

## READING PARKING AUTHORITY

### **Minutes of Reading Parking Authority Board Meeting – March 28, 2023**

1) Meeting Called to Order.

The Reading Parking Authority's regular board meeting was called to order on March 28, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. by Timothy J. Profit, Chairman. It was held at the Reading Parking Authority, 430 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Reading, PA 19602, pursuant to notice published and posted according to law.

2) Pledge of Allegiance.

3) Moment of Silence.

4) Roll Call.

A roll call to confirm all individuals present for the meeting was taken. The following individuals were present for the meeting:

*RPA Board Members:* Timothy J. Profit, Chairman; Daniel Laws, Vice-Chairman; Keith Eschleman, Treasurer/Secretary; Kerry Burford and Carlos Rivera.

*Others Present:* Nathan L. Matz, Executive Director; Bart Ganster, Director of Operations; Kari Bollinger, Finance Director; Claudia Hurwitz, Executive Assistant; Mahlon J. Boyer, Esquire, General Solicitor; Danielle Reardon, Paragon Consulting and James Mancuso, Esquire, Labor Solicitor.

Mr. Profit welcomed Kerry Burford and Carlos Rivera as new members of the Authority's Board of Directors. He thanked them for volunteering their time.

5) Public Comment.

Linda Capozello appeared before the Board. Prior to any comments made, Mr. Boyer read the Authority's Public Participation Policy. Ms. Capozello expressed her concerns regarding parking and, in particular, its effect on the Reading Public Library. She noted concerns with the new gateless system installed in some of the garages including the timing of the required payment and the technology barrier that some may have. Mr. Profit said that her concerns would be reviewed. The Authority always wants to make improvements and wants to solve problems as they arise.

Mr. Matz confirmed that the Authority waives citations issued to individuals in the gateless garages for the first time. Mr. Profit and Mr. Laws said that this should be advertised to the public. Mr. Ganster noted his concern that any such advertising could create abuse. Mr. Matz said that, although payment is supposed to be made within 15 minutes of entering a garage, there is a 30 minute timeframe for payments to be made. Mr. Burford said that directions to the pay stations

should be clearer for those that are not tech-savvy. Mr. Profit said that the Authority should review its signage. Mr. Matz confirmed that the Authority has spent significant funds in signage and has added stickers to the pay stations to confirm no change is given. The Authority provides a QR code that offers a Spanish translation of the garage signage. The Authority addresses concerns as they arise, and it is always trying to make the user experience better.

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. Mr. Laws made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on February 28, 2023. Second by Mr. Eschleman. The motion passed unanimously.

7) Approval of Accounts Payable.

The accounts payable in the total amount of \$1,110,031.53 were presented to the Board. Ms. Bollinger said that the payables included the February and March payments to the City. Mr. Laws made a motion to approve the proposed payables. Second by Mr. Eschleman. The motion passed unanimously.

8) General Solicitor Report.

a) Paragon Consulting Agreement

Mr. Boyer presented a proposed agreement from Paragon Consulting. Paragon already works for the Authority pursuant to a previously approved agreement. The new agreement would increase the services that Paragon provides including but not limited to assistance with all aspects of the Authority's hiring process, the onboarding and benefit enrollment process, the Workers Compensation process, and the Leave of Absence programs. Paragon will assume the human resources generalist work previously performed by an Authority employee. Paragon's current monthly fee of \$3,000.00 will increase to \$5,500.00 in light of the proposed work that it will perform. A motion to approve the Paragon agreement was held for further discussion in executive session due to personnel matters that needed to be discussed in conjunction with it. (\*See section 19 below for further action on this matter)

b) Resolution 2023-4: Raymond Greer Settlement

Mr. Boyer presented Resolution 2023-4, which proposes the approval of a Severance and Release Agreement with Raymond Greer. Mr. Mancuso suggested that the Board discuss the resolution in executive session due to the personnel matters that had to be discussed. Mr. Profit announced an executive session at 12:34 p.m. to discuss a personnel issue. The executive session ended, and the Board returned to public session at 12:39 p.m. Mr. Eschleman made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-4. Second by Mr. Laws. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Resolution 2023-5: Taking of 501 N 9<sup>th</sup> Street / 515 N 9<sup>th</sup> Street

Mr. Boyer presented Resolution 2023-5. It approves the taking of 501 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 515 N 9<sup>th</sup> Street via eminent domain. The Authority recently closed on its purchase of 503-513 North 9th St. from Our City Reading. The Authority plans to construct a surface parking lot in this area, and it needs the properties at 501 and 515 N 9th St. in addition to 503-513 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street for the construction of the parking lot.

Mr. Boyer said that he had issued multiple letters to the owners of 501 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street confirming the Authority's offer to purchase the 501 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street property for double its appraised value. Unfortunately, the owners have requested an amount for the property that is far in excess of its appraised value.

Mr. Boyer said that he had spoken to the owner of 515 N 9th St. According to the owner, there is a mortgage against the property with an outstanding balance of roughly \$18,000 and unpaid water bills totaling in excess of \$12,000. The mortgage and the unpaid water bills exceed the property's fair market value. Therefore, the use of eminent domain for the taking of the property would be the most practical means of obtaining it.

Mr. Profit made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-5 for the use of eminent domain to take the 501 and 515 N 9th St. properties with a requirement that the solicitor try to contact the owners of 501 N 9th St. one final time to negotiate a purchase of the property for double its appraised value. Second by Mr. Rivera. The motion passed unanimously.

d) Resolution 2023-6: Purchase of 330 Elm Street

Mr. Boyer presented Resolution 2023-6 to approve the Authority's purchase of 330 Elm Street from UGI Utilities Inc. for the total amount of \$150,000.00. The purchase price is based on an appraisal that UGI obtained for the property. The Authority had previously obtained an appraisal that valued the property at \$125,000.00. The 330 Elm Street property is a flat, vacant lot in an area with a high demand for parking. UGI has spent significant funds to remediate the property. UGI installed a fence around the perimeter of the property. The Board agreed that UGI's requested sale price was fair given the condition and location of the property. Mr. Profit made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-6. Second by Mr. Burford. The motion passed unanimously.

e) McCarthy Line-Striping Proposal

A proposal from McCarthy Engineering was presented to the Board. McCarthy proposes to assist the Authority in the marking of parking stalls throughout the City at an agreed flat rate. The Board discussed the proposal and whether there are alternative options for the marking of the parking stalls at a lower cost including, possibly, the use of the Authority's current employees. Mr. Matz said that McCarthy will take care of complications that may arise such as fire hydrants and curb cuts. McCarthy will also keep a record of all markings on draft sheets for future reference. The Board tabled consideration of McCarthy's proposal pending review of alternative options for the line-striping.

f) IMAX

Mr. Matz said that discussions with IMAX regarding its current agreement with the Authority are ongoing.

g) T2 SOW

Mr. Matz said that discussions with T2 regarding its proposal to assist the Authority with automating payment plans are ongoing.

h) Board officer positions

Mr. Laws made a motion to appoint new board member, Carlos Rivera as the Assistant Secretary/Assistant Treasurer and to appoint new board member, Kerry Burford as Secretary. Second by Mr. Eschleman. The motion passed unanimously.

i) 625 McKnight St.

Mr. Boyer presented an Improvements Agreement and a Stormwater Controls Agreement required by the City for the construction of the surface parking lot at 625 McKnight St. Approval of the agreements along with the deposit of the required financial security set forth in the Improvements Agreement is necessary for construction to begin. Mr. Laws made a motion to approve the Improvements Agreement. Second by Mr. Eschleman. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Laws made a motion to approve the Stormwater Controls Agreement. Second by Mr. Rivera. The motion passed unanimously.

9) Executive Director Report

a) Ordinance changes

Mr. Matz said that there is going to be a public forum on March 28, 2023 regarding the proposal to make traffic one-way on Cotton St. This is the second public forum. Only about four to six people attended the last public forum. None of those people lived on Cotton St.

b) Velocity update

Mr. Matz is continuing to work with T2 on the gateless system at the parking garages. T2 is changing the software to allow customers to pay up to the point they leave the garage. The software update is scheduled for April.

c) Wisesight update

The Wisesight system installed at the State Lot is in a 30-day data collection stage. Authority staff are being trained to use the system.

d) Events

Tree removal is occurring along the railroad tracks in the 700 block of Penn St. Norfolk Southern approved the removal. Jazz Fest is scheduled to begin soon.

e) Parking Expansion

The Authority is continuing to meet with the Mayor and his administration to create additional parking around the City.

f) Citywide Parking Relief (CPR)

The Authority is continuing discussions with the City in regard to the design of 1200 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street.

g) Riverfront Office

The Riverfront Office will open to the public on April 3, 2023. Hearings will be held at the Riverfront Office. There is a drive through for the public. The office will also be open to the public.

10) Director of Finance Report

a) Finance Report

Ms. Bollinger submitted a Finance Report to the Board prior to the board meeting. The Board posed no questions in regard to the report.

b) Auditor

The Board reviewed bids that had been submitted for the audit of the Authority's 2022 financial statements. Ms. Bollinger said that she would feel comfortable working with RKL or Boyer & Ritter. Their pricing for the audit was comparable. Mr. Matz said that Boyer & Ritter had recently assisted the Authority with a forensic audit. Their work on the forensic audit was good. They discovered an error that was missed by the prior auditor. Mr. Laws made a motion to retain Boyer & Ritter to perform an audit of the Authority's 2022 financial statements. Second by Mr. Rivera. The motion passed unanimously.

11) Director of Operations Report

An Operations Report was submitted to the Authority's Board of Directors prior to the meeting. The Board posed no questions in regard to the report.

12) HR Report.

There was no report.

13) Office Administration Report

An Office Administration Report was submitted to the Authority's Board of Directors prior to the meeting. The Board posed no questions in regard to the report.

14) Communications & Special Projects Report

A Communications and Special Projects Report was submitted to the Authority's Board of Directors prior to the meeting. The Board posed no questions in regard to the report.

15) Board Member Reports

None.

16) Old Business

None.

17) New Business

None.

18) Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be held on April 18, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. at the Reading Parking Authority, 430 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Reading, PA 19602.

19) Executive Session

*Mr. Profit announced that an executive session was going to be held at 1:55 p.m. to discuss personnel matters and the purchase of real estate with a return to public session for possible board action upon the conclusion of the executive session. The executive session ended, and the Board returned to the public session at 3:06 p.m.*

\*Mr. Eschleman made a motion to approve the proposed agreement with Paragon Consulting. Second by Mr. Laws. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Laws made a request that the Authority and Paragon provide a report of all work that Paragon performs for the Authority after its initial 90 days of providing the increased services.

20) Adjourn

There being no further business of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.