

Worcester Redevelopment Authority

Michael P. Angelini
Chair

Peter Dunn
Chief Executive Officer



WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Thursday, April 11, 2024

9:00 A.M.

City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber

Worcester, MA 01608

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 259 411 405 421

Passcode: rtHQPS

Dial-in by phone

[469-998-7682](tel:469-998-7682)

Phone conference ID: 270 499 887#

Present:

Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board

Michael Angelini, Chair
David Minasian, Vice Chair
Richard Burke
Sherri Pitcher
Richard Weekes

Staff

Peter Dunn, Chief Executive Officer
Michael Traynor, City Solicitor
Alexis Delgado, WRA Finance Manager
Julie Lynch, Director of Public Facilities
James Bedard, Public Facilities
James McDermott, Public Facilities
Jonathan Freitas, Public Facilities
Paul Morano, Office of Economic Development
Greg Ormsby, Office of Economic Development
Victoria Porteiro-Cejas, 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 9:00 A.M. on Thursday, April 11, 2024

1. Call to Order

Mr. Dunn called the meeting to order at 9:02 A.M.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Approval of Minutes: March 7, 2024

Mr. Minasian made a motion to approve the minutes of March 7, 2024.

Mr. Burke seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved on a 5-0 roll call.

New Business

1. Authorize execution of Amendment to the Operating Cooperation Agreement with the City of Worcester in the amount of \$148,000.

Mr. Dunn advised the Amendment is for cash flow needs expected through the fiscal year primarily for operations at Union Station.

Mr. Minasian offered the following motion:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute Amendment No. 2 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 \$7,226,619.00 to \$10,171,980.00 for an increased scope of waterproofing work.

Ms. Pitcher seconded the motion.

The motion was approved on a 5-0 roll call.

2. Authorize Execution of Amendment No. 3 with Glickman Kovago Management in the amount of \$53,204 relative to 484-500 Main Street.

Mr. Dunn introduced the request to authorize Amendment No. 3 with Glickman Kovago Management in the amount of \$53,204.00 relative to 484-500 Main Street. Mr. Dunn acknowledged the work of Mr. Ormsby in driving down carrying costs since acquiring the property in August 2022.

Chair Angelini appreciated the work and asked about timeline for demolition since the building has been free of tenants for about a year. Mr. Dunn advised the Land Disposition Agreement with the Menkiti Group is in final stages for execution. Chair Angelini asked for clarification about the outside date for closing on the sale. Mr. Dunn advised twenty-four months from the execution date of the LDA, and expects the building would remain standing for 18-24 months. Chair Angelini asked about the need to maintain elevators and escalators given the fact the building will be demolished. Mr. Dunn advised that is an active topic of conversation and staff are considering letting the maintenance of those to lapse, which would drive costs down further. Ms. Pitcher asked if there would be a cost

to bring the elevators back into service. Mr. Dunn confirmed and advised staff are discussing with the Menkiti Group whether the elevators are needed to support the future demolition. Mr. Angelini asked if the WRA has a legal obligation to maintain the elevators. Mr. Dunn responded that the LDA calls for general maintenance of the building, but it is not specific on this topic. Chair Angelini recommended that the WRA only do what it is required to do given that the building is coming down. Mr. Weekes asked for clarification of whether a hard date exists for when the demolition will start. Mr. Dunn advised the LDA provides for various milestones on progress. Mr. Minasian asked for a summary of the milestone dates once the LDA is finalized.

Mr. Minasian also expressed concern about the financing for the project and if the WRA has protections to prevent a change from the project as proposed if the Menkiti Group acquires the property before all the financing is in place. Mr. Dunn agreed that the project should be proposed and there will be a deed restriction that will help ensure protection against any substantive changes. Chair Angelini appreciated the comment.

Mr. Burke asked if there is an argument to be made for the WRA to take the building down now considering the carrying costs. Mr. Dunn advised the demolition would definitely be a lot more costly than the carrying costs, and the accepted proposal includes the commitment of the developer to demolish the building in exchange for the \$2.5 million credit against the purchase price. In addition to the costs, which would require additional funding authorization from the City Council, Mr. Dunn acknowledged the risk and liability if any unforeseen conditions arise or potential cost overruns. Mr. Burke appreciated the explanation.

Chair Angelini expressed his observation of the building adjacent to the Denholm building, the potential common wall between the two buildings, and how to accommodate that during demolition. Mr. Dunn confirmed that will need to be navigated and managed through the means and methods of demolition.

Mr. Minasian offered the following motion.

Be It Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute Amendment No. 3 to the Property Management Services Agreement with NAI Glickman Kovago Management for 484-500 Main Street in the amount of Fifty-Three Thousand, Two Hundred Four Dollars and no cents (\$53,204.00).

Mr. Angelini seconded the motion.

The motion was approved on a 5-0 roll call.

3. Discuss scope of services regarding cleaning contract at Union Station

Chair Angelini acknowledged the time and effort regarding the ongoing conversations for cleaning services at Union Station. Mr. Dunn provided a background on the item as well as the results of a third-party cleaning company that evaluated the scope and costs. Mr. Dunn commented that exercise was not as helpful as staff were hoping it to be and shared the analysis. Mr. Dunn suggested staff would share a proposed scope of services at the next meeting for the board to consider authorizing an RFP and the scope would look very similar to the existing scope. Mr. Dunn suggested some additional effort in advertising and outreach for the bid opportunity might produce some more competitive pricing. Mr.

Weekes asked if the information received from the third-party could be shared with the board and Mr. Dunn confirmed. Chair Angelini acknowledged the work of staff and the board's responsibility to make sure public dollars are being spent well.

4. 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 6, 2024, to April 9, 2024, total expenditures were \$319,513.00 primarily operations of Union Station.

5. Status Reports

a. Union Station

b. Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan

c. The Cove

a. Union Station

Mr. Dunn advised the latest information from the MBTA on the Center Platform project is projecting a late May substantial completion date.

b. Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan

c. The Cove

Ms. Porteiro-Cejas provided an overview of the latest REIPP reports from The Cove project. Mr. Minasian appreciated Mr. Porteiro-Ceja's efforts and asked about Optiline. He shared that when Optiline was working on the Plumbhouse project, they had a number of lower tiered subcontractors under them, but it seems like that is not happening as much on the Cove. Ms. Porteiro-Cejas advised she would compare the two projects and follow up. Mr. Dunn also commented that staff can dive into the certified payrolls to cross-check and confirm that they are the employer of record for the folks working on the Cove project and they are not working under another subcontractor or employer. Mr. Minasian appreciated the suggestion.

Mr. Weeks appreciated the report and asked if all the reported M/WBE companies are certified by the state. Ms. Porteiro-Cejas advised she understands one or two of the self-identified M/WBE are in the process of getting certified with the state Supplier Diversity Office. All subcontractors not certified have been provided information about the certification process.

Mr. Weekes asked if the Economic Development office has a marketing packet that he could provide to a business that might be interested in the city of Worcester. Mr. Dunn advised he would provide that and mentioned the Chamber of Commerce has similar information as well.

Chair Angelini asked about the Cannabis Control Commission and whether staff are regularly coming to the building or working remotely. Ms. Lynch advised there are full-time employees reporting five days a week, which is growing, but believes there is a hybrid model in place. They have also been increasing the number of onsite public

meetings. Mr. Burke shared that he was at Union Station for about an hour roaming around and was surprised how much space the Cannabis Control Commission has, and the activity seemed pretty quiet. Chair Angelini asked Ms. Lynch to keep the board up to date on the Commission's activity in the building.

Mr. Burke asked if staff believed the Center Platform would be up and running this spring. Mr. Dunn advised the MBTA definitely seems confident about the substantial completion date this spring. He was not sure about the implementation steps relative to the scheduling of the trains and the timeframe for full utilization. Ms. Pitcher asked if there were any updates or changes to the Spring schedule. Chair Angelini replied not yet. Mr. Dunn added that many stakeholders are anxiously awaiting the determination and there has been a lot of good advocacy from local leaders including the WRA and state delegation.

Chair Angelini made an observation that simply restoring what was improperly taken from the city is not a cause for celebration. He encouraged the board and local leadership to be earnest in insisting that MBTA be less Boston centric about its responsibilities. He referenced an article in the Globe regarding the proposed budget increase for the MBTA and what it will do for the city of Boston, but not much about what it will do for the city of Worcester. Ms. Pitcher asked if the expectation was that the express train would be restored. Chair Angelini was optimistic and reiterated that Worcester is the second largest city north and east of New York City in the United States of America. The fact that there was only one express train for morning commuter service to Boston is archaic and need to keep insisting on improvements.

Ms. Pitcher asked for clarity how the schedule change gets communicated when it happens. Last time it was a bit of a disconnect on how that schedule update was communicated to people, businesses and the city. Mr. Dunn advised there was a recent briefing about where they were headed. It was not a draft schedule, but it did not seem like the Spring schedule would include an express train, more of a status quo. Mr. Dunn advised local stakeholders responded accordingly. Mr. Burke complemented Mr. Dunn for his advocacy and response. Chair Angelini also acknowledged terrific engagement from the Legislative delegation. Mr. Weekes added that the efforts should be beyond restoring what was taken. Chair Angelini agreed.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Dunn called the roll to adjourn the meeting at 9:51 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Dunn
Chief Executive Officer