

**Business Development Corporation for a Greater Massena
Board Meeting Minutes
May 16, 2019**

Board Members: Ron Bacon, President Dan Pease
 Chris Herrick Ben Murtagh
 Dave LaClair

Excused: Jeff Dobbins Anthony Viskovich

Staff: Jim Murphy, Executive Director

Public: None

Call to Order

President, Ron Bacon, called the meeting to order at 4:35 pm.

Minutes of the April 2019 Meeting

Since the regularly scheduled April board meeting had been cancelled, there were no minutes to approve.

Financial Report s

Treasurer Chris Herrick submitted several financial reports for board review and approval, including reports for December of 2018, as well as January, February, March and April of 2019. Chris noted that most of the reports reflected primarily payroll expenses, as well as the funding received - and disbursed - to date for the theater project.

There was a question about the December 2018 report which showed a \$167,000 deficit on the income statement. Chris noted this reflected the construction costs of the railroad spur pad, which will be a re-capitalized item that ultimately will not be considered an expense and adjusted in the next audit. Chris noted that the BDC had received \$66,250 from the RVRDA in February to cover construction costs.

Chris had earlier noted that he was continuing to reach out to our auditor, Barbara Dwyer, in an attempt to finish her work. Jim will put together an RFP for the next audit, using the last available complete audit figures, until the latest audit is received.

Executive Director Report

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

The BDC has played a significant role in the development of the village of Massena's Downtown Revitalization Initiative, which is due June 1. Both Jim Murphy and Ron have participated in weekly planning meetings and Jim contributed to the narrative and coordinated four public listening sessions and a focus group of high school students as part of the DRI's public engagement process. Jim also participated in the final editing of the DRI document, took many of the pictures that appear in the DRI and put together a letter from the BDC in support of the effort. Jim noted that the DRI was a highly competitive process and that Potsdam, Canton, Ogdensburg and Lowville were all in the mix. He said that Massena has as good a chance as anyone to receive the \$10 million award and that he thought that the BDC would play a significant role in the implementation of the DRI grant if Massena receives the award. Then the real work starts, Jim noted.

Jim and Matt LeBire discussed application specifics and detailed some of the potential projects in Massena's DRI application. This is a long process and nothing is set in stone at this point.

Consolidated Funding Application process

Many of the 20+ projects outlined in the DRI application could also be eligible for a CFA grant application. These applications are due on July 26 and the BDC will be working with the village, town, and other local applicants to develop and support CFA applications, regardless of what happens with the DRI.

Theater Grant Update

As administrator of the Massena Theater's CDBG grant, Jim noted that he continues to work with the theater group to complete the work for which they have been approved for funding by the January of 2020 deadline. Questions were asked about the scope of the work and whether that included putting the marquee back up (it does) and why the project seemed to be taking so long. It was noted that there were additional local resources, including Alcoa Action Grants, that could provide funding and manpower to the restoring of the marquee. This had been set up years ago, but never implemented. Some questioned the structure and leadership of the theater organization, which appeared to be unresponsive to village efforts to include the theater in its DRI application.

Rail Spur Request

Jim reported that he had received a request from a local contractor to use the BDC's rail spur at the industrial park. The client wants to ship stone from his quarry to Florida and the Carolinas. After talking with Paul Rufa, Jim was told that he had to reach out to CSX representatives to schedule an inspection of the track section of the spur, as it had never

been used before. Jim noted that he had been unable to connect with CSX representatives despite numerous attempts, and the client had expressed similar frustrations about connecting with the train company to negotiate a rate. Jim asked the Board. About their feelings about what to charge, from our end, for the service. A figure of \$250/car had been discussed in the past. It was noted that the BDC had built the rail spur to assist the local market and not to make a profit. The consensus was to “be on the low side” when it came to charging to use the facility. Jim noted that he had been told that the cost for the rail inspection could be in the \$1,500 range, so he wanted to make sure the client was committed to using the track before incurring the expense of inspection. Our goal should be to generate some interest and usage.

St. Lawrence County ED Study Advisory Board Meeting

Jim continues to participate in this monthly meeting, which has proven to be a great informational source for upcoming grants and other types of funding initiatives.

Massena LWRP

Jim/BDC has taken the lead role in coordinating a Local Waterfront Redevelopment Plan for the Grasse River, running through downtown Massena. The long-term process is just starting, with the Waterfront Advisory Committee recently approved and will be meeting for the first time. This effort will build on a failed effort to develop an LWRP in 2009, which focused on the reconstruction of the dam downtown. Once the DEC determined that the dam could not be rebuilt, that effort fell apart. This project would include proposed improvements at the planned Water Street Park, increased access, usage and connections with downtown and other amenities that would enhance how we connect with the river.

Ongoing/Future Projects

Work continues on several ongoing projects, including website updates, Doing Business Guide, inventory of vacant commercial space, volunteer program and development of a downtown merchants’ association. Jim also talked about the proposed skilled workforce development training center that is part of the DRI application. He talked with the board about connecting with local unions. Board members suggested reaching out to Ron McDougal at Central Trades.

Board Action Items

None

New Business/Other Business

The Board discussed continuing efforts to reach out to Barb Dwyer (audit) and AEO training for board members.

Consultant and Liaison Reports

None

Questions from the Public/Press

None

Adjournment

Dan Pease made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 pm, that motion was seconded by Chris Herrick and passed with all members voting 'Aye'.

Next Regular Meeting Date: June 20, 2019