

Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee

September 24, 2020

10:00 a.m.

Via WebEx

Meeting Minutes

WJF Oversight Committee Attendance: Karen Pelletier, Fred Taylor, Adrianna Buduski, Maritza Cruz, Jeff Turgeon, Carlene Godfrey (proxy), Tommy Maloney, Isabel Gonzalez-Webster.

WJF Staff: Kelsey Lamoureux

Guests: Ethan Brown, Peter Dunn, David Minasian, Aaron Papowitz and Tom Greco.

- The meeting was called to order after a quorum was established.
- All attendees introduced themselves, their positions and their organizations.

Discussion with SilverBrick on the 340 Main St. Project:

- P. Dunn provided an overview of the 340 Main Street Tax Increment Exemption (TIE) Plan implemented by Commerce Associates. This program will support additional projects Commerce Associates has in the area including 332 Main Street, 244 Main Street, and 18 Chestnut Street. The 340 Main Street project will include an investment of \$54.45 million to create 312 units of market-rate housing over two phases with commercial uses on the first floor. The proposed TIE Plan includes an average exemption percentage of 41% over 15 years and will generate net new property taxes of an estimated \$1.1 million for the City. The developer will also contribute \$100,000 to the City's new Affordable Housing Trust Fund that will be used to support affordable housing initiatives.
- A. Papowitz and T. Greco from SilverBrick introduced themselves and their positions. A. Papowitz described Silverbrick's specialization with historic and vintage properties and noted that the new housing units will be a variety of sizes including studio, 1 and 2 bedroom and be built using a diverse workforce. I. Gonzalez-Webster inquired about how the project is assessing market rate pricing and if they are using Area Median Income or Worcester Median Income to set monthly rents. A. Papowitz explained that market rate housing does not create pricing based on median income.
- F. Taylor requested clarification on the negative media coverage of a recent project in Springfield. A. Papowitz explained that the general contractor for that project hired unlicensed plumbers against the terms of their contract. When SilverBrick became aware of the issue, they provided additional oversight, corrected the problem, and now have 95% of the units occupied by tenants. F. Taylor highlighted the importance of hiring subcontractors with a history of paying wages fairly and maintaining good safety records. T. Greco noted that they are currently in the process of hiring architectural firms and have goals of hiring local contractors to meet the diversity construction goals.

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Approval of August 27, 2020 Meeting Minutes:

- The meeting minutes from the August 27, 2020 virtual meeting were reviewed and F. Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by J. Turgeon and unanimously approved.

Economic Development Updates:

- P. Dunn informed the committee that there are no current updates for future TIF/TIE Applications.
- E. Brown noted that a quorum was not present for the Construction Diversity Monitoring Committee's September meeting. E. Brown stated that the committee expects all general contractors to submit the same level of detail in their reports, but that some general contractors will use different formats for their submissions. K. Pelletier noted that having the specific building trades listed for each subcontractor is important information. F. Taylor suggested that the City provide companies with an optional template to encourage the companies who are new to workforce diversity reporting to use our recommended format.

Grant Updates:

- K. Lamoureux provided an overview of the Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant that could provide funding for up to 60 local residents to become trained in OSHA 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER). J. Turgeon provided further detail about the training providers and local employer demand associated with the training program. P. Dunn noted that the City of Worcester has extensive experience with brownfields remediation and this training would help support the ecosystem that allows for remediation of unused building stock. K. Lamoureux explained that the grant request for proposals does not allow use of funds for work readiness training. M. Cruz made a motion to support the effort and authorize use of Jobs Fund resources to provide Bounce USA work readiness training to City of Worcester residents enrolled in the project. The motion was seconded by F. Taylor and unanimously approved.
- K. Lamoureux summarized the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration grant awarded to the New England Tractor Trailer Training School to provide CDL B instruction to 24 Veterans and/or family members. K. Lamoureux noted that the grant neither provides work readiness nor support services to program participants. M. Cruz made a motion to provide up to \$460 per eligible City of Worcester resident enrolled in the grant to cover support services including RMV fees, testing fees, drug testing, DOT physical, transportation assistance and BOUNCE USA Online. The motion was seconded by I. Gonzalez-Webster and unanimously approved.

WJF Financial Update:

- K. Lamoureux presented financial updates on the Worcester Jobs Fund, Washington Square, and Department of Transportation (DOT) Funding through August 31, 2020. K. Lamoureux noted that the DOT has approved an additional \$88,000 to be used for a 2021 cycle of Worcester Building Pathways pre-apprenticeship training and reviewed the current trainings, expected trainings, and pending grant applications. J. Turgeon inquired about the best way to prioritize spending down funding that cannot extend beyond June 30, 2021 over those that can extend beyond this date.

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C. Godfrey noted that she would provide guidance as grant applications become approved to determine the best way to prioritize spending the various accounts to ensure maximum participate enrollments and outcomes.

WJF Director Report:

- K. Lamoureux provided updates on current distance learning and in-person programming for School Bus Driver, CDL Class B, Clinical Medical Assistant, and Building Pathways Pre-apprenticeship trainings. K. Lamoureux noted that several programs are currently accepting students for waitlists for the next cycles of training including CDL A, CDL B, School Bus, and Building Pathways.
- K. Lamoureux described the need for increased funding to be allocated to the Clinical Medical Assistant program to ensure adequate support for students throughout externship. F. Taylor made a motion to approve an additional \$3,500 in staffing and support services for the Clinical Medical Assistant program. The motion was unanimously approved.
- K. Lamoureux shared the proposal from Quinsigamond Community College's newly developed IT Help Desk Certificate training program through their Workforce Development department. The program would provide students with 6 months of synchronous and asynchronous remote learning to earn two nationally recognized certificates for a cost of \$3,899. F. Taylor noted that since the students will be issued laptops as part of training, it is recommended that the program own the computers until the students graduate. F. Taylor made a motion to approve up to 7 seats of IT Help Desk Certificate training, with added BOUNCE USA training provided by Jobs Fund staff, provided that laptops become the property of students upon graduation. T. Maloney seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Other Items/Announcements:

- F. Taylor stated that he became aware of the guest scheduled for the Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee meeting through the local media prior to receiving notification by the City of Worcester. F. Taylor requested that the Worcester Jobs Fund Oversight Committee receive details of guests scheduled to appear before the group prior to this information being released to the media.

Adjourn:

- A motion to adjourn was made by J. Turgeon, was seconded by F. Taylor, and was unanimously approved.

The next monthly meeting will be Thursday October 22, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

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