

# Worcester Redevelopment Authority

Michael P. Angelini  
Chair

Peter Dunn  
Chief Executive Officer



## WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Thursday, April 13, 2023

8:00 A.M.

City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber

Worcester, MA 01608

### CALL IN INFORMATION:

+1-415-655-0001 US Toll

Access Code: 2311 709 7048

### Present:

#### *Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board*

Michael Angelini, Chair  
Sherri Pitcher  
Richard Burke

#### *Staff*

Peter Dunn, Chief Executive Officer  
Michael Traynor, City Solicitor  
Alexis Delgado, WRA Finance Manager  
Julie Lynch, Director of Facilities  
Paul Morano, Office of Economic Development  
Greg Ormsby, Office of Economic Development  
Jeanette Tozer, Office of Economic Development  
Rachel Pressey, 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 8:00 A.M. on Thursday, April 13, 2023

### 1. Call to Order

Mr. Dunn called the meeting to order at 8:05 A.M.

### 2. Roll Call

Mr. Dunn called the roll – Ms. Pitcher, Mr. Burke, and Chair Angelini.

Chair Angelini advised all votes will be taken by roll call.

### 3. Approval of Minutes: March 16, 2023

Ms. Pitcher made a motion to approve the minutes.

Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

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

## **New Business**

### **1. Authorize Execution of FFY2022 Subrecipient Agreement with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority relative to Federal Transit Administration funding**

Chair Angelini asked for a description of the item and noted that he had not read it yet. Mr. Dunn provided background for context. A lot of improvements performed at Union Station rely on Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant funding and the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) is the entity that receives those funds from the Federal government. The WRA has subrecipient agreements with them so that the funds can be accessed and this item is authorizing execution of the Federal Fiscal Year 22 Subrecipient Agreement with them relative to that FTA funding and Ms. Lynch, Chief of Public Facilities to give a quick synopsis of this agreement.

Ms. Lynch advised her department is responsible for maintaining the facility at Union Station, supported by multiple FTA grants for different aspects including a state of good repair grant. This particular agreement is for a bundle of work known as miscellaneous renovations and staff are working to get a bid out this spring. There are three different uses for funding: the first is renovate, the second is design, and the third is preventive maintenance items. Renovate is a term they use to mean construction and the work generally begins with design before moving to renovations. This particular grant is to renovate and replace sidewalks, improvements to the canopy maquis, which has water infiltration issues, exterior masonry rails by the main entrance. The total of the Phase 5 Grant is \$3.23 Million Dollars estimated eighty percent FTA and twenty percent match of \$807,000 for a total grant of \$4.038 Million Dollars. Chair Angelini asked if this a document in which the board has any discretion or if there are judgments to be made or if this is simply a requirement of the law that we execute this document in light of it for the funding that has been made. Ms. Lynch advised it is a requirement that we execute the subrecipient agreement. Chair Angelini asked about the form of agreement. Mr. Traynor, added there is no discretion, this is dictated by the FTA to the WRTA to WRA and in fact is a revised document of a previous document. Chair Angelini thanked Mr. Traynor and Ms. Lynch.

Mr. Burke offered the following vote:

**Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute a revised FFY2022 Subrecipient Agreement with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority relative to Federal Transit Administration funding of certain capital projects at Union Station.**

Ms. Pitcher seconded the motion

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

### **2. Discussion of Proposals received under the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the disposition and redevelopment of 484-500 Main Street.**

Chair Angelini introduced the next item for discussion of the proposals received in connection with the disposition and redevelopment of the Denholm Building. Mr. Dunn provided an overview of the process to date and the process moving forward. The request for proposals had a due date of March 24, 2023, over the last few weeks staff reviewed those proposals first to make sure they submitted everything needed. Then, staff took the next step looking for minimum evaluation criteria then for which proposals would proceed onto the comparative evaluation. As part of the Board packet, each of the four proposals received were provided: one from Criterion Group, Joseph J. Corcoran Company, RMS Companies and Menkiti Group. Two of the companies have active assets or projects ongoing in the city right now, Menkiti Group as well as Criterion Group. RMS Companies is based out of Stamford, CT and Joseph J. Corcoran Company is based out of Quincy, MA.

Each of these proposals had an approach in terms of what they would seek to do with the site. Three of the four proposals involved a demolition of the existing structure new construction in its place, one proposal from Joseph J. Corcoran Company contemplated an adaptive re-use of the existing structure. Two of these proposals are not qualified to move onto the comparative evaluation process with the first being Joseph J. Corcoran Company as they did not submit and are not intending to submit a deposit. The second proposal that will not move on to the next stage would be Criterion Group. One of the minimum criteria was to demonstrate an understanding of the WRA's Responsible Employer and Inclusionary Participation Policy and that proposal did not contain really any information about of their understanding of the Policy. With that I will pause for a moment to see if there are questions or clarifications.

Chair Angelini has a representative of the Authority had any communications with Criterion regarding the Responsible Employer and Inclusionary Participation Policy and the reason they did not address it. Mr. Dunn advised to maintain fairness they were not asked to cure that issue as it would not be fair to the other proposals that did so at the time of the deadline. Chair Angelini asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Dunn suggested if the Board is in agreement, from here the process would go onto the comparative evaluation process and a review committee has been established that will be comprised of Mr. Dunn, Mr. Ormsby, Special Project Manager, Ms. Pressey, Special Project Coordinator and Ms. Tozer, Affordable Housing Trust Fund Manager for the city. Staff would independently review the two proposals that are qualified and come up with a scoring based on the RFP criteria. The criteria under the comparative evaluation section would be ranked as highly advantageous, advantageous and non-advantageous and then the committee will meet and make a recommendation of which proposal is in the best interest of the WRA and the City.

Chair Angelini asked if there will be face to face meetings or interviews with the applicants. Mr. Dunn confirmed yes. Chair Angelini asked if there were any additional comments from the Board.

Ms. Pitcher inquired when the work would start and the period of due diligence. Mr. Dunn advised one of the comparative criteria is the timeline and project schedule. A highly advantageous proposal is one which includes a reasonable commencement of construction within eighteen months recognizing there is a due diligence period necessary and then completing the project within the following twenty-four months after the commencement of construction. The advantageous and non-advantageous timelines are a

little bit longer than that. Each of the proposals did submit their intended schedule and once the preferred developer is selected that schedule would be part of our Land Disposition and Development Agreement.

Ms. Pitcher asked if the language includes any action or repercussion if that requirement is not met. Mr. Dunn suggested Mr. Traynor may comment further, but there are parts of the Land Disposition and Development Agreement in terms of default and recourse including language typically about making reasonable efforts and demonstrating progress. Mr. Traynor confirmed and added the agreement would discuss no intentional delay or failure to proceed with the project, but if there are bumps in the schedule and they are reasonable we try to work with the redeveloper.

Chair Angelini asked when interviews are set up could board members attend. Mr. Dunn described the interviews as being closed door type of interviews and a limitation on how many Board members could be present or even be spectating. Mr. Traynor advised one or two Board members could take part in the interviews but three would be a quorum and have to be a public meeting. Chair Angelini, understood and will follow that protocol, thank you Mr. Traynor.

Mr. Dunn asked to provide a little bit more of a description. RMS Companies is proposing two hundred apartments including accessory parking along with sixty-five hundred square feet of ground floor space on the Main Street elevation. They provided a conceptual site plan with their proposal and recognized they will comply with the pending inclusionary zoning ordinance. They also proposed having at least ten percent units being ADA accessible.

With the Menkiti Group proposal they have contemplated an eleven-story building with two hundred twenty-three mixed use units and looking for twenty percent of the units as affordable and ten percent ADA accessible with associated parking necessary to support that. It also includes five retail spaces of about ten thousand square feet of retail along the Main Street elevation. Fairly similar in terms of the big picture for the site.

Ms. Pitcher asked if RMS has ever done a job in Worcester before. Mr. Dunn responded that he was not aware of any. Chair Angelini asked about the vacancy rate on Main Street from the Federal Courthouse down to the old courthouse storefront vacancy can you venture a guess as to. Mr. Dunn suggested it is probably about fifty percent vacant and retail has been a struggle. The City also designated Main Street from that stretch courthouse to courthouse along with lower Pleasant Street and Chandler Street as a vacant storefront district. There is a state program under the Massachusetts Office of Business Development entitled Massachusetts Vacant Storefront Program where any business occupying those vacant spaces could be eligible for a \$10,000.00 Investment Tax Credit from the state. The Board has also discussed the presence of first floor offices. In some cases there might be some level of occupancy or in other cases the building stock may not be setup for retail and needs to be reconfigured. Chair Angelini asked about the thoughts of these two developers of their plans to fill that retail space on the ground floor that they are each proposing to see distinctive strategies regarding that. Chair Angelini thanked Mr. Dunn and staff for moving this along.

### **3. Financial Update Report**

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

#### **b. Report on Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan Expenditures**

Mr. Dunn advised for the period of March 14, 2023, through April 10, 2023, total expenses were \$367,666.30 majority of this is the operating costs for Union Station.

Chair Angelini asked if the Board packet could be sent at least two or three days in advance in the future so that the Board has time to review. Mr. Dunn agreed.

**4. Status Reports**

**a. Union Station**

**b. Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan.**

Mr. Dunn advised key activities at Union Station include the restaurant across the Grand Hall from Luciano's, which is in buildout and hope to be completed by the summer, which is great to see. Mr. Dunn offered a future tour for Board members if they would like to see the progress of that space. Mr. Dunn also advised the lease document with the Food Hub is in progress for the ground floor lower-level space at Union Station. They are continuing to make progress on their construction level documents and hopefully put out to bid in the summer.

Ms. Pitcher asked about the status of the proposed Main Street working group for activation. Mr. Dunn advised an invite will be going out for the first meeting to discuss strategies and ideas. Chair Angelini asked if engaging with the Research Bureau in that process would be helpful. Mr. Dunn agreed.

**5. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Dunn called the roll to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 A.M

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Dunn  
Chief Executive Officer