

## **READING PARKING AUTHORITY**

### **Minutes of Reading Parking Authority Board Meeting – March 16, 2021**

1) **Meeting Called to Order.**

The Reading Parking Authority's regular board meeting was called to order on March 16, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. by Timothy J. Profit, 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 participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom. The physical meeting was closed to the public, but notice published and posted prior to the meeting provided members of the public with information 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:**

Timothy J. Profit, Chairperson

Daniel Laws, Vice-Chairperson (*participated remotely*)

Maritza Colon, Secretary (*participated remotely*)

Keith Eschleman, Assistant Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

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

**Members of Public:** Jeremy Long, Reading Eagle; Jason Zimmerman, Omega Systems (*both participated remotely*).

2) **Pledge of Allegiance.**

3) **Moment of Silence.**

4) Roll Call.

Mr. Profit confirmed all individuals that were present for the meeting whether in person or remotely.

5) Public Comment.

There was no public comment.

6) Approval of Minutes.

Minutes from the previous regular meeting of the Authority's Board of Directors were circulated to the members of the Board prior to the meeting. There being no requested revisions, Mr. Laws made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on February 16, 2021. Second by Mr. Eschleman. The minutes were unanimously adopted.

7) Approval of Accounts Payable.

Mr. McGrath presented the accounts payable for March 2021, which totaled \$640,695.96. The proposed payables were sent to the members of the Board prior to the meeting. Mr. Laws made a motion to approve the proposed payables for March via the Authority's general fund. Second by Mr. Eschleman. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Profit recused himself from voting on the motion.

8) General Solicitor Report.

a) Board Officer Positions

Mr. Boyer addressed the Board and noted that Frank Denbowski had previously served as the Board Secretary. Ms. Colon has been serving as Board Secretary and Assistant Treasurer. Mr. Boyer suggested that Ms. Colon be formally named the Board Secretary and that Mr. Eschleman be named as the Board's Assistant Secretary/Assistant Treasurer. This position had been held by Ms. Colon. Mr. Profit made a motion to name Ms. Colon the Board Secretary and to name Mr. Eschleman the Assistant Secretary/Assistant Treasurer. Second by Mr. Laws. The motion passed unanimously.

b) 423 Schuylkill Ave.

Mr. Boyer said that an appraisal had been recently completed at the request of the Authority and sent to the City of Reading for the property the City owns at 423 Schuylkill Avenue. The appraised value of the property is \$25,000.00. The Authority has expressed interest in purchasing the property for use as a surface parking lot. Mr. Profit said that the purchase of the property would continue forward with the current city-wide parking relief program initiated by the Authority. He said that the property is mostly ready for use as a parking lot. There is already lighting and it has a macadam surface. The Authority will need to make only a few improvements. Mr. Profit made a motion to authorize the purchase of the 423 Schuylkill Avenue property by the

Authority in an amount not to exceed \$25,000.00. Second by Mr. Eschleman. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Municipal Solutions Group

Mr. Boyer said the Authority had previously entered into an agreement with Municipal Solutions Group/Kelley Ryan for the issuance of parking tickets and the collection of past-due violations. The Authority later decided to replace Municipal Solutions Group with UpSafety. UpSafety began its services for the Authority on August 1, 2020. The Authority is saving roughly \$90,000.00 per year with UpSafety instead of Municipal Solutions Group.

In December 2020, the Authority Board authorized a settlement of \$25,000.00 payable to Municipal Solutions Group for a formal and complete end of the prior agreement between the parties. Subsequently, Municipal Solutions Group requested an additional \$5,000.00 due to a data download request by the Authority. The data will be used by the Authority for the collection of past due violations.

Mr. Boyer said that a new motion to approve the settlement at an amount not to exceed \$30,000.00 is now necessary. Mr. Profit confirmed with Mr. McGrath that the data download will be valuable to the Authority for the collection of past due debts and, further, that the potential amounts collected will far exceed the authorized settlement amount paid to Municipal Solutions Group. Mr. McGrath confirmed Mr. Profit's statements were correct.

Mr. Eschleman made a motion to increase the authorized settlement with Municipal Solutions Group from \$25,000.00 to an amount not to exceed \$30,000.00. Second by Ms. Colon. The motion passed unanimously.

9) Labor Solicitor Report.

No report. Mr. Profit asked for the removal of this agenda item unless the labor solicitor has to address the Board. The Labor Solicitor Report will be included on the agenda as needed in future meetings.

10) Executive Director Report.

a) Collaboration Acknowledgements

Mr. Matz reviewed correspondence that the Authority had received from the Salvation Army, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berks and City of Reading Fire Chief William I. Stoudt, Jr. The Salvation Army expressed its gratitude to the Authority for the \$5,000.00 gift donation by the Authority to the Salvation Army. The Unitarian Universalist Church thanked the Authority for allowing the church to use of one of the Authority's parking lots for the church's food bank. Fire Chief Stoudt noted his gratitude to the Authority for donating parking for the funeral of Firefighter Mark Kulp.

b) Ordinance Change Update

Mr. Matz said that the new no-parking sign system permitted by City Council's recent revision of the Daily Permit Ordinance went into effect on March 1, 2021. There is a new process for the issuance and enforcement of no-parking signs. Mr. Profit noted that the Reading Police Department had been requesting a change to the no-parking sign system based on previous issues the Police Department had with private parties hanging impermissible signs.

Mr. Matz said that there were some minor issues with the implementation of the new system but nothing major. He also noted that the Authority's hanging of the no-parking signs under the new system is time intensive for the Authority and costly. Mr. Ganster confirmed that the Authority has been paying overtime to employees for the hanging of the signs. Mr. Matz said that an adjustment would be needed in the Authority's workforce to address the issue. Mr. Profit said that it was good to be proactive in regard to the situation and to prevent the overuse of employees. He also noted that the Authority might not face the same workforce issues in the winter when there is less construction and work projects. He said that the Authority should repurpose employees rather than lay them off during that time if possible.

Mr. Matz noted the need for possible greater parking enforcement during snowstorms. There was a recent meeting between the Authority and the City's Department of Public Works. They discussed issues that arose in regard to parking during the recent snowstorms. Trash haulers were unable to access certain streets and there were other parking issues. Mr. Ganster confirmed that the Authority did respond to complaints during that time. The Authority used its all-wheel-drive vehicles. Mr. Profit noted the importance of collaboration with and support of the City.

Mr. Laws asked if there had been any discussions between Service Access Management ("SAM") and the Authority regarding the escort of SAM employees. Previously, DID employees would escort SAM employees. Mr. Matz said that he would follow-up with Mr. Laws to discuss this issue in greater detail.

Mr. Matz said that the metering of loading zones has not yet occurred. The Authority is working with ParkMobile for necessary signage and with UpSafety to create an unlimited use pass so customers can pay one flat fee and have unlimited use for a month. The Authority is attempting to ensure that it has the best available options for people making deliveries and to minimize any inconvenience. The Authority is going to make a formal announcement when it starts charging for loading zones and there will be a media campaign announcing the start date. Mr. Profit asked when the Authority anticipates the metering of loading zones. Mr. Matz said the Authority had planned for April 1 but it will most likely be May 1, 2021 for the start date.

In regard to the meter expansion recently approved by Reading City Council, the Authority has not yet installed the meters. Some of the meters are still on order and some of the signage is also on order.

Mr. Matz confirmed that the hourly meter rate was reduced to \$1.00 on March 1, 2021. The reduced rate will be in place for six months. Mr. Profit said that the reduced meter rate had been at the request of the Mayor. The reduced rate is more friendly to residents and visitors. Mr.

Matz noted a thanks in appreciation to Tiffany and Jose, employees of the Authority. They had to change the stickers on the parking meters and had to reprogram each one of them for the reduced meter rate. Mr. Profit also noted appreciation to the two of them.

c) Construction Update

Mr. Matz confirmed that the ongoing construction at the parking garages is on schedule. In regard to the Reed & Court Garage, the partial depth repairs were more than anticipated. This is an issue created by the original construction of the garage. The original concrete slabs were smooth not rough-coated. The wire mesh was improperly placed. The partial depth repairs are double the estimated quantities. Mr. Matz said that the savings generated during construction in the other garages will likely account for this increased quantity and he also noted that an allowance had been made in the original contract for a situation such as this.

Mr. Profit asked when the construction project will be complete. The current completion date is October 29, 2021. Mr. Ganster noted that a jury trial was held at the courthouse without notice to the Authority. The Authority had to free-up spaces in the Reed & Court Garage, which slowed repairs.

Mr. Matz said that a request for bids to modernize the garage elevators will be issued next week. A new review of the elevator portion of the project allowed for some cost savings in regard to the planned modernization. Mr. Matz thanked Jim Frank for his suggestions in that regard.

Mr. Matz said that the work needed for the Authority's office renovation is currently out for bid. He also noted that the Authority is continuing to work on a possible rooftop event space at the top of the Convention Center Garage for use by the Double Tree Hotel. Mr. Matz said that plans are being made to host the Reading High School prom at that location.

d) Citywide Parking Relief (CPR) Update

Mr. Matz said that the Authority is presently looking at approximately 15 properties it can purchase or lease across the City to provide parking. It is waiting to hear from certain of the property owners and also waiting for engineer designs for some of the properties to determine parking that could be placed there. The Authority is also obtaining appraisals for some of the properties to confirm the value and offers to be made.

11) Director of Finance Report & Administration Report

a) Financial Statements

Mr. McGrath reported that the Authority's gross revenue for February 2021 was \$568,972.00. This was \$112,150.00 less than January's gross revenue and was unfavorable to budget in the amount of \$95,357.00. Mr. McGrath noted that the Authority provided free parking in its garages for eight days in February. There was also no meter enforcement for several days because of the snow. These factors contributed to the Authority's lower gross revenue for

February. Mr. McGrath also said that there were no events and there is a continuing trend for reduced transient parking.

The Authority's operating expenses for February 2021 totaled \$483,209.00. This was favorable to budget in the amount of \$49,308.00 but unfavorable to 2020 in the amount of \$17,709.00. Mr. McGrath said that the Authority's maintenance costs were higher in February due to snow removal. Mr. Profit noted the use of Authority personnel to assist the City with clearing snow. He thanked the Authority for its work in that regard.

Mr. McGrath said that the Authority's operating income for February 2021 was \$85,763.00. After interest expense and income, the Authority's net income for February 2021 was \$15,004.00. This was unfavorable to budget in the amount of \$32,485.00.

Year-to-date through February 2021, the Authority's gross revenue was \$1,249,754.00. This was unfavorable to 2020 in the amount of \$204,765.00 and unfavorable to budget in the amount of \$82,406.00. Year-to-date through February 2021, the Authority's operating expenses were \$998,437.00. This was unfavorable to 2020 in the amount of \$58,336.00 but favorable to budget in the amount of \$77,850.00. The Authority had operating profit in the amount of \$261,317.00 and net income of \$103,413.00 after interest income and expense.

In reviewing the Authority's Cash Flow Statement, Mr. McGrath said that the Authority had unrestricted cash on January 1, 2021 in the amount of \$2,240,335.82. The Authority had a total outflow of cash in the amount of \$235,865.24 in February. The Authority had an unrestricted cash balance of \$2,004,470.58 on February 28, 2021. Mr. McGrath anticipates that the Authority's cashflow will improve with better weather and the possible scheduling of events. He said that the outflow of cash in February is not a projection of things to come for the Authority. Mr. Profit said that the Authority is doing a good job in light of the challenges it faces, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the prior snow events.

Mr. Matz said that he has checked with other cities to determine how they handle snow events. He intends to develop and present a plan for future snow events. He wants to present something that is better for residents and City businesses. The new plan may include snow emergency routes. He said that everyone did a good job handling the last snow events but there is always room for improvement.

b) Smart Secure

Mr. McGrath said that the Authority suffered a minor security breach in the past. He reached out to its IT provider, Omega, to discuss better security options. Omega has presented a possible new upgrade of the Authority's network that would include alerts as well as system monitoring by Omega employees. Mr. Profit asked where the Authority stores its data. Mr. McGrath confirmed it is cloud-based.

Jason Zimmerman from Omega addressed the Board. He is the Authority's technical account manager. He confirmed that the Authority's servers are located at Omega and there is a back-up to a separate data center. Mr. Laws asked about the frequency of the back-ups. Mr.

Zimmerman confirmed that the system is backed-up every two hours. Mr. Laws asked how long the back-ups are retained. Mr. Zimmerman confirmed that back-ups are retained for fourteen days although the data is always available unless specifically deleted. Mr. Laws asked if a larger window of time was needed.

Mr. McGrath noted that there are certain complications in the storage of the Authority's data, including the use of UpSafety and Paris software, each of which has their own data retention systems. Mr. Profit asked what Omega hosts. Mr. McGrath confirmed that the HUB gates are part of that system. However, there is no credit card number retention by the Authority.

Mr. Profit said that he and the Board need to fully understand the current system and what is being proposed. He wants to know what specific data is being stored and where it is being stored. He also feels that a review of the back-up system process is necessary. Mr. Laws said that he agreed with Mr. Profit. He also noted that he has faith in Omega because he has worked with them on other projects. Mr. McGrath agreed that he would provide further information to the Board regarding the Authority's current system and the Omega proposal for security of that system at the Board's April meeting for further consideration by the Board .

12) Director of Operations Report

Mr. Ganster referred to his written report submitted to the Board. The Board posed no questions.

13) HR Report.

Ms. Danielle Reardon said that some personnel matters would be discussed in executive session.

14) Maintenance Supervisor Report

No report.

15) Office Administration Report

Cindy Sanzo and Abril Ortiz submitted a monthly report that was provided to all of the Board Members prior to the Board Meeting. The Board posed no questions.

16) Board Member Reports.

The members of the Board did not present any reports.

17) Old Business.

None.

18) New Business.

None.

19) Next Board Meeting.

The Authority's next board meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2021, beginning at 5:30 p.m. and will be a hybrid of in-person attendance and via Zoom in keeping with CDC guidelines for public meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions. An executive session will be held and will start immediately after the conclusion of the public meeting.

20) Adjourn.

*Mr. Profit 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.*

There being no further business of the Board, Mr. Laws made a motion to adjourn the regular board meeting. Second by Mr. Eschleman. The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.