

APPROVED - 1/28/15

CITY OF BENTON HARBOR
RECEIVERSHIP TRANSITION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
November 25, 2014

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting held November 25, 2014 at Commission Chambers, Benton Harbor City Hall, 200 East Wall Street, Benton Harbor, Michigan at 11:00 a.m.

REPORTED BY: Ms. Alison R. Huffman - CSR-0945
Certified Shorthand Reporter

BOARD MEMBERS:

MR. CARY J. VAUGHN (Chairman)

MR. MARVIN RAGLON

MR. BRET WITKOWSKI

TREASURY STAFF:

MR. ROBERT WIDIGAN

BENTON HARBOR STAFF:

MR. DARWIN WATSON (City Manager)

1 Benton Harbor, Michigan

2 November 25, 2014 - 11:00 a.m.

3 MR. VAUGHN: It is 11:00. I'm calling the
4 Receivership Transition Advisory Board Meeting to order.

5 Mr. Widigan, will you please call the roll?

6 MR. WIDIGAN: Yes.

7 Cary Vaughn.

8 MR. VAUGHN: Here.

9 MR. WIDIGAN: Marvin Raglon.

10 MR. RAGLON: Here.

11 MR. WIDIGAN: Bret Witkowski.

12 MR. WITKOWSKI: Here.

13 MR. WIDIGAN: Sharon Hunt.

14 A quorum is present.

15 MR. VAUGHN: Let the record note Miss Hunt is
16 absent.

17 I'd like to remind the public that if they want
18 to speak they have to sign in at the sign-in sheet in the
19 front.

20 The first item on our agenda is the approval of
21 the agenda. We all have a copy of that.

22 Is there discussion or modifications needed?

23 If not, I move that we approve the agenda as
24 presented.

25 Is there a second?

1 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll second that.

2 MR. VAUGHN: All those in favor, say aye.

3 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

4 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

5 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

6 The motion passed.

7 The next item on the agenda is the approval of
8 the October 29th RTAB meeting minutes.

9 Is there any discussion on this?

10 Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion on this
11 item.

12 MR. RAGLON: I move that we approve the
13 October 29th, 2014 RTAB meeting minutes.

14 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll support that.

15 MR. VAUGHN: All right. All those in favor, say
16 aye.

17 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

18 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

19 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

20 Motion is passed.

21 We have Old Business, which is the City Manager
22 Evaluation Form.

23 Mr. Widigan, do you have an update for the
24 Board?

25 MR. WIDIGAN: Yes.

1 So after further discussion with the Commission,
2 the Evaluation Form and process was discussed, agreed upon
3 and approved at the end of the November 3rd City
4 Commission meeting. The evaluation process is tentatively
5 scheduled to be completed in December and, after staff
6 review, approval of the City Manager Evaluation Form is
7 recommended.

8 MR. VAUGHN: Mr. Watson, do you have any input
9 for us or are you in agreement with that?

10 MR. ^{Watson} WITKOWSKI: I am in agreement with it. As I
11 spoke last month at the RTAB board meeting, we did go into
12 conversations, went into conversations with the
13 Commission, came up with a form and evaluation process we
14 both agree to, so I'm satisfied with it.

15 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you, Mr. Watson.

16 Further discussion on this topic?

17 Okay. I'll entertain a motion on this item.

18 MR. WITKOWSKI: I make a motion to approve it.

19 MR. VAUGHN: Is there a second?

20 MR. RAGLON: Second.

21 MR. VAUGHN: All those in favor of approving the
22 City Manager Evaluation Form, say aye.

23 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

24 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

25 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

1 Motion is passed.

2 The next item on the agenda is the Operational
3 Plan. It's a five-year budget.

4 Mr. Widigan, do you have an update for the
5 Board?

6 MR. WIDIGAN: The RTAB requested that the City
7 include a forecast for all enterprise funds and major
8 funds along with identifying which fiscal year the City
9 plans on getting to each key initiative. The City has
10 re-submitted the Operational Plan with ~~a request for~~ ^{the requested}
11 information. After staff review, approval of the
12 Operational Plan is recommended.

13 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you, Mr. Widigan.

14 Does the Board have any comments or discussion?

15 Okay. I'll entertain a motion on this item.

16 MR. RAGLON: I move that we approve the City's
17 Operational Plan.

18 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll support that.

19 MR. VAUGHN: All those in favor, say aye.

20 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

21 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

22 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

23 Motion is passed.

24 Next item of business is New Business. We have
25 the approval of Resolutions and Ordinances for the City

1 Commission meetings; the first one is the October 20th
2 regular meeting.

3 Do we have discussion on this item?

4 Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion on this
5 item.

6 MR. WITKOWSKI: I make a motion to approve.

7 MR. VAUGHN: Is there a second?

8 MR. RAGLON: Second.

9 MR. VAUGHN: All those in favor of approval of
10 all City Commission Resolutions from the October 20, 2014
11 meeting, say aye.

12 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

13 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

14 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

15 Motion is passed.

16 The next item on the agenda is the November 3rd,
17 2014 meeting minutes.

18 Again, the public, if they want to have public
19 discussion, needs to sign in on the sign-in sheet at the
20 microphone, please.

21 November 3rd, 2014. Is there a discussion on
22 ^{these} ~~this~~ regular meeting minutes?

23 Seeing none, I'll entertain a motion on this
24 item.

25 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll make a motion to approve.

1 MR. RAGLON: Second.

2 MR. VAUGHN: All those in favor of approval of
3 all City Commission Resolutions from the November 3rd,
4 2014 meeting, say aye.

5 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

6 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

7 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.
8 Motion is passed.

9 City Manager Items. City Manager Evaluation
10 Form has been addressed. The Operational Plan has been
11 addressed.

12 Adopt 2015 meeting schedule for the RTAB.
13 Mr. Widigan, do you have an update for the Board?

14 MR. WIDIGAN: Yes. So it is time to adopt our
15 schedule for next year. Unless there are any conflicts,
16 we recommend that this be adopted. We moved November's
17 and December's due to Thanksgiving and Christmas, and
18 these can always be subject to change if need be.

19 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll make a motion to approve.

20 MR. RAGLON: I second.

21 MR. VAUGHN: Okay. All those in favor, say aye.

22 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

23 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

24 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

25 Motion is passed.

1 The next item is the Amended Rules of Procedure.

2 Mr. Widigan, do you have an update for us?

3 MR. WIDIGAN: Okay. I'll do my best to explain
4 this. For the first amendment, the -- we're going to
5 amend the -- it's recommended to amend the voting for the
6 Board from a majority of the Board members to pass a vote
7 to a majority of the Board members present. We had an
8 issue in another community where one member was absent
9 and a vote came up and another member abstained because it
10 was a conflict of interest and so it passed two to zero,
11 so it passed at the meeting, but the rules said you need a
12 majority of total Board, so it didn't pass. So this is
13 just changing so if one individual, like today, is absent,
14 you can pass it with a two to one vote or two to zero
15 vote.

16 The other one would just be the Board, the RTAB
17 members are not paid and we're just stating that in the
18 rules just so it's clear there's no pay for the members.

19 MR. WITKOWSKI: Or mileage or anything.

20 MR. WIDIGAN: Right, or mileage or anything.

21 And that's the only two amendments.

22 MR. WITKOWSKI: I make a motion to approve.

23 MR. RAGLON: I second it.

24 MR. VAUGHN: All those in favor, say aye.

25 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

1 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

2 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

3 Motion is passed.

4 Nonaction Items. There's a Budget to Actual
5 Report ending October 2014.

6 Do we have discussion on this item?

7 MR. WITKOWSKI: Darwin or Jodi, are things going
8 as you thought they should be budget-wise?

9 MR. VAUGHN: Miss Lundquist.

10 MR. WITKOWSKI: Or whoever.

11 Any surprises that have popped up at all?

12 MS. LUNDQUIST: No surprises here today. Things
13 are going fairly according to plan as you can see by the
14 percentage of year-to-date activity.

15 To respond to your question prior to the meeting
16 regarding how the water and sewer revenue was summarized,
17 water includes simply the metered water sales for the City
18 as well as the sprinkler hydrant fire suppression fees,
19 and then the sewer only is sewer charges and then all
20 other revenue was dumped into Other.

21 MR. WITKOWSKI: And then just on the audit,
22 has that been presented to the City Commission yet?

23 MS. LUNDQUIST: The audit will be presented to
24 the City Commission on December 15th.

25 MR. WITKOWSKI: Okay.

1 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you, Miss Lundquist.

2 MR. WATSON: Subsequently?

3 MR. WITKOWSKI: I think it should go to the
4 Commission first.

5 MR. VAUGHN: Any further discussion on the
6 budget?

7 The next item is the City Manager Update.

8 Mr. Watson, do you have anything for us?

9 MR. WATSON: Thank you, chairperson.

10 Just to let the RTAB know that we are -- I met
11 with the POLC to start their initial negotiations over the
12 contract that expires June 30th, 2015. We're kind of
13 getting an early start for the fact that there's some
14 structural things that we need to fix in the contract
15 itself so that when it says, "Look for fringe benefits on
16 Page 7," it's on Page 7, because there's some juxtaposing
17 of that. Also, asked to come in a little earlier to get a
18 good start on it, so just to let you know about that.

19 Also, we had a very successful tree lighting
20 ceremony last Friday night. It was the first annual
21 holiday light ceremony that the Parks and Recs Conservancy
22 sponsored. The City partnered along with a lot of local
23 vendors and businesses and it was a very, very
24 well-attended event. Got a lot of great comments about
25 it, social media, the Herald Palladium. We're getting

1 e-mails and what not about just, you know, people having a
2 lot more -- just being energized by what we did, something
3 as simple as putting up lights downtown.

4 I lastly want to wish everyone a happy
5 Thanksgiving. That's it.

6 MR. VAUGHN: Appreciate it. Thank you,
7 Mr. Watson.

8 The next item on the agenda is the Public
9 Comment.

10 Commissioner Adams, did you want to address the
11 Board this morning?

12 MS. ADAMS: Yes. I think I went somewhere else,
13 but thank you and happy holidays to everybody.

14 I just need more clarity on the audit. If in
15 fact we could get it days prior to the meeting to look
16 over, I mean I think I was looking -- reflecting back on
17 the minutes and I heard Mr. Witkowski say again that the
18 Commission should have an opportunity to look at it prior
19 to, and I just think that I would hope that it's in a more
20 timelier manner for any questions because we only have two
21 meetings a month.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you.

24 That's an issue that you would want to work out
25 with the City and the manager I think.

1 Thank you, commissioner.

2 I don't think there's any other public comment
3 available. I don't think anybody signed in.

4 Next item on the agenda is the Board Comment.
5 Mr. Witkowski.

6 MR. WITKOWSKI: First of all, thanks,
7 Commissioner Adams. She's the one city commissioner that
8 comes to every meeting, so thank you.

9 Also, I want to congratulate the City on how it
10 looks, the downtown, absolutely phenomenal, the Arts
11 District, and I would encourage whoever does your website,
12 which is a nice website, to see if you can grab that
13 article and put it on there because it does look very nice
14 driving through there, I mean it's -- I'm 46, I've lived
15 here my whole life and, to me, this is the nicest downtown
16 in my whole lifetime, and so, like I said, I would grab
17 that article, if they would allow you, and put it on your
18 website because I think that's the news that can get out.
19 It looks absolutely fantastic, that Arts District, the
20 Christmas tree and everything just looks great.

21 MR. VAUGHN: Mr. Raglon.

22 MR. RAGLON: I want to add my congratulations
23 for the look downtown and, also, I just want it to be
24 known that the businesses along Main Street were asked by
25 the Conservancy to contribute to the fund to light Main

1 Street and their stepping up to the plate was outstanding.
2 I would hope that this is something that can continue, not
3 just for the holidays, but in terms of doing things along
4 Main Street that need to be done, making sure that the
5 fronts of the businesses are clean and neat and
6 presentable all year-round, that the lawns are taken care
7 of, because we know sometimes that the grass isn't mowed
8 or taken care of. If the businesses could do that, my,
9 what a difference it would make, and this is an example of
10 the difference that can be made with the contributions of
11 all parties involved, and then I want to wish everybody a
12 happy and safe Thanksgiving.

13 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you, Mr. Raglon.

14 I would like to thank the employees and
15 officials of Benton Harbor. I consider you all friends.
16 It's been a good few months working with you and I do
17 appreciate the willingness to work and the openness and
18 just the quality of the work is very, very high.

19 Because of conflicts with my current position at
20 the Department of Treasury, it is with regret that I
21 submit my resignation to the Board effective tomorrow.
22 It's been a pleasure to serve the residents of Benton
23 Harbor in this capacity. I very much enjoyed working with
24 the fellow members of the Board and employees of the City.
25 So I do appreciate all of you very much and I'm sorry to

1 go.

2 So with that, I move that we adjourn the
3 meeting.

4 Do I have a second?

5 MR. RAGLON: Second.

6 MR. WITKOWSKI: Second, yeah.

7 MR. VAUGHN: Okay. All those in favor, say aye.

8 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

9 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

10 MR. VAUGHN: All those opposed, say no.

11 The meeting is adjourned.

12 (At 11:16 a.m. meeting adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATE

State of Michigan
County of Van Buren

I certify that this transcript, consisting of 16 pages,
is a complete, true and correct record of the Meeting
held 11/25/14.



Alison R. Huffman - CSR-0945
Certified Court Reporter
Notary Public in and for
Van Buren County, Michigan
Commission Expires: 8/19/2019

