

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF THE REDEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF BERKS**

December 14, 2021

Vice Chairperson Eileen Kastura called the meeting of the Board of the Redevelopment Authority of the County of Berks to order at 3:32 P.M. on December 14, 2021 via a Zoom meeting.

**1. Roll Call:**

The following Board members were present during the meeting:

Eileen Kastura, Vice Chairperson  
Diodato Bassano, Treasurer  
Thomas Ruth, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer  
Jorge Diaz, Secretary

Also in attendance were:

Kenneth Pick, Executive Director  
Kathy Heckman, Executive Assistant  
Kathy Miller, Fiscal Officer  
Thomas Dachowski, Housing Director  
Daniel P. Becker, Esquire of Kozloff Stoudt, Solicitor  
Joshua Lewis, Facilities & Housing Manager  
Kyre Maxwell, Redevelopment Generalist  
Peter Edelman, Esquire  
Michael Vind

**2. Reading and approval of minutes of the meeting of 11/16/21:**

Upon motion made by Thomas Ruth and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all members of the Board present voted to approve the November 16, 2021 minutes of the Board.

**3. Report of Treasurer:**

Diodato Bassano presented the Profit & Loss Statement and the Balance Sheet as of November 30, 2021. A copy of the report is attached to these Minutes. Upon motion by Eileen Kastura and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted to accept the report of the Treasurer, including said Profit & Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, subject to audit.

**4. Bills and Communications:**

Diodato Bassano presented the list of payments to creditors representing the period of December 1, 2021 through December 15, 2021. A copy of the report is attached to these Minutes. Upon motion by Thomas Ruth and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted to approve the list of payments to creditors.

There were no communications.

**5. Reports of Committees:**

There were no committee reports presented.

**6. Unfinished Business:**

a. Rentals. No report.

b. Colebrookdale Railroad:

Mr. Pick advised that he submitted the documents for the \$14,000,000.00 CRISI Grant. Mr. Pick advised that he is uncertain if the Authority will receive any CRISI Grant funding. If received, the funds from the CRISI Grant will be used to reduce the \$40,000,000.00 loan for the railroad improvement project.

Mr. Pick advised that he is currently working on a \$4,000,000.00 grant from the Economic Development Administration to finish the Boyertown Transload Station, which will be used to finish the structure and the landscaping area around the station.

Nathaniel Guest advised Mr. Pick that the trains are fully booked.

Authority employee, Josh Lewis recently rode in the Authority's Diplomat car which is being used as the "Ghost Train of Christmas Past". Mr. Lewis advised that while the dome is complete, there is still some work to be done.

c. Emergency Rental Assistance Program ("ERAP"). Mr. Maxwell advised that the Authority received more than 4,000 applications. Currently there are 939 applications being processed by the Authority, and 245 applications being processed by the Berks Coalition to End Homelessness.

d. Armorcast R.A.

No report.

e. Hamburg Center.

Mr. Pick advised that he and Solicitor Becker attended a meeting with General Administrative Services and Senator Argall's office on Monday, November 22, 2021. The State undertook a subdivision of the property which left 106 acres remaining, including the building and cemetery. The State proposed a new concept for the Authority with respect to the property. Mr. Pick advised that the State will sell the property to the Authority at fair market value. Mr. Pick and Solicitor Becker advised that they have not agreed to do anything but will review the appraisal when received. Ms. Kastura inquired as to the maintenance currently being done at the property. Mr. Pick advised that there is minimal maintenance being done, i.e. mowing of lawns and minimal heating of the building. Mr. Bassano inquired of any environmental conditions and Mr. Pick responded that he was not aware of any environmental issues, but that would need to be looked into further if the project would proceed.

7. New Business:

a. Agreement with BCNDC providing \$300,000 from Act 137 for affordable housing projects and general operating costs. A motion was made by Eileen Kastura and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement.

b. Funding Agreement with BCRA providing \$550,000 from the County's HOME-ARP Program towards the homeless veteran project at 615-619 Walnut Street. A motion was made by Diodato Bassano and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the Agreement.

c. Redevelopment Generalist Position. Mr. Pick recommended hiring Pauline Klopp to a new position of Redevelopment Generalist. Ms. Klopp's duties will include assisting Ms. Miller and Mr. Maxwell with the ERAP program, as well as assistance with other Authority tasks as needed. Ms. Klopp will report to Mr. Pick. If hired, Ms. Klopp will start employment on February 2, 2022. Mr. Pick and Ms. Miller have known Ms. Klopp for over 30 years as she worked with the County for many years. Mr. Ruth believes having a "Generalist" position would be beneficial to the Authority. A motion was made by Diodato Bassano and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted in

the affirmative to approve the hiring of Ms. Klopp to the position of Redevelopment Generalist.

- d. **Internship.** Mr. Lewis advised that he has been communicating with Benjamin Murphy who is a senior at Kutztown University studying Public Administration. Mr. Murphy is looking for an internship position. If given the position, Mr. Murphy would begin working in mid-January 2022 through May 2022. Mr. Lewis advised that initial discussions were for an unpaid internship, however, he believed having a stipend for mileage and/or lunches would be appropriate. Ms. Miller mentioned that this would be a 1099 employee rather than a payroll employee. The Board discussed at length whether it would be appropriate for the internship to be paid. After discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Lewis should contact Kutztown University to determine the appropriate compensation, and for Mr. Lewis to develop a job description for the next Board meeting. A motion was made by Eileen Kastura and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the hiring of Mr. Murphy as an intern.
- e. **2022 Meeting Dates.** A motion was made by Thomas Ruth and seconded by Eileen Kastura, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve and advertise the 2022 meeting dates.
- f. **2022 Budget.** A motion was made by Eileen Kastura and seconded by Diodato Bassano, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the 2022 budget.
- g. **Award of \$1,526,348 contract to Amtrak RR Contractors of MD for the Boyertown Transload Facility subject to approval by PennDOT.** A motion was made by Eileen Kastura and seconded by Thomas Ruth, all Board members present voted in the affirmative to approve the awarding the contract to Amtrak RR Contractors of MD.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business of this Authority, a motion was made by Eileen Kastura to adjourn the meeting of this Authority. The motion was seconded by Diodato Bassano and all members of this Authority present voted in the affirmative. The next meeting of the Board will be January 25, 2022. This meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

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**Eileen Kastura, Vice Chairperson**