

**ADA TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (DDA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 8, 2021, MEETING, 8:00 A.M.**

A regular meeting of the Ada Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) was held on Monday, March 8, 2021, at 8:00 a.m. via video/audio-conferencing, in conformance with Public Act 228 of 2020 concerning temporary authorization of remote participation in public meetings.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:09 a.m. by Vice Chair, Idema.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Bowersox, Coe, Harrison, Idema, Leisman, Norman, VanderWulp, Wright

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Knapp

STAFF AND OFFICIALS PRESENT: Ferro, Suchy

PUBLIC PRESENT: 0

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Harrison, supported by Coe, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 8, 2021 MEETING

Moved by Harrison, supported by Norman, to approve the minutes with proposed change in wording to section IV, 6th paragraph, to add “contingent upon the grant funds being awarded.” Motion passed by roll call vote 8-0, with 1 absent.

Bowersox arrived meeting 8:13 a.m.

IV. APPROVAL OF FARMERS MARKET MANAGER CONTRACT FOR FY 21-22

Ferro stated that the market agreement is similar to previous years and the total hours are based on the number of markets held during the season. Ferro stated the hourly rate is \$15/hour for a total of \$8,175 for 545 hours during the contract year April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Ferro stated that he added additional language to the basic Memorandum of Understanding regarding vendor recruitment and promotion based on the board discussion during the budget preparation.

Harrison mentioned the addition of the COVID-19 preparation and responsibility measures and asked if hours needed to be added for that. Ferro stated the hours should be less this fiscal year because the costs for all the planning was already done last year with basic measures carried out this year.

Norman stated the labor market has changed substantially and asked whether they should review the market manager hourly wage. Ferro stated that would be the discretion of the board for discussion.

Leisman asked if the money from the market is managed through the treasurer’s office. Ferro explained the market used to involve taking in funds from marketing items and token sales, but the only cash involved now is a small amount of petty cash that reimburses out-of-pocket expenses.

Moved by Idema, supported by Leisman, to approve the market manager contract for FY 21-22. Motion passed by roll call vote 8-0, with 1 absent.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVE UPDATED DRAFT FY 2021-2022 BUDGET

Suchy stated that there are some minor variations made to the budget from the township board budget work session. Suchy explained the detail of the changes that are found in the column 2021-22 work session amount change. Suchy stated the total budget for revenues is \$675,304.00, which is about \$2,100 less than the previous proposal. Suchy stated we are still looking at total revenues exceeding expenditures by \$77,080.00 and the fund balance is expected to finish at \$827,000.00.

There was board discussion regarding the market manager's current hourly compensation and reviewed additional options for an increase.

Moved by Harrison, supported by Coe, to approve the budget reflecting the increase in market manager's hourly wage. Motion passed by roll call vote 8-0, with 1 absent.

Moved by Harrison, supported by Idema, to amend the market manager contract by increasing the manager's pay to \$16/hour. Motion passed by roll call vote 8-0, with 1 absent.

VI. DDA FINANCIAL REPORT, 2/28/21

Ferro stated that there has not been much activity other than what is included in his memo.

VII. BOARD MEMBER/STAFF COMMENTS

A. DISCUSS DDA DIRECTOR HIRING TIMELINE & JOB DESCRIPTION

Suchy referred to the current DDA Director job description included in the packet. Suchy stated the job description meets the needs of what the DDA is currently looking for. Suchy discussed the desired timeline to post the job on March 15th, close the position on April 9th, have a special DDA meeting on April 19th to select finalists to interview for the position, and have a tentative start date of June 1, 2021.

Suchy presented Michigan Municipal League salary study data and pointed out that there are only a few DDA's in the state with compensation rates less than ours. Suchy stated based on the township current 3-step plan the pay would be \$42,032/year. Suchy went over the comparisons and the township's 3-step process. Suchy provided two options to consider; starting the DDA Director at \$52,032/year with a 5-step plan to \$56,871/year or starting pay at \$60,000/year with 5-step plan to \$65,000/year.

Suchy stated that we need to get someone who has DDA experience and can bring their ideas and skill set from their previous work and hit the ground running from day one. Suchy said the DDA budgeted for \$52,000 for wages for the DDA Director.

Wright asked if a benefits package is included in the compensation. Suchy stated that they factor 30% for benefits and that amount is reflected in the budget.

There was board discussion about the different salary options/pay ranges and the levels of experience preferred and also the possibility of changing the job description experience to "Three or more years preferred." Suchy proposed a range be posted between \$52,032 - \$60,000 and ultimately the DDA will make the final determination. The board agreed with the range proposed for the DDA Director salary.

Vanderwulp left meeting approx. 9:00 a.m.

Moved by Idema, supported by Bowersox, to amend the position description as discussed and approve the job posting range of \$52,032 - \$60,000/year salary. Motion passed by roll call vote 7-0, with 2 absent.

B. SUMMARY OF SIDEWALK SNOW REMOVAL SERVICES

Ferro referred to the table in the packet comparing 2019-2020 costs to 2020-2021. Ferro stated that there was an increase due to the windrow removal option that was added, but still below the projected budget amount. The board all commented on the great job performed for the season.

C. UPDATE ON STAFF COORDINATION/COMMUNICATIONS WITH ABA

Suchy stated that he and Ferro attended an ABA executive board luncheon and Michelle Fair, Hudsonville DDA/Chamber, discussed how they operate. Suchy stated the ABA is going through some fact finding and researching the ideas of how to best serve the business community including the possibility of becoming a Chamber of Commerce. Suchy said the ABA plans to call the chamber at the state level to identify what the organizational benefits would be.

There was board discussion regarding the role of ABA and/or a Chamber and the benefits or grants/funding it may provide. Wright asked if we could have an ABA and a Chamber. Suchy stated that there wouldn't be a point in having the two entities operating because of the duplication and the ABA is only looking at one organization. Suchy stated that he is in communication with the ABA and will report back with any updates about the process.

D. UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN THE DDA DISTRICT

Ferro stated there is a proposal before the Planning Commission for converting the former Kniff Accounting building (the brick house next to Speedway) to a restaurant with outdoor seating, the Ada Garage Bar & Grill. Ferro stated that the developer/owner, Brad Rosely, owns a couple other Garage Bars in Grand Rapids, does not plan to apply for a redevelopment liquor license and plans to purchase a license on the open market.

Idema expressed her concern about the restaurant only having 5-6 parking spaces. Ferro stated that the owner is relying on the daytime office population, walking traffic, and nearby public parking.

Ferro also shared information on two other proposals on Fase Street which would provide 24 additional home sites in the village.

E. COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING POLICY OPTIONS FOR ISSUANCE OF REDEVELOPMENT AREA LIQUOR LICENSES

Suchy stated that Steven Hively, an intern working for Ada Township, has been doing policy research and working with Michigan Liquor Control Commission to identify requirements and/or restrictions for redevelopment area liquor licenses (RDA). Suchy referred to Steven's memo and said Hively outlined the background of what other communities do and provided recommendations to have a limit on number of licenses issued and a density requirement.

Ferro referred to Hively's memo and clarified the statement, "the current quota of 9 licenses has been reached." Ferro stated the quota licenses are population based and are handled separately from redevelopment licenses so there is not really a relationship between the two.

Wright asked if there is a direct relationship between a redevelopment liquor license and the quota license. Ferro stated the business has to demonstrate that they have tried to find a license, whether it a quota license or a license on the open market, then they qualify to apply for a redevelopment liquor license.

Suchy stated the quota licenses used to be very costly and that redevelopment license became more popular because if they could show the investment in their facility then they were granted one at a much lower rate than buying one on the open market, but the redevelopment license is not transferrable and doesn't have resale value.

There was board discussion regarding what criteria should be required for a potential recipient of a liquor license and the need to establish guidelines on how to limit the number of licenses or distance between locations within the DDA district.

Suchy stated he will provide a summary to the DDA of what current locations have liquor licenses and whether it is an open market license or RDA's and will include a map showing the locations.

Coe left meeting at 9:22 a.m.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

To keep in compliance with the law regarding virtual meetings, Leisman suggested that all members identify their physical location. Responses were as follows:

Ross Leisman in Grand Rapids MI
Terry Bowersox in Ada MI
Ted Wright in Chicago IL
Bryan Harrison in Grand Rapids MI
Margaret Idema in Ada MI
Devin Norman in Grand Rapids MI
Walt VanderWulp in Ada MI

IX. ADJOURN MEETING

Moved by Idema, supported by Harrison, to adjourn meeting at 9:32 a.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Devin Norman, Secretary

rs:eb