

St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency
Minutes of January 21, 2014 Meeting ~ Town of Louisville Municipal Offices, Massena NY

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Chairman McNeil.

Roll Call/Determination of Quorum: Mssrs. McNeil, Burns, Murphy, Strait and Carroll attend. New York Power Authority Representative Michael Huvane joins the meeting via conference call. NYPA Representative Karen White is present. A quorum is recognized.

Public Notice: Public notifications were sent January 10, 2014 to, at a minimum: St. Lawrence County's newspapers designated for the publication of local laws and other matters required by law to be published. Notification also sent to other local media sources and websites.

Presentations: None

Approval of Minutes: Carroll/Burns motion to accept the revised December 10, 2013 regular meeting minutes, which reflect an addition to the last paragraph on page 1 of the meeting minutes whereas Sam Burns joins Patrick Kelly in Albany on December 10, 2013 for a meeting with the Governor's staff. The minutes are accepted unanimously.

Financial Report: Tom Plastino, Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency, reports on the November 2013 Financials. Mr. Plastino informs the group that the annual audit began today. As such, the December financials will be available for review in the next meeting packet.

He adds that CITEC received full payment from the National Grid grant. The RVRDA's balance sheet has carried a \$41,325 accounts receivable for some time; that item in the balance sheet should disappear in January when the cash will be received. The RVRDA funds that NG is partially reimbursing were used towards the Canadian marketing campaign.

Mr. Murphy inquires about the loan status for the CSX railroad project. He asks why there are not any funds disbursed to them. Mr. Plastino notes that conversations continue with the Massena Business Development Corporation and the funds are available as soon as they are ready for them.

Mr. Plastino discusses the building improvements grant received by the Regional Economic Development Council for Lots 18 & 19. The RVRDA was awarded \$60,000 for building improvements made. When the total improvements meet or exceeded \$145,000, the RVRDA will apply to ESD for reimbursement. There are a few remaining items to be completed this spring after which the reimbursement paperwork will be submitted.

Mr. Burns notes that revenue exceeded projections for the buildings.

Burns/Carroll motion to accept the November 2013 financial report. The report is accepted unanimously.

Committee Reports: On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Mr. Strait motions to recommend the current slate of officers remain the same for one more term. The current Chair Mr. McNeil remains as Chairman and Mr. Strait as Vice Chair. Mr. Carroll seconds the motion. Motion passes with unanimous consent.

Old Business: None

New Business: Chairman McNeil announces the Community Development and Environmental Improvement program will be in its fourth year when the application process begins on Friday, January 24th.

The Chairman mentions that the 2014 RFP continues last year's "point system" disclaimer on page 5 of the application. Discussion ensues around whether to increase points or even a separate track should be created to encourage applications that are proposing to leverage external funds. Mr. Strait suggests a two track approach. The Chairman explains that the leverage of funds will be covered in the category which awards a maximum of 25 points for this characteristic. Mr. Strait is concerned about the gap in certain programs and feels there needs to be a mechanism to bridge the gaps when it is going to create a longer timeline for project completion. He advises the group that they must be more flexible with multi-year projects leveraging other funds. Mr. Huvane suggests awards are made contingent on the leverage of funds. Mr. Burns asks if the smaller group of businesses that could use the funds are being excluded. Mr. Plastino notes that there have been very few "for profit" businesses that have applied for this type of funding. Typically, they seek other funding opportunities. Mr. Huvane adds that if other investments are leveraged, this should be used as a guide. Mr. Carroll suggests the group not focus so much on the leverage of funds, but rather more on the project substance itself.

Mr. Murphy suggests inviting SeaComm Federal Credit Union to prepare a proposal and present it at the next meeting to outline a strategy for figuring the best possible way to leverage available funds with what is available to be awarded. Chairman McNeil suggests that Mr. Murphy contact SeaComm directly.

A motion to accept the 2014 Community Development and Environmental Improvement RFP as written is made by Murphy/Burns. Motion passes with unanimous consent.

Staff Report: Mr. Plastino notes the National Grid marketing project was completed on June 30, 2013. As a result of this grant award, the creation of a large database of companies, including contact information, was achieved. A recent mailing to 342 businesses in Canada produced 24 returned envelopes for insufficient address. While minimal responses have resulted from this mailing thus far, it is still too early to determine its effectiveness. Mr. Plastino notes that the National Grid money allowed them to get out and knock on doors – a valuable commodity.

As we move into 2014, we continue to work on putting together a CEDS (Community Economic Development Strategy) for the U.S. Department of Commerce, which is required if communities propose to access Economic Development Administration funding. Mr. Plastino notes that significant changes should be noted, as a lot of changes have occurred since the last CEDS was completed five (5) years ago. The process is expected to take at least six (6) months to complete. Mr. Plastino is seeking input from the group.

Mr. Murphy mentions a new concept for disposing cheese brine as a cost savings to highway departments. According to a recent news article, by mixing rock salt with cheese brine, the Milwaukee has experienced a 30-40% cost savings by eliminating the amount of rock salt used on roads in the winter. He asks why this concept would have to wait six (6) months for a CEDS report before anyone can do anything to proceed with this type of project in our area. Mr. Plastino informs Mr. Murphy that he doesn't have to wait – they can proceed now.

As a follow up to the RVRDA members' tour back in October with the Shipley Center for Innovation at Clarkson University, a young company currently occupying space at the Clarkson Business incubator in Peyton Hall will move into Lot 19 within a couple of weeks upon signing a month-to-month lease.

Mr. Burns asks why there is such little movement in regards to the availability of power. While low-cost power is one marketable item in this area, Mr. McMahon points out that large capital is also an item of interest. This was clarified at the AMPCO presentation in Canada last year.

Mr. Murphy asks if there has been any headway made with Start Up NY. Mr. Plastino mentions a website link he will forward the members to review, which demonstrates some of the work the IDA staff has done with SUNY Canton and SUNY Potsdam to include some of the IDA and RVRDA vacant buildings in the two colleges' Start Up NY portfolio.

Mr. Carroll asks if there has been any discussion with the folks heading the Ogdensburg and Massena Airport expansion projects. Mr. Carroll expresses an interest in meeting with both parties to ensure they continue with the expansion project, as this would create a great deal of opportunity for this region.

Public Comment: None

Executive Session: Carroll/Burns motion for Execution Session at 6:52 PM to discuss the financial history of a particular company.

Return to regular session at 7:41 PM, upon the motion by Carroll/Burns.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:41 PM, upon the motion of Carroll/Burns.

Note: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency will be held at 6:00PM on Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at the Town of Louisville Municipal Offices.
