

APPROVED - 4-29-15

City of Benton Harbor
Advisory Board Meeting

Receivership Transition
February 25, 2015

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CITY OF BENTON HARBOR
RECEIVERSHIP TRANSITION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2015

City of Benton Harbor Receivership Transition Advisory
Board Meeting held February 25, 2015 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 Court Reporter

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800-408-0070 captions@me.com

BOARD MEMBERS:

MR. LARRY STECKELBERG (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 Wednesday, February 25, 2015 - 11:00 a.m.

3 MR. STECKELBERG: Call the meeting to order of
4 the Receivership Transition Advisory Board for Benton
5 Harbor.

6 Mr. Widigan, ~~roll call~~ *roll call*, please.

7 MR. WIDIGAN: Marvin Raglon.

8 MR. RAGLON: Here.

9 MR. WIDIGAN: Bret Witkowski.

10 MR. WITKOWSKI: Here.

11 MR. WIDIGAN: Larry Steckelberg.

12 MR. STECKELBERG: Here.

13 MR. WIDIGAN: Let the record note that Sharon
14 Hunt is absent, but a quorum is present.

15 MR. STECKELBERG: The first item on the Agenda
16 is the approval of the Agenda.

17 Is there a motion?

18 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll make a motion.

19 MR. RAGLON: Second.

20 MR. STECKELBERG: Being seconded, all those in
21 favor?

22 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

23 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

24 MR. STECKELBERG: Aye.

25 Reminder to the public, should anyone wish to

1 speak, please sign up on the sign-up sheet on the podium
2 and we, of course, have a two-minute limit. If anybody
3 wishes to speak, please do sign up. I'll remind people
4 later.

5 The next item is the approval of the RTAB
6 Minutes for the January 28th meeting with noted
7 clarifications. I'll entertain a motion on that
8 if nobody has any questions.

9 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll make that motion.

10 MR. RAGLON: Second.

11 MR. STECKELBERG: Being seconded, all those in
12 favor?

13 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

14 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

15 MR. STECKELBERG: Aye.

16 We have no old business; on to new business.
17 Item Number 1 is approval of resolutions and ordinances
18 for City Commission meeting, the regular meeting of
19 January 20th, which is Attachment 2. If there's no
20 discussion, I'll entertain a motion to approve those.

21 MR. RAGLON: I'll make that motion.

22 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll second that.

23 MR. STECKELBERG: All those in favor?

24 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

25 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

1 MR. STECKELBERG: Aye.

2 Next, Item Number 2 is the meeting of
3 February 2nd, Attachment Number 3. We're splitting that
4 into two items. It may not be clear on the Agenda, but
5 the first motion that I'll entertain is approval of the
6 resolutions with the exception of the city manager
7 contract extension and then we'll take that up as a
8 second item with some discussion from Mr. Widigan. So
9 ~~if~~^{is} there ~~was~~ a motion to approve the February 2nd
10 resolutions with exception of the city manager contract
11 extension?

12 MR. RAGLON: I so motion.

13 MR. WITKOWSKI: Second.

14 MR. STECKELBERG: All those in favor?

15 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

16 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

17 MR. STECKELBERG: Aye.

18 All right. The second item then will be the
19 city manager's contract extension.

20 Mr. Widigan, do you have a summary for that?

21 MR. WIDIGAN: Yes. The Benton Harbor City
22 Commission approved an extension of the city manager's
23 employment agreement on February 2nd. Mr. Watson has
24 agreed to a one-year extension with no change in salary
25 and the employment agreement has been reviewed by

1 Treasury staff as well as the City attorney; no issues
2 are noted.

3 MR. STECKELBERG: Any discussion?

4 If not, I'll entertain a motion to approve that
5 action of the Commission.

6 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll make that motion.

7 MR. RAGLON: I'll second.

8 MR. STECKELBERG: Being made and seconded, all
9 those in favor?

10 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

11 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

12 MR. STECKELBERG: Aye.

13 All right. City Manager Items, Attachment
14 Number 4, the employment agreement. Is there any
15 discussion? Do we need --

16 MR. WIDIGAN: No.

17 MR. STECKELBERG: All right. Secondly, we have
18 the FDCVT Grant as information only.

19 Do you want to --

20 MR. WATSON: I'll just speak to that. Thank
21 you, Chairman Steckelberg.

22 The City is in receipt of the FDCVT Grant,
23 which stands for Financially Distressed Cities, Villages
24 and Townships Grant. We got an intent-to-award letter
25 from the State of Michigan in the amount of about

1 \$907,000. There are a number of projects that are going
2 to be funded by that grant. There are two water main
3 replacements that we're going to do, one on Summit and
4 one on Cherry Street. There's sidewalk repairs that are
5 going to be done. There's also blight elimination money
6 that was granted to the City, along with property
7 reassessment dollars that are going to be given to the
8 City. So we're kind of excited about that. We're waiting
9 on the resolution from the State of Michigan so we can get
10 it to the Commission so it can be passed and then
11 subsequently by the RTAB so we can get started. The work
12 preliminarily has started on gathering of information and
13 data that we need to start the RFPs and/or RFQs for the
14 work to be done, so we are in the process of getting that
15 off the ground and getting that hopefully this spring,
16 if not early summer. So that's just an update on that
17 grant. If there's any questions, I'll answer them as best
18 I can.

19 MR. STECKELBERG: Thank you very much.

20 The next item on the Agenda is discussion of a
21 new business opening. I believe you have a brief
22 discussion.

23 MR. WATSON: Yes. The Planning Commission
24 approved a site plan for a new business to open right
25 over here on Pipestone. A new convenience store is going

1 to be opening up, just to let the RTAB know and the
2 community, those that are here. Mr. Corwin Kyle is going
3 to be opening up a business. He very diligently got the
4 work done on the site plan and it was approved, and just
5 to let you know of good news that's happening, we've got
6 new businesses that are coming into the City of Benton
7 Harbor. So that's just information.

8 MR. WITKOWSKI: Is that on Pipestone and
9 Jefferson?

10 MR. WATSON: Yes, sir.

11 MR. WITKOWSKI: Those were lots he bought at a
12 tax foreclosure eight, 10 years ago, so the property had
13 to be torn down. He didn't own it at that time.

14 MR. WATSON: Right.

15 MR. WITKOWSKI: He ended up tearing it down.

16 MR. WATSON: That's true. He actually combined
17 the lots into one lot and got his site plan through the
18 Planning Commission. He worked very, very diligently.
19 I mean he was diligently on it. It was probably a good
20 two to three months of "This is what you need to do,
21 fix this." And he got it done, so he's anticipating
22 starting construction this spring.

23 MR. WITKOWSKI: Good.

24 MR. RAGLON: What is his name again?

25 MR. WATSON: Corwin Kyle.

1 MR. RAGLON: Okay.

2 MR. WATSON: That's all I have for updates.

3 MR. STECKELBERG: The next item is proposed
4 amendment to the 2015 RTAB meeting schedule, which was
5 Attachment Number 6.

6 Mr. Widigan, please give us a summary.

7 MR. WIDIGAN: All right. So at this time the
8 amount of items the City addresses each month does not
9 warrant a monthly RTAB meeting. We're taking into account
10 also the drain on City staff to produce information for
11 Treasury and the costs that go with that and also the
12 distance for Treasury staff to travel from Lansing per
13 month. It's suggested that the RTAB switch to an
14 every-other-month meeting schedule. I'd just like to
15 note, however, the City is still responsible for monthly
16 submission of financial reports. That's all I have on
17 that.

18 MR. STECKELBERG: Any thoughts or concerns?

19 MR. WITKOWSKI: No. The City seems to be
20 running well.

21 MR. STECKELBERG: And, of course, if an item
22 comes up that requires our action, we'll convene a
23 meeting, schedule it appropriately.

24 So I'll entertain a motion to approve, deny or
25 table the amendment to the schedule.

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

2 MR. RAGLON: Second.

3 MR. STECKELBERG: All those in favor?

4 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

5 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

6 MR. STECKELBERG: Aye.

7 We'll now move to Nonaction Items, Budget to
8 Actual Report ending January 31st, 2015, Attachment
9 Number 7.

10 Anybody providing any background on this or just
11 noting it?

12 MR. WIDIGAN: It's to receive and file unless
13 any of the Board members have any questions.

14 MR. STECKELBERG: Move on to City Manager
15 Update.

16 MR. WATSON: Well, just in addition to what
17 I've already given to you to let the RTAB know that I met
18 with the Mayor yesterday. He is planning his State of the
19 City address to be held in March. We haven't confirmed
20 the date, but it looks to be the last week in March.
21 We're going to have it at the Benton Harbor High School.
22 So we're working on that.

23 Also, we're working on the strategic planning
24 sessions for the Commission and goal setting for the
25 upcoming fiscal year. That looks to take place -- it's

1 going to take place probably in May of this year. We're
2 looking to put together a survey to send out to business
3 owners and residents to get their feedback, demographics,
4 kind of understand what people want so we can quantify the
5 work that we do going forward from that, and so that will
6 be coming, like I said, in May probably. The survey
7 should be ready middle of March, so it will be March
8 through the middle of April we'll get that, quantify the
9 data and then go into the sessions afterwards.

10 That's pretty much it, and then we're getting
11 ready for spring; hopefully it's coming. We are less
12 than 60 days away from the Blossom Parade, ironically so,
13 but, yeah, we're just getting geared up for a great
14 summer.

15 We've got projects that are starting. The
16 Colfax resurfacing will happen after school is out. Like
17 I said, we're getting ready for the work to be done from
18 the grant. The SAW Grant work is still going on. We've
19 got Union Field that's also going to be starting progress
20 on work to be done up there hopefully this spring. So
21 there's a lot of things getting geared up and ramped up,
22 like I say, if the snow decides to recede and go away for
23 a couple months.

24 MR. STECKELBERG: It does every year.

25 MR. WATSON: I know it does. Slowly but surely

1 it will happen. So that's just an update for the RTAB and
2 the people that are here currently.

3 MR. STECKELBERG: Next item on the Agenda is
4 Public Comment. I haven't seen anybody approach the
5 podium or sign up for public comment. So barring that
6 happening in the next few seconds, we'll move on to
7 Board Comment if there is any.

8 MR. WITKOWSKI: I have none.

9 MR. RAGLON: I have none.

10 MR. STECKELBERG: Then I'll entertain a motion
11 to adjourn the RTAB.

12 MR. RAGLON: So motioned.

13 MR. WITKOWSKI: I'll second.

14 MR. STECKELBERG: All those in favor?

15 MR. WITKOWSKI: Aye.

16 MR. RAGLON: Aye.

17 MR. STECKELBERG: Aye.

18 Meeting is adjourned.

19 (At 11:12 a.m. Meeting adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATE

State of Michigan
County of Van Buren

I certify that this transcript, consisting of 13 pages,
is a complete, true and correct record of the Meeting
held 2/25/15.



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



