

**SAYREVILLE ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY  
“SERA”**

**MINUTES OF June 13, 2024**

The meeting of the Sayreville Economic Redevelopment Agency was called to order by Chairman Zebrowski and opened with salute to the flag. Chairman Zebrowski announced that the meeting was being conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Law P.L. 1975, c231, Public Law, 1975.

SERA Commissioners that were present were: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Ms. Duffy, Mr. Grillo, Councilperson Roberts (online), Mr. Scott and Chairman Zebrowski

Absent Commissioners: Mr. Dalina, Ms. Fischer

Also present were: Mr. Shah, Mr. Baker, Esq., Mr. Samuel, Mr. Cornell, Ms. Sawant and Mr. Kronowski

**AT THIS TIME, THE MEETING WAS OPENED:**

**Chairman Zebrowski asked the Board Secretary if the board meeting was being conducted under the Sunshine Law and if all publications were notified, the secretary had stated, yes.**

**MINUTES:**

**Mr. Scott made a motion to approve the minutes from May 9, 2024; seconded by Mr. Davis.**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Ms. Duffy, Mr. Grillo, Mr. Scott and Chairman Zebrowski**

**NO: n/a**

**ABSTAIN: n/a**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT:**

**Mr. Shah provided the Executive Director’s report of June 13, 2024. He referred to the corrective action plan prepared by CFO, Wayne Kronowski. Mr. Shah stated, the 2023 audit report was emailed to all commissioners for review. He also stated, the financial system set up process is ongoing, the beginning balance was revised based upon the draft audit and all transactions from January to May 31<sup>st</sup> are in the process of being reconciled.**

**2024 budget is on this evening's agenda for public hearing and adoption and the beginning of the 2025 process should be ready for introduction in September/October. The board will get back into the timely process. Brownfield redevelopment BDA meeting was rescheduled for July. SERA was awarded a planning grant from the FTA for Intermodal Transportation. Mr. Shah and Mr. Samuel had a meeting with NJDOT on June 12<sup>th</sup>, their discussion about receiving this grant was positive and another meeting is scheduled for the week of June 24<sup>th</sup> to complete the process of the application. It will be approx. nine (9) months before the onboarding process. Mr. Shah stated we may have to meet with them bi-weekly. Mr. Samuel stated federal funding has been shifted to federal transportation instead of NJDOT. The grant is for an engineering study to plan out the connections of the roadway/bicycle lanes/pedestrian of walkways of parcel A, B and C and studying the connectivity to the train and ferry station of South Amboy. Chairman Zebrowski added the Parcel B property is not land locked but the issue is one entrance and one exit.**

**Mr. Samuel discussed further the area of the Brownfield development to new commissioners. The key to this type of development is that you need to meet their requirements of which we have and received monies from the initial part of clean up. The reasons for these meetings are to ensure compliance with their standards, providing reports and having representation for three (3) commissioners from this agency.**

**Mr. Shah informed the commissioners about the design of the financial system that is now in use. As Mr. Shah stated, it has more functions than excel or quicken. The agency will take advantage of all modules of this system.**

**Ms. Duffy asked which individuals will be responsible for the checks and balances, who oversees the checks being written, signs for them. Mr. Shah stated the CFO will primarily and myself, Executive Director to make sure. The commissioners ultimately will be reviewing the reports and the bill list to approve. There is a manual check option between meetings, but must be reported for your approval. The audit report will check to ensure all documentation is in place, as well as reports.**

#### **2024 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING & ADOPTION:**

**Mr. Scott made a motion to open the public portion, seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion carried**

**No public was present**

**Mr. Scott made a motion to close public portion, seconded by Mr. Davis. Motion carried**

**Ms. Duffy raised concerns regarding a set amount paid to Mr. Kronowski' s salary. Mr. Shah informs that the budget is a planned document, not an absolute document. The absolute document will be the audit report. It will reflect what spending took place within the year. Mr. Baker, Esq added that unlike the municipal budget, where if you have money in the budget you have to raise taxes to pay for it. We don't raise taxes to pay for it, we have our own revenue sources. This does not impact the taxpayer or anyone, like it would if it was the Borough budget. Chairman Zebrowski mentioned that we memorialized his salary at an earlier meeting that we discussed it would be pro-rated. Ms. Duffy stated Mr. Baker, Esq. changed the resolution to state to be prorated, but not with a specific amount.**

**Mr. Scott made a motion to adopt the 2024 budget as presented, seconded by Mr. Davis.**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Ms. Duffy, Mr. Grillo, Mr. Scott, Councilperson Roberts and Chairman Zebrowski**

**NO: n/a**

**ABSTAIN: n/a**

#### **AUTHORIZATION FOR PAYMENT BILLS:**

**Mr. Grillo had a question about a \$1,400 bill from Mr. Baker's firm regarding the Club Pure site in May. Mr. Baker, Esq advised the commissioner that another invoice is forthcoming for June. Per the request of the Borough, Mr. Baker's office will prepare a resolution to the Clerk and assisted the Borough complete the PILOT agreement. There have been conversations that the original PILOT that SERA had recommended a year or so ago and that in the new PILOT that the administration had negotiated, the Borough will obtain an additional \$1M and the administration will go ahead with that and place it onto the agenda next week's council meeting.**

**Mr. Grillo asked if SERA will have any interaction or will this be solely with the Mayor and Council? Mr. Baker, Esq. answered, mayor and council.**

**Mr. Scott made a motion to accept the operating expenses total \$36,094.35, seconded by Mr. Davis.**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Ms. Duffy, Mr. Grillo, Mr. Scott and Chairman Zebrowski**

**NO:**

**ABSTAIN:**

**Councilperson Roberts (was not able to get a response)**

**Mr. Scott made a motion to accept Item B, escrow total \$28,303.95, seconded by Mr. Davis.**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Ms. Duffy, Mr. Grillo, Mr. Scott and Chairman Zebrowski**

**NO:**

**ABSTAIN:**

**Councilperson Roberts (was not able to get a response)**

**MEMORIALIZATION OF RESOLUTIONS:**

**Chairman Zebrowski stated his appreciation of all the years Ms. Kemble provided as recording secretary. At a later meeting, they will request her to come and present her with a certificate or plaque.**

**Ms. Duffy stated her concern about the new recording secretary annual salary which is over what Joan Kemble was being paid. Ms. Duffy did not recall any discussion about an increased salary for this position and the same thing for Item C. She feels the commissioners do not have any input on hiring.**

**Chairman Zebrowski addresses Item B with regard to a limited pool by the Borough and price point that is presented by the Borough. He stated that Joan provided resignation and SERA had to work very quickly. Ms. Magnani has the experience, skill set that will be a great asset for SERA.**

**Chairman Zebrowski made a motion to accept the resolution to appoint Ms. Beth Magnani as recording secretary effective June 1, 2024 with an annual salary of \$3,600.00, Mr. Scott so moved, seconded by Mr. Davis.**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Mr. Grillo, Councilperson Roberts, Mr. Scott and Chairman Zebrowski**

**NO:**

**ABSTAIN: Ms. Duffy**

**Chairman Zebrowski moved to Item C to appoint new accounting clerk. Ms. Duffy asked if she was a Borough employee. Mr. Shah stated, no she is not but is experienced in accounting. This position was posted and we received a resume. We recommended Ms. Salian and only one application was received.**

**Ms. Duffy wanted to know her hours and responsibilities. Mr. Shah responded that she is part-time, working remotely and on Thursdays working with Denise and Wayne. Her focus will be accounts payable, escrow and management.**

**Mr. Grillo asked Mr. Shah, \$600 a month is basically charity. Is this a fix fee per month, is there a not to exceed? Mr. Shah stated for now this is a salary per month.**

**Mr. Grillo would like to form a personnel committee that would review resumes and application when needed. This committee would be to vet their experience prior to going to the board.**

**Councilperson Roberts had concerns about this committee. She felt this is a lot of overhead for such small part-time positions. All other professionals come through the RFP process; what positions would need this type of management?**

**Ms. Duffy felt there should be a process in place to oversee either \$100 a month or \$100,000 a month. This will provide the commissioners the opportunity to see the candidates that are applying.**

**Councilperson Roberts states we have a process in place for the \$100K which we go through professionals annually. Mr. Shah stated there's a two (2) step process, all RFPs are reviewed and qualified by the board and second step would be the evaluation and recommendation.**

**Mr. Grillo asked Mr. Baker, Esq. if they would proceed with a personnel committee, does this require a change in by-laws or any legal documents required? Mr. Baker, Esq. stated as long as you are making a recommendation to the agency, no changed needed. This can be completed orally and voted on this evening.**

**Mr. Scott wanted to know what the purpose of this committee reviewing the RFPs? Chairman Zebrowski stated the employment committee is a good thing and we should have further discussion about professional RFP review process.**

**Mr. Grillo made a motion to create a personnel committee to evaluate only staff and administration hires, seconded by Councilperson Roberts.**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Ms. Duffy, Mr. Grillo, Councilperson Roberts and Chairman Zebrowski**

**NO: Mr. Scott**

**ABSTAIN:**

**Chairman Zebrowski would like to appoint Mr. Davis, Mr. Grillo, Ms. Duffy and alternate member of Mr. DeWise to the personnel committee.**

**Chairman Zebrowski made a motion to appoint Sujata Salian, effective June 1, 2024 with an annual salary of \$7,200.; Mr. Scott and Mr. Davis accepted the motion**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Mr. Grillo, Councilperson Roberts, Mr. Scott and Chairman Zebrowski**

**NO:**

**ABSTAIN: Ms. Duffy**

**Mr. Scott made a motion to accept Ms. Joan Kemble's resignation as Recording Secretary effective May 28, 2024; seconded by Mr. Davis.**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Ms. Duffy, Mr. Grillo, Councilperson Roberts, Mr. Scott and Chairman Zebrowski**

**NO:**

**ABSTAIN:**

**Mr. Andrew Zabiega, auditor of Samuel Klein presents the 2023 audit. There are several recommendations, most carried over from 2022 audit. Mr. Zabiega reviews the comments and recommendations, as such:**

**2023-01, the annual pension bill that is due to the State of New Jersey, due by April 1<sup>st</sup> was not paid as of December 31<sup>st</sup>. Will be paid in 2024.**

**2023-02, prior outstanding checks were canceled without being approved by Commissioners. They should be completed by Board approval because the commissioners approve the bills to begin with, they should also approve cancellation of checks that are not cashed.**

**2023-03, this is a repeat with a different redeveloper. The anniversary date accrued in 2023 for administrative fee. This fee was not collected by 12/31/23. We set up as a receivable in the audit.**

**2023-04, this is a repeat. SERA pays the professionals for SSA, under the agreement with the redeveloper is supposed to reimburse SERA for the expenses. During 2023, SERA paid out \$20,663.50 which was never reimbursed by the redeveloper. This is set up as a receivable.**

**2023-05, this is a repeat from the 2022 audit. There are several escrow accounts that are overspent as of December 31, 2023. The agency was not tracking sufficient balances prior**

to releasing expenditures. Auditor and Mr. Kronowski met and went over each line item that SERA currently has and reconciled their costs and had to make one (1) adjustment in the audit for prior year mis posting. In the 2022 audit there were certain bills that were labeled as non-escrow related and these were charged to operating budget. When Mr. Kronowski reviewed and determined they were escrow bills. That was one adjustment that was made from the 2022 to 2023 to charge the escrow accounts not SERA's operating budget.

Page 39 summarizes the recommendations and Mr. Zabiega would like to thank, Mr. Baker, Esq for getting the loan amount from the County.

Mr. Shah informed the commissioners that at the end of the year the agency will be in a better position with the procedures in place that professional invoices will be paid once the escrow balance has funds.

Councilperson Roberts had asked if Mr. Shah can include an escrow report to be included with the agenda? Mr. Shah stated once the system is fully populated, commissioners will receive monthly reports. Mr. Kronowski stated that both the CFO and Executive Director sign off on the vouchers before it is submitted for payment.

Mr. Scott made a motion on the certification of the 2023 annual audit, seconded by Mr. Grillo.

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES:** Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Ms. Duffy, Mr. Grillo, Councilperson Roberts, Mr. Scott and Chairman Zebrowski

**NO:**

**ABSTAIN:**

**DISCUSSION:**

Mr. Kronowski discussed the corrective action plan for the 2022 audit, as it repeated in the 2023 audit. Mr. Kronowski indicates the corrective action taken on the first item had to do with deposits. Governmental agencies are required to deposit within 48 hours of receipt. The comment about the pension bills, they were all paid in January for 2022, 2023 and 2024. Due date is April 30<sup>th</sup> of each year and does not require a check. All payments are electronically fund transferred to the state. With regard to allocating accounts, this will be handled through Mr. Kronowski and will be allocated appropriately. There is now a schedule in place for administrative fees, escrow fees and purchase orders will be available for auditors.

**Mr. Davis made a motion to accept the 2022 Corrective Action Plan that was presented by CFO, seconded by Mr. Grillo.**

**ROLL CALL:**

**YES: Mr. Davis, Mr. DeWise, Ms. Duffy, Mr. Grillo, Councilperson Roberts, Mr. Scott and Chairman Zebrowski**

**NO:**

**ABSTAIN:**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Mr. Shah informs the agency of new projects. Corner of Main Street/Crossman, currently there is a small transit bus maintenance center and it was a containment site. Mr. Shah did not have a name of the firm that would be interested but there is additional land in the rear of the lot that they would be interested in doing development. The second one is the Red Oak; they are looking to do an expansion project on Jernee Mill Road. Mr. Shah created an application for developers that cover all the information SERA needs and will be shared with the commissioners once received from an applicant.**

**At 8:02 p.m., Mr. Shah himself needed to be excused from the meeting.**

**Mr. Cornell provided exciting news about Bass Pro Shoppe. Mr. Cornell spoke with the redeveloper and they have awarded a concrete contract to a contractor and will submit shop drawings soon and the plan is to start work footings and foundations sometime during fall this year.**

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS:**

**Chairman Zebrowski states that a letter of retirement was received for Mr. Ambrosio effective date of June 14, 2024. Chairman Zebrowski informs that the Planning Board is working on the Master Plan. He has asked Mr. Grillo and Ms. Sawant to look at the special economic redevelopment industrial zones to see if the Borough is doing everything they can within the zone and to review all vacant properties that are available within the zones so SERA can help the development move forward. Mr. Grillo mentioned SERA should review zoning and make recommendation to the Borough, as well as keep up with current economic trends and GREEN energy.**

**Ms. Sawant has been looking over the zoning ordinance and redevelopment plans that have been written. She feels as the agency should be looking at the overall zoning in the Borough. Also, she stated that many towns have Economic Development Plan as an element of the master plan, and overlay zoning that allows new uses.**

**Mr. Grillo stated we have a very strong board and very good professional, diverse commissioners and I believe the time is right to say, SERA and the Borough are in a strong position to benefit.**

**Chairman Zebrowski stated that the re-examination of the master plan, it's not as far thinking that you may think. In many cases, it is addressing current issues and I saw that a lot in the report and in the leadership of where we want to go and provides SERA the opportunity to make the recommendations.**

**Public portion was opened and closed; no public attended.**

**Mr. Scott made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Davis.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Beth Magnani  
SERA Recording Secretary**