

City of Syracuse Industrial Development Agency
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Minutes
Finance Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 8, 2023
8:00 a.m.

Committee Members Present: Kathleen Murphy, Steven Thompson, Kenneth Kinsey, Dirk Sonneborn, Rickey T. Brown

Staff Present: Eric Ennis, Susan Katzoff, Esq., Lori McRobbie

Others Present: Wendy Lougnot, Esq., Merike Treier, Gail Cawley

I. Call Meeting to Order

Ms. Murphy called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Ms. Murphy acknowledged all Finance Committee members were present.

III. Proof of Notice

Ms. Murphy noted that notice of the meeting had been timely and properly provided.

IV. Minutes

Ms. Murphy asked for a motion approving the minutes from the September 14, 2023 Finance Committee meeting. Mr. Sonneborn made the motion. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. **ALL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 14, 2023 FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING.**

V. New Business

JMA Tech Properties, LLC

Mr. Ennis said the Agency previously assisted JMA Tech Properties, LLC in the acquisition of property through eminent domain and that the committee is now being asked to authorize recommendation to the board of directors with regards to an expansion of its 5G campus facility. He said that Ms. Cawley from JMA is in attendance to speak about the project.

Ms. Cawley said JMA previously leased space for warehousing outside of the City in both the County and out of State and now wishes to centralize those functions by building an approximately 100,000 square foot warehouse next to their current project site. The new project will create 40 new jobs and cost approximately \$25,000,000.

Mr. Sonneborn asked what buildings are being used now for warehousing? Ms. Cawley said they have warehouse space in the Liverpool area, 1 General Motors Drive, Syracuse and Edgewood, Maryland. The leases for 1 General Motors Drive, Syracuse, NY and Edgewood, Maryland will terminate.

Mr. Brown asked if there are jobs coming from Maryland? Ms. Cawley said 16 positions from Maryland will come to Syracuse.

Ms. Cawley advised that construction would take 14-18 months and commence after the Brownfield cleanup process which she anticipated to be approximately 5 months.

Mr. Sonneborn asked about the local hiring requirement. Ms. Murphy said all local hiring requirements will be applicable.

Ms. Murphy stated that the insurance on the property is in place and that the cleanup will be good for both JMA and the neighborhood.

There being no further discussion, Ms. Murphy asked for a motion to recommend to the board of directors the authorization to undertake the project and for the Agency to enter into an agreement with JMA to allow JMA access to the property to clean up debris and secure the property with fencing. Mr. Brown made the motion. Mr. Kinsey seconded the motion. **ALL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A MOTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUTHORIZATION TO UNDERTAKE THE PROJECT AND FOR THE AGENCY TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH JMA TO ALLOW JMA TO ACCESS THE PROPERTY TO CLEAN UP DEBRIS AND SECURITY THE PROPERTY WITH FENCING.**

VI. Old Business

Downtown Committee Budget Modification

Mr. Ennis began a discussion regarding the Downtown Committee's (DTC) request for a modification to their agreement with the Agency relative to funds allocated for security and environmental maintenance. There is currently a two-year agreement in place through June 2024 regarding security and environmental services. The DTC has requested a change to the use of funds. Mr. Ennis said Ms. Treier, executive director of the DTC, is in attendance to provide background and context.

Ms. Treier said the impression people have of downtown space is important to attracting visitors and the investment in Syracuse. With regards to security, the DTC works with 911 system and Syracuse Police Department. The DTC has had difficulty finding dedicated security officers. The DTC has been unable to find dedicated officers for weekend positions despite rates being increased to be competitive. DTC ends up paying overtime to get shifts covered. Negative press regarding the safety of Downtown has an impact on visitors and our downtown businesses.

Recently, graffiti has become a big problem. A designated staff person usually has graffiti removed within 24 hours.

With the holiday season approaching, attracting visitors to Downtown is even more critical to support our businesses. However, additional marketing is needed to combat negative press regarding the safety of Downtown and what to expect when you come to Syracuse.

DTC reported approximately \$29,000 in unexpended funds from year one as a result of challenges to fill the part-time weekend environmental maintenance positions. DTC is requesting the Agency consider a reallocation of approximately \$29,000 from year one's allocation of the funding and approximately \$17,000 from year two's allocation for a total of approximately \$46,000 to support much-needed marketing, advertising and promotion activities for the central business district.

Mr. Brown asked about vandalism – is it graffiti only? Mr. Treier said no, there is vandalism, including vehicle larcenies and a garbage can flipper.

Mr. Brown asked if graffiti could be redirected to a public graffiti wall? Ms. Treier said they do have proposals out to pilot a utility box program involving public art/graffiti.

Mr. Sonneborn asked why the DTC responsible to do this type of maintenance? Why not just hire another police officer to parole downtown? Ms. Treier said the DTC is funded through the City to supply supplemental services. City residents pay special assessment taxes which go to the DTC to support these services.

Ms. Sonneborn asked if other cities do special assessments and raise funds. Ms. Treier said yes.

Ms. Murphy asked Ms. Treier to come back to the finance committee in February or March to provide an update on the security and environmental maintenance programs.

Mr. Thompson asked if it would be possible to offer a health benefit package instead of changing the pay structure? Ms. Treier said that incentives are given to people working 20 hours and above in the form of dental benefits. They are interviewing people now and are hopeful the tides will change.

Mr. Sonneborn said he would move the motion but asked Ms. Treier to continue to work hard to find additional funding.

Mr. Sonneborn and Mr. Thompson and Ms. Murphy thanked Ms. Treier for her all her efforts.

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Murphy asked for a motion to authorize the reallocation of approximately \$46,000 from the funding contract between the Agency and the DTC as described above. Mr. Sonneborn made a motion. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. **ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A MOTION TO AUTHORIZE THE REALLOCATION OF FUNDS FROM A FUNDING CONTRACT BETWEEN THE AGENCY AND THE DOWNTOWN COMMITTEE OF SYRACUSE.**

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Ms. Murphy asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Sonneborn made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brown seconded the motion. **ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:54 A.M.**