

## READING PARKING AUTHORITY

### **Minutes of Reading Parking Authority Board Meeting – February 19, 2025**

1) Meeting Called to Order

The Reading Parking Authority's regular board meeting was called to order on February 19, 2025 at 5:11 p.m. by Nelson Espinal, 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:* Nelson Espinal, Chairman; Patricia Vasquez, Vice-Chairman; and Dr. Rodney S. Ridley, Sr.

*Others Present:* Rafael Batista, Executive Director; Josue Vega, Finance Director; John Brown, Director of Human Resources; Nellie Martir, Head of Supervisors; Jesse Metheny, Finance Operations Manager; Cynthia Sanzo, Accounting Manager; Janice Nieves, Communications Specialist; and Mahlon J. Boyer, Esquire, General Solicitor.

5) Annual Reorganization

The reorganization did not take place based on the prior decision of the Board to hold the reorganization once a fifth person is named to the Board.

6) Public Comment

Manuel Ortiz addressed the Board. He said that he has been a resident of the City for 17 years. He has received four non-moving violations in the last 14 years including a citation for an expired inspection and for parking against the flow of traffic. He said that PEO's should consider when someone was last given a citation before issuing a new one. There should be an allowance for those who have not received a citation in several years. Mr. Batista thanked Mr. Ortiz for his comments. He confirmed that PEO's are unable to check past records while issuing citations. However, Mr. Batista said that individuals that are issued violations can call the Authority to request a waiver, which may be granted in certain circumstances.

7) Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – January 15, 2025

Mr. Espinal made a motion to approve the January 15, 2025 regular board meeting minutes. Second by Dr. Ridley. The motion passed unanimously.

8) General Solicitor

a) Sale of Snowrator – approve price reduction

Mr. Boyer said that the Board had approved the sale of two Authority owned snowrators for the total amount of \$20,000.00. However, when the buyer inspected one of the snowrators, it was determined that the price should be reduced based on its condition. Mr. Nelson made a motion to approve the sale of the snowrators at a reduced price of \$14,000.00. Second by Dr. Ridley. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Towing RFP

Mr. Boyer said that he had previously worked on a draft Towing RFP for the Authority. Currently, the Authority relies on the City's towing contract. However, the Authority is permitted to hire its own towing contractor. By consensus, it was agreed that Mr. Boyer should finalize the RFP so the Authority can directly retain its own towing contractor.

c) Alvernia Parking Agreement

Discussion was held in regard to a proposal from Alvernia. It would provide a certain maximum number of projects to the Authority on a rolling basis, such as assistance with marketing, and, in exchange, the Authority would provide a reduction of Alvernia's current parking rates. The total cost for each project would be \$10,000.00. The parking reduction would reflect the project costs. Mr. Batista said that the Authority would only focus on one project at this time and would seek assistance with marketing. Mr. Batista said that he wants to receive Alvernia's proposal for the marketing project before proceeding forward.

d) Berkshire Building

It was confirmed that the developer of the Berkshire Building was in contact with the Authority. The developer needs 79 parking spaces for its tenants and wanted to use one of the Authority's parking garages. The developer plans to pay the cost for parking on behalf of the tenants rather than having the tenants obtain individual parking passes. Mr. Batista said that the Authority should develop a policy for developer requests like this one. Mr. Boyer confirmed that the Authority is permitted to set its own rates for the parking garages.

9) Executive Director Report

Mr. Batista said that the start of the Amnesty Program needs to be delayed to March 3, 2025. The program did not start in February, as planned, due to marketing of the program. Mr.

Espinal made a motion to approve new dates for the Amnesty Program, which shall now run from March 3, 2025 to June 3, 2025. Second by Dr. Ridley. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Batista confirmed that the forensic audit has been completed by RKL. There were no negative findings and no points of concern that were discovered. A copy of the forensic audit was given to the members of the Board.

Mr. Batista discussed RISETEK. He said that the Authority has issues with its current boots. They get broken or lost. Each boot is over \$600.00 to replace. RISETEK is a subscription based system. Individuals with a boot on their vehicle call a phone number to release the boot. They are required to pay their outstanding fines and a boot fee for the release of the boot. PEO's do not have to release the boot. A charge is placed on the credit card of the individual whose vehicle was booted until the boot is returned. The subscription cost for the RISETEK service is \$2,040.00 per month for 24 devices. It is \$85.00 per boot for additional boots. The Authority is negotiating with RISETEK at this time. The current proposed contract requires the Authority to pay for unreturned boots. Mr. Batista said that he will provide a contract for review after the negotiations are over.

Ms. Sanzo said that Jazz Fest is returning to the City in April. Jazz Fest is asking the Authority for a \$25,000.00 sponsorship, 10 reserved spaces at the DoubleTree garage, 300 volunteer spaces, no-parking signs on Penn Street and parking for visiting schools. In return, the Authority will receive 25 tickets to the award dinner, 50 tickets for the concerts and advertising. Mr. Batista noted that the Authority receives increased revenue during Jazz Fest because of the event parking. Dr. Ridley made a motion to approve the sponsorship. Second by Mr. Espinal. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion was held in regard to radios used by the Authority pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding with the City. The City has suggested there are 6 missing radios that cost roughly \$6,000.00 per radio to replace. This will be investigated further to determine if the Authority is required to pay for the radio replacements.

a) PFM

Mr. Batista said that the Authority met with Gordon Mann from PFM on February 18, 2025. Mr. Metheny said that PFM wanted to provide a 5-year financial plan. PFM was unwilling to negotiate the scope of its work or its price. PFM was proposing a fee of \$10,000.00 per month for 4 months. The Authority is exploring options with Desman. Desman works exclusively in parking and can assist with a strategic plan.

b) Santander Arena

Mr. Batista said that the Authority met with representatives of the Santander Arena. The Arena is proposing a three-year marketing partnership with the Authority. For a Suite Lease and Sponsorship, the Authority would have to pay \$85,750.00 the first year with 4% increases each year thereafter. Mr. Batista said that Arena benefits the Authority because of parking revenue for events. The Authority wants to be sensitive to a strategic partner like the Arena. It was generally

agreed that the Authority does not need a suite at the Arena. It was agreed that the Authority should focus on advertising instead. Mr. Batista said that the Arena's number one complaint from customers is the price of parking for hockey games. The Authority will have further discussions with the Arena for the possible reduction of hockey game parking prices and a sponsorship for advertising.

c) City/RPA cooperation agreement

There was discussion about the cooperation agreement and the Authority's annual payment to the City. Mr. Batista said that the City will not discuss a new lease for 213 S. 11<sup>th</sup> Street until the renegotiated cooperation agreement is resolved. Ms. Vasquez said that the City needs correct facts about the Authority to change its current perception about the Authority, which is based on past practices and prior administrations of the Authority.

d) United Way

Mr. Batista said that he is going to meet with United Way next week. United Way is located on the lower floor of the 2<sup>nd</sup> & Washington parking garage. United Way wants 500 free parking vouchers from the Authority pursuant to past Authority sponsorships. Mr. Batista said that the Authority cannot continue with a practice of giving free parking away. He said an accommodation may be possible but the Authority needs to understand its return on investment.

10) Finance Director Report

Mr. Vega said that the accounting team did well in helping RKL complete the forensic audit. The implementation of the new accounting system is going well. April 1, 2025 is the planned go-live date for the new system. Positive Pay has been put in place for accounts payable. It went live on February 19, 2025.

a) Financial Statements – January 2025

The Authority's Financial Statements as of January 31, 2025 were presented to the Board prior to the board meeting. Mr. Vega said that revenues were slightly higher than January 2024. Expenses also decreased. However, the Authority's operating and net income were negative. This was due to larger cash outlays in January. Also, no-parking sign revenue decreased because of the cold weather and lack of construction. The Authority's debt service is also higher. Mr. Vega said that the Authority has taken back some work from its IT vendor that will now be performed in-house at the Authority. This will save the Authority roughly \$45,000.00.

b) Approval of Accounts Payable

Mr. Espinal made a motion to approve the accounts payable in the amount of \$845,901.76. Second by Dr. Ridley. The motion passed unanimously.

11) Director of Human Resources Report

Mr. Brown submitted a report prior to the meeting. He confirmed that Hubric had provided some leadership training at the Authority. Customer service training for all employees is scheduled for February 27, 2025.

12) Operations & Departmental Report

Written reports were submitted to the Board prior to the board meeting. Ms. Martir said that she is hiring new event staff. There are now second shift PEO's that work from 3:00 pm – 11:30 pm. There is a supervisor on second shift. New second shift PEO's are still being trained. There will be a crew of six on second shift. Residents are being notified about the enforcement times.

13) Board Member Reports

There were no board member reports.

14) Old Business

None.

15) New Business

None.

16) Next Board Meeting

The next regular board meeting will be held on March 19, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at the Reading Parking Authority, 430 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Reading, PA 19602.

17) Adjourn

There being no further business of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.