed that obtaining a new provider will be at no cost to the Authority. He expects that the new provider will offer a better system going forward with a better user experience.

f) Election Day Parking.

Mr. Matz said that the State Lot will be free for use by voters on election day. The City voting precincts are going to be combined and will be located at the Santander Arena due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Poll workers will be provided parking at the Convention Center Garage at no cost.

10) Director of Finance Report

Michael McGrath, the Authority's Director of Finance addressed the Board. He noted that April 2020 was tough for the Authority. The Authority's gross revenue was approximately one-half of the amount it was in 2019. Total gross revenue for April 2020 was \$328,081. Transient/daily parking revenue was down approximately 90%. Permit revenue was also lower because the Authority tried to accommodate businesses with their monthly payment requirements. There were no events, which reduced event revenue by roughly \$40,000 compared to last year and there was no meter enforcement, which reduced revenue approximately \$40,000 compared to last year.

The Authority has attempted to mitigate its expenses. Professional and temp fees have been reduced. The reduction in hourly rates from legal counsel has resulted in an estimated savings of approximately \$20,000. There was also a workforce furlough in April, which resulted in a savings of approximately \$55,000.

For the month of April, operating income was -\$81,722. Net income was -\$153,877. Year-to-date, gross revenue is \$304,630 unfavorable to budget. Efforts to reduce expenses resulted in a year-to-date favorable to budget amount of \$78,479. Year-to-date, the Authority generated income of \$507,316, which is \$262,663 less than last year.

In regard to cashflow, the Authority had unrestricted cash of approximately \$1.5 million as of January 1, 2020. To date, the Authority has only incurred an outflow of cash in the amount of \$14,680.49. Mr. Profit said that although the Authority is suffering reduced revenue, the cashflow is essentially neutral. He said that the Authority is doing an excellent job under the circumstances.

Mr. Denbowski said that the Authority has been proactive in its efforts to control the current circumstances. He noted his appreciation to Mr. Matz and Mr. McGrath. Mr. McGrath said that the proactive approach started in March 2020. The Authority reached out to its vendors at that time. It also reached out to Fulton Bank to request payment deferrals, which Fulton permitted for May, June and July 2020. Mr. McGrath estimates savings of approximately \$733,826 as a result of these efforts.

11) HR Report.

a) Assembly of EE Handbook Committee & Next Steps.

Ms. Danielle Reardon addressed the Board. Ms. Reardon confirmed that a handbook committee has been formed. The committee was planning to meet next week to begin the handbook review process.

b) Ongoing COVID-19 Related EE Support.

Ms. Reardon noted several, ongoing changes with employment law due to COVID-19. She has been assisting the Authority with those changes and providing updates as needed.

12) Maintenance Supervisor Report.

Mr. Frank submitted a report to the Board prior to the meeting, which had been circulated to the Board members for their review.

13) PEO Supervisor Report.

Mr. Matz introduced Bart Ganster to the Board. He started as the Authority's PEO Supervisor at the end of April 2020. Mr. Ganster presented his report to the Board. He noted the servicing of bicycles used by the Authority and an update to required devices and printers. He also provided total amounts regarding the issuance of tickets and warnings. Mr. Denbowski welcomed Mr. Ganster as the PEO Supervisor and said that the Board looked forward to working with him.

14) Office Administration Report.

Ms. Stubblebine reviewed the current office hours and staffing at the Authority. The Authority's office re-opened to the public on May 4, 2020. There are certain rules in place such as customers being required to wear masks in the office. A maximum of four people is permitted in the Authority lobby at any time. A staff member is stationed at the door to assist in enforcement. Clerks sanitize counters and anything touched by customers between each transaction. There are two clerks covering the front windows with an open window in between. The Authority's drive-through opened on Wednesday, May 6, 2020. It is open to process payments only.

Ms. Stubblebine confirmed that the Authority is using its available media resources to provide information to the public. Mr. Matz said that the Authority is doing everything possible to issue notices to the public to provide good and helpful information. Mr. Laws asked if the Authority is utilizing DID. Mr. Matz said that the Authority had partnered with the City Administration and RAWA but did not have any direct partnership with DID. Mr. Laws

suggested using DID as a resource to contact business owners and for additional exposure. Mr. Denbowski noted that the Authority plans to hire a marketing intern this year.

15) Board Member Report.

Mr. Denbowski said that the Board Member Report portion of the meeting will be used for committee updates in the future.

16) Old Business.

None.

17) New Business.

a) Committees Assignments.

At this time, Ms. Domena is serving on the Board's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Mr. Denbowski is serving on the Employee Handbook Committee. Ms. Domena and Mr. Profit are serving on the Grievance Committee. Mr. Laws and Mr. Profit are members of the Double Tree Work Group and Mr. Profit and Ms. Domena are serving on the City Work Group.

b) Board Training.

Discussion was held in regard to a consulting proposal from Larry Cohen. He would provide individual Board training. Mr. Cohen has served with the Lancaster Parking Authority and he can speak to issues similar to those in Reading. His contract proposal to work as a consultant would be a total cost of \$2,500 per month. Mr. Cohen could start in June. The contract length would be sixty (60) days. Mr. Matz confirmed that Mr. Cohen's consultation and training can be done remotely. Mr. Denbowski said that Mr. Cohen is an expert for a mid-size city parking authority.

Mr. Laws said that he does not need training in board function and noted his biggest concern being the furlough of Authority employees and then spending money for a consultant for training. He believes the timing of the proposed consultant is unfavorable. Mr. Denbowski said that the Authority employees have returned to work. He also said that the retention of Mr. Cohen is under budget and that Mr. Cohen can assist Authority staff. He wants Mr. Cohen to help the Authority reach a gold standard and for its strategic vision. Mr. Matz said that he wants Larry Cohen for staffing matters. He also noted that the retention of Mr. Cohen as proposed is a large savings compared to Mr. Cohen's normal consultation prices for individual training.

Mr. Laws said that he would want the contract with Mr. Cohen to be thirty (30) days not sixty (60) days and that Mr. Cohen should provide on-going updates regarding his consulting work for the Authority. Mr. Laws made a motion to approve the retention of Mr.

Cohen if his contract is reduced to thirty (30) days instead of sixty days and if Mr. Cohen provides a monthly status report confirming the work he is doing for the Authority. Second by Mr. Profit. Motion passed unanimously.

c) Rooftop Dining.

Councilwoman Reed reached out to Mr. Denbowski regarding the use of the parking garages for possible rooftop dining. Mr. Denbowski said that no action is needed at this time. He is just gauging the interest of the Board in regard to this proposal. Mr. Denbowski polled the Board to see if there was support for further discussions regarding this matter. Mr. Laws said that he would support further discussions. The Board Members were supportive of having more discussions. Mr. Denbowski noted that Mr. Matz had the consensus of the Board to discuss the rooftop dining in greater detail.

d) BARTA.

Mr. Denbowski had reached out to BARTA for the possible management of the BARTA garages by the Authority. BARTA has indicated that it is not interested in the Authority's management of its garages at this time. Mr. Denbowski said that it may be worthwhile to have further discussions with BARTA in the future.

18) Next Board Meeting.

Mr. Denbowski announced that the Authority's June Board Meeting was going to be changed from June 16, 2020 to June 23, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. with the location and format to be determined. Formal notice regarding the date, time and location of the meeting will be posted and published pursuant to applicable law. An Executive Session will be held and will start immediately after the conclusion of the public meeting.

19) Adjourn.

Mr. Denbowski announced that an executive session was going to be held to discuss personnel matters and pending litigation with no board action to be taken upon the conclusion of the executive session. Mr. Laws made a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting. Second by Mr. Profit. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.