

Worcester Redevelopment Authority

Vincent A. Pedone
Chairman

Peter Dunn
Chief Executive Officer



WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Friday, April 14, 2022

9:00 A.M.

City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber
Worcester, MA 01608

CALL IN INFORMATION:

+1-415-655-0001 US Toll
Access Code: 2304 984 8528

Present:

Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board

Vincent Pedone, Chair
David Minasian, Vice Chair
Jennifer Gaskin

Staff

Peter Dunn, Chief Executive Officer
Michael Traynor, City Solicitor
Alexis Delgado, WRA Finance Manager
Julie Lynch, Public Facilities Director
Paul Morano, Office of Economic Development
Jane Bresnahan, Office of Economic Development

Pursuant to a notice given (attached), a meeting of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority was held at 9:00 A.M. on Friday, April 14, 2022

1. Call to Order

Mr. Dunn called the meeting to order at 9:03 A.M.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Dunn called the roll – Chair Pedone, Ms. Gaskin and Mr. Minasian. Chair Pedone advised all votes will be taken by roll call.

3. Approval of Minutes: March 11, 2022

Mr. Minasian made a motion to approve the minutes.

Ms. Gaskin seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved 3-0 on a roll call.

New Business –

1. Polar Park and Garage project workforce diversity and inclusion report

Mr. Dunn informed the Board that Ms. Skilling from Gilbane had a conflict. Mr. Dunn informed the Board that the item was left out of the package and will be emailed after the meeting. The numbers are trending very consistently month after month. We have wrapped up the garage project, with punch list items ongoing. We have received our Temporary Occupancy Permit in March and the garage is open and operating. The punch list items are not a lot of hours and we do not see changes towards the goals. The current M/WBE is 17.1% and consistent with the last several months for the subcontracting work. Diversity of the workforce on the project to date is also very consistent with Worcester residents 20% against the goal of 25%, People of Color 12% against the goal of 15.3%, not a lot of hours being worked month over month. We anticipate keeping steady on those numbers as they wrap up the punch list over the next couple of weeks. Chair Pedone requested that the report be send to the Board members. Ms. Gaskin noted that she is excited that the garage is open and available to the public as parking last year was sore point for the public.

Chair Pedone advised without objection the board accepts the report.

2. Authorize execution of a non-binding Letter of Intent with the Trustees of the Denholm Condominium Trust with respect to the real property at 484-500 Main Street.

Mr. Dunn advised at the last City Council meeting on April 5, 2022, a Loan Order Request was submitted by the Worcester Redevelopment Authority, to have the resources to take the next steps in order to proceed with the plan for acquisition of the property. The Order was adopted unanimously by the City Council and allows us to take the next steps. There will be a few steps that the WRA will need to take before formal acquisition of the property. Mr. Dunn explained the nonbinding letter of intent would be helpful for the Board and the stakeholders to have available and discuss at the meeting today to outline the framework and the steps that will be occurring. The agreement is a simple four pages that outlines the goals and objectives of the Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan and this acquisition being consistent with those goals. Identifying the site and the current structure of the building being a condominium building with a Board of Trustees. As the Board is aware and based on previous Executive Session meetings, along with the City Council transmittal last week the negotiated price for the acquisition is Three Million Dollars. The Worcester Redevelopment Authority has other costs that it will incur as part of the transaction to include relocation assistance, carrying costs, and soft costs. One example is we have a title exam occurring and one of the steps that we need to have completed before we proceed for the vote to acquire and take title to the property. The Letter of Intent also outlines some of the actions we need of the Trustees and Unit Owners to complete. They have been working for several months now communicating with each other about what price would make sense for all of them and Three Million Dollar acquisition price for the entire property. They are working on what we call a unit owner agreement as referenced in the Letter of Intent as well as a Dissolution Agreement where the owners would vote and agree to dissolve the

condominium as well as outline the distribution of the proceeds of the sale. They are coming to an agreement among themselves and the WRA is not dictating the distribution price of the proceeds. This is generally the framework. There are other steps we need to take with DHCD. The Board had previously voted on the authorization to file the next amendment to the plan that would expand the plan to include the whole property. The initial plan had only targeted the first floor of the property and in preparation for submission to DHCD and will include both the request to approve the amendment to the plan as well as approve the transaction that has been negotiated. Once we have the Letter of Intent signed by the Trustees of the property we will file with DHCD for their review and consideration. Chair Pedone this is unexpected with what happened to the Denholm Building but I am glad we had in place our Urban Revitalization Plan to help facilitate this transaction. I think it is great work on the City's part and really happy that the WRA and the City can assist all the tenants and a feather in the cap of this Administration for being there to step in and work with the Trust and ensure that all those agencies and the work that happens in those agencies at the building continues. Mr. Minasian similar to what you are saying when we first started with the Urban Revitalization Plan we considered the history of urban revitalization plans and this is a really great example of how we are not falling into some of that history. We have a unanimous vote of City Council we are helping and they came to us for help. It is unfortunate what happened to the Denholm Building is in the state that it is in, the Administration had the foresight, and those that put the plan together and working on it and being able to have mechanism here to do something is great.

Mr. Minasian offered the following vote:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute a nonbinding Letter of Intent with the Denholm Condominium Trust with regard to the potential acquisition of 484-500 Main Street.

Ms. Gaskin seconded the motion.

The item was approved on a 3-0 roll call.

Chair Pedone referenced when we were doing the actual plan seems like a long time ago (seven years) and talking about how to incorporate the Denholm Building given that it was a condominium and broken up the what it was broken up and Mr. Traynor through your office and your work and helping work through the issues with the State and we were able to do that which was a very unique way of putting together our Urban Renewal Plan and including the Denholm Building in the way we did. Kudos to Mr. Traynor and Mr. Dunn and the Administration for figuring out how to include the Denholm Building in a way that has probably has happened in an urban renewal plan. Chair Pedone said this will be one of his last duties as Chair of the Board.

- 3. Authorize execution of an amendment to the Memorandum of Agreement between the WRA and the MBTA, dated September 22, 2021, concerning accessibility and side platform plaza work, to increase the contract price from \$3,277,619.00 to \$7,176,619.00 for an increased scope of waterproofing work.**

Chair Pedone stated the item is an amendment to the Memorandum of Agreement between the WRA and the MBTA for the platform work. The amount of the amendment is from \$3,277,619.00 to \$7,176,619.00 for an increased scope of work for waterproofing. Chair Pedone inquired as to who would speak about the item for those

attending on what the increase means and why we are doing this work and where the monies are coming from. Mr. Dunn will provide the update and will refer to Ms. Lynch our Chief of Public Facilities. As we know, the existing MOA with the MBTA is relative to the center platform project at Union Station. The work has started on the center platform project. One thing that has been on our radar for a while, now based on what we have been experiencing at the Union Station, we have seen some water leak issues. This particular project that we have before the Board is relative to waterproofing which is substantial along the plazas on the exterior of the property. There is a legend and map in your packet that shows us the extent of the waterproofing, which is extensive. The total cost of the project is currently estimated at \$3.9 Million Dollars, which is the increase in the item before you increasing the pricing with the MBTA in the MOU from \$3.71 Million Dollars. We are looking to take advantage while the MBTA is there and utilize the work at Station in its environs and we have had this project on our radar for a while so to have the efficiency of the staff while working there and include this work as part of their efforts and really the goal. Most of our improvements to Union Station we are in the process of making that request to utilize the FTA funds so 80% of the value of the amendment would be funded by the FTA and the 20% match would be the WRA. The 20% match is part of our budget proposal for this year.

Mr. Dunn requested of Ms. Lynch for any further updates. Ms. Lynch that is correct, we reviewed the drawings for the waterproofing project that the MBTA has underway and when we did that we realized that the scope should be expanded and mitigate all the water infiltration issues that we have been having at the Station. This should pretty much eliminate any issues we have moving forward with the west plaza, the remaining retaining walls as well as the east roof, which is the extended scope.

Mr. Minasian I know that we have spoken about this in the past and ongoing before the MBTA took this on and in terms of the waterproofing the whole platform will be removed and the exterior of the building will be waterproofed, will there be a drainage system and I think I heard that this will resolve, we believe will resolve, all the water issues coming into the building. I know that there are some interior spaces where water is coming in and that is a challenge for us. So by doing this are we to have usable space without leaks on the interior of Union Station. Ms. Lynch that is a very good point Lamoureux and Pagano Associates Architects had completed a study years ago back in 2015, that pointed out what they believed were sources of major water leak infiltration. The building is situated in a difficult way in that as you all know the tracks run over it. The Harding Street façade for instance we have area that we do not own and working now of the best way to deal with those issues. This effort will mitigate most, we cannot ever guarantee all of the water infiltration most of the water infiltration that we have been experiencing, which has been severe and significant and it has been ongoing. We are using as a basis for this effort initially Lamoureux and Pagano report but we are working with the MBTA's architects who have a lot of experience dealing with these types of issues and feel very confident that by bringing in the same system for waterproofing that they working on at the existing platform that will become obsolete when the new platform is complete and bring as well there retaining wall system into play that we will eliminate most of these issues, but there is no guarantee and not want to anyone to believe that we will ever have water infiltration issues again. That said we are also undertaking a roofing project this year and we are in design and feeling that the building is moving in the right direction and dealing with any water infiltration issues from any way and confident that this will mitigate most issues. Mr. Minasian I believe Lamoureux and Pagano presented a few options before Board the one presented before us is more of an all in option included with different costs. This sounds like we are really going after

the water and doing the best we can while the project is here to mitigate water penetration in the building. Ms. Lynch confirmed.

Chair Pedone we are asking the Board to take a vote authorizing Chair Pedone to sign the amendment, and if City Council approves by replacement on the Board or is held over I will not be here that aside we are taking a vote to authorize the amendment to a contract prior to the budget being approved. We have a Three Million Dollar red mark in our budget and do not have the Three Million Dollars available from a practical prospective how do we take a vote in this authority to authorize an amendment in the hopes that the budget is approved in the next meeting. Mr. Dunn we wanted to show MBTA that the Board was supportive of this and would not execute until the funding is available until the budget process plays out. We wanted to make sure the essence of the project and scope and how we were approaching this and consistent with the Boards wishes and somewhat of a ceremonial vote in a way and hold the amendment until the funds are available and to your point we would not sign a contract for funding we do not have yet in hand. This will allow us to formalize the request with FTA as well obviously, as the FTA would be funding eighty percent of this. Making sure we can proceed with the next steps but knowing that we will not execute the amendment until the funding is in place. Ms. Lynch the other thing this vote does, we are not asking for the funds we are allowing the MBTA to directly ask for these funds from the FTA. Basically, the WRA would be signing a split letter that would allow the MBTA to request Federal Fiscal Year 2019 funds for this project. Chair Pedone I am going to be signing an amendment to a contract for a prospective change. Chair Pedone requested that Mr. Minasian as Vice Chair actually sign the amendment where I am stepping off the Board and creating a paper issue. Mr. Traynor stated that you will not be signing the amendment it will be awhile before that will be ready to be executed. This is authorization for the chair or vice chair when that amendment is ready to be authorized to be signed, this for authorization to move forward with the amendment once the funding is in place.

Mr. Minasian offered the following vote:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute Amendment No. 1 to the Memorandum of Agreement between the Worcester Redevelopment Authority and Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, dated September 22, 2021, concerning accessibility and side platform plaza work, to increase the contract price from \$3,277,619.00 to \$7,176,619.00 for an increased scope of waterproofing work.

Ms. Gaskin seconded the motion.

The item was approved on a 3-0 roll call.

4. Financial Update Report

a. Report on Prior Month's Executed Contracts and Payments

b. Report on Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan Expenditures

Mr. Dunn total expenditures from March 9, 2022 through April 11, 2022 WRA expenditures were \$951,234.00, which is really spread out some of the expenses, were across the board with payments made to City of Worcester including taxes typical janitorial bills. A \$200,000.00 to LEI Corporation landscaping contract wrapping up snow expenses and getting into spring expenses. One of the other payments were Pickett

Plaza Project which is wrapping up next to Polar Park Gate A a nice new pedestrian plaza, our monthly requisition from UEL Contractor. The final payment to AIDS Project Worcester for relocation benefits from the Ballpark to their new home.

5. Status Reports

a. Union Station

b. Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan

Mr. Dunn informed the Board that there would be a press conference at Union Station with Congressman McGovern and Lt. Governor Polito announcing state and federal funding to support the Food Hub Project. They are working on design and had received previously from the city of Worcester for some of our American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars. The announcement today will be about direct federal dollars to the project that Congressman McGovern secured as well as some state funds, possibly food infrastructure funding that they have at the state level and the Lt. Governor will announce the details of that award. Mr. Dunn informed the Board the about for urban renewal is the Denholm Building.

Mr. Dunn acknowledged Chair Pedone for his ten years of service to the Board we really could not have done a lot of things without your leadership on the Board and we really appreciate your service and bittersweet last meeting and I know we will see later this afternoon for another meeting and do have something to present to you in recognition of that later today and did not want to miss that opportunity and appreciation for service. Chair Pedone thank you. Chair Pedone announced the dates for the next three meetings May 13, 2022, June 10, 2022 and July 8, 2022 and announced the July 8th meeting falls under the expiration of the permissible remote meeting law. Mr. Traynor unless the legislature extends the remote meeting accommodations that are currently in place you might want to think about the August in person meeting. Mr. Minasian thank you for your service. Chair Pedone you guys are awesome. Thanks

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Dunn called the roll to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Dunn
Chief Executive Officer