

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
PUBLIC PARKING AUTHORITY OF PITTSBURGH  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2021**

Having been duly advertised in accordance with the Sunshine Act No. 84 of 1986, a virtual meeting of the Public Parking Authority of Pittsburgh was held at 10:07 a.m. on February 18, 2021. The following Board members were present at the start of the meeting: Jeff Cohen, Matt Barron, Karina Ricks and Bobby Wilson. Present from staff were David Onorato, Mark DiNatale, Jo-Ann Williams, Gwendolyn Bolden, Christopher Speers, Chris Holt, David Perry, Scott McNaugher, Tracy Sowinski and Pat Konesky. Also present were Jason Wrona of Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney; Bill Stewart of Strategic Communications; Alison Keating and a person identified as Pittsburgher representing themselves.

**MINUTES**

Mr. Cohen asked for approval of the minutes from the January 21, 2021 meeting.

Upon motion by Ms. Ricks and seconded by Mr. Wilson, the minutes were approved as follows: Mr. Barron, yes; Mr. Wilson, yes; Ms. Ricks, yes; Mr. Cohen, yes.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Cohen asked if there were any public comments.

There were none.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Onorato introduced and welcomed Mr. Perry who was recently hired as Human Resources Manager.

Mr. Perry stated that he was happy to be part of the Authority, looked forward to working with everyone and asked that they reach out to him if there were any questions regarding his area of responsibility.

Mr. Onorato advised that evening enforcement will resume on March 1, 2021 and noted

that we are working with the City in support of the upcoming Street Cleaning season. He also advised that the enforcement of the small alley ways in South Side, particularly Wright's Way, in relation to a Thursday garbage cleaning detail, will resume next week.

Mr. Onorato reported that, based on the current Co-Op agreement with the City, we recently forwarded the \$14.4 million representing the 2020 portion of its share.

Mr. Onorato advised that Maher Duessel has begun the Authority's yearly audit and said that Mr. Barron and Ms. Fishback both volunteered to be on an Audit Committee. He advised that the goal is to have the audit completed and presented at the April Board Meeting. Mr. Onorato asked Mr. Barron if he would like to say anything regarding the committee's initial meeting.

Mr. Barron stated that he and Ms. Fishback had a few questions for the Auditors and were satisfied with their answers and said the committee is looking forward to a positive process.

Mr. Onorato advised the Board that he recently received an executed agreement from the AFSCME Union agreeing to a one-year extension of its contract under the same terms and conditions. He said that this contract will now expire in December of 2021, noting that the Teamster's contract also will expire at the end of 2021.

Mr. Wilson asked for clarification of the garbage/trash enforcement program.

Mr. Onorato responded that is a special enforcement service on the South Side on garage collection days because the refuse trucks have difficulty driving down narrow alleys, specifically Wrights Way. He said that enforcement officers will go ahead of the trucks and issue tickets to vehicles remaining in the area that are parked in violation of posted signage.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Finance Report, stating that at the Board's request the revenues from 2019 were kept in the report as a benchmark of pre-Covid results. He noted that January 2020 to January 2021 were comparable as this was before the pandemic hit and said a significant drop will become apparent beginning in March. He advised that the Authority was also able to reduce expenses and will continue to monitor them. He noted that the reports show that current monthly revenues totals are approximately \$1.8 million compared to pre-pandemic monthly revenues of approximately \$4.6 million. Mr. Onorato stated that that there was some upward movement in December and January and said, to date in February, it appears that its revenues may be higher than in January.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Garage Facility Report, which shows the revenues broken down by garage location. He stated that these revenue numbers for the garages tie into those shown in the Finance Reports.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Enforcement Ticket Report, which shows issuance down approximately 50 percent from last year. He did advise that the Authority will be resuming evening enforcement beginning March 1 and said that, together with Street Cleaning and Trash Collection, should increase ticket volume.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Collection Report, which shows a decrease of approximately 57 percent from last year with off-street revenues down approximately 60 percent.

Mr. Onorato discussed the Parking Court Report, which shows revenues are down approximately 50 percent, again due to the pandemic.

Mr. Onorato summarized that all of the reports show a decline in revenues since the start of the pandemic. He noted that most of the businesses that we have been in contact with thought they may be able to return to normal business beginning around June but are now extending their employees remote work locations further into the year, most likely through November 1. He also noted that three large hotels and many of the restaurants located downtown still are not open for business, adding that the North Shore events and theaters are still closed as well. He advised that we will continue to monitor activity trends, noting that most of the current parking levels are out of our control.

Mr. Cohen stated that Mr. Onorato's report made the current situation seem pretty nice but said that in fact the Authority is in trouble financially. He stated that while the Authority has always been financially sound and has just re-financed out debt, these numbers are way below our projected revenues and we are unaware of which direction they are going to go. He stated that the Board is going to need to determine a game plan sooner than later because, based on the reported revenue numbers, the Authority is in financial trouble owing to conditions beyond our control. He stated that while the current Board has never had to deal with this type of situation, it is going to have to address it quickly. He thanked Authority staff for everything it has done and noted that he is aware that Mr. Onorato has been discussing our positions with the Mayor's Office. He stated, however, that if the Authority does not generate adequate returns, we can't generate the necessary level of capital funding necessary to maintain our garages and lots. He stated that we need to look more closely at what will be required to ensure the short-and-long-term future of the Authority.

Mr. DiNatale stated that while our projection for 2021 is a pretty flat number, we are now trending low and are awaiting parkers to return to regenerate our revenues. He stated in the short term we just cannot go out and get new debt, which would just create issues with our debt ratio and make it harder to keep our favorable bond rating. He stated that right now our \$1.8 million projection is low and the reason Mr. Onorato has been conversing with the City on our revenue-sharing agreement.

Mr. Cohen stated that as bleak as it looks now, he does believe that we will need to make some short-term adjustments. He emphasized that the Authority is solvent but we have to be concerned. He noted that the Federal Government may be able to help financially stressed municipalities, and that could possibly help the Authority. He asked the Board Members if they had any questions or comments.

Mr. Barron referenced Mr. Onorato's earlier point about hearing from major downtown employers that September is the most likely target for when employees might return to in person business, noting that he is hearing the same. He said he believes we may need to make some budget adjustments to factor this in but suggested tracking the revenues for another month or two and then make any adjustments after that.

Mr. Cohen stated that he believes that things will improve slowly as the flow of vaccine distribution increases and said that we may only have to make some short-term adjustments based on revenue results. He noted that when we refinanced our debt in December we saved approximately \$4 million but stated that things we took for granted two years ago need to be looked at more closely now.

Ms. Ricks stated that the Parking Authority exists only to satisfy demand, stating that our revenues occur because people do want to come to downtown destinations and activities. She stated that it is going to be a long haul to bring patrons back to the theater district and to surrounding restaurants and feels we need to be ready should this return coincides with the holiday season that always requires a dynamic discussion between the Cultural District, the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and the Parking Authority. Ms. Ricks added that we need to look at that balance and how we manage our parking resources in accordance with their impact on the patronage that comes downtown. She said she feels that the only way to have a long-term revenue comeback is if we are committed to the recovery of the city because, without a healthy city a large volume of parking capacity is unnecessary.

Mr. Cohen said he agreed and stated that if last weekend was any indication of trends, Valentine's Day weekend's increase in people visiting restaurants was a good sign of pent-up demand.

Mr. Wilson added to Ms. Ricks comments and stated that this is an opportunity for the Board and the Authority to think a little more creatively in using its assets by emphasizing the revenue-generation capacity of those that are productive also to consider but particular assets that may never bounce back to a revenue generating place by thinking about land leases or other property-disposition methods that could possibly enhance the recovery of other city activities. He stated that maybe an asset of ours isn't the best location for parking in the future and may be better suited for other revenue-generating purposes that could bring more long-term revenue. He stated that the challenges associated with this pandemic could also potentially contain some opportunities for future growth.

Mr. Onorato responded that he and staff have been thinking about these types of issues and, as an example, has been working with DOMI on curb management such as what we have done with the URA on retail spaced at our Mellon Square Garage. He advised that we will continue to look at other options to generate revenue from the type and location of our assets.

**RESOLUTION NO. 1 OF FEBRUARY 2021, "A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ADJUST THE EXISTING PUBLIC PARKING AUTHORITY OF PITTSBURGH POLICY RELATED TO PROCUREMENT OF LOW-VALUE CONTRACTS FOR CONSTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTION, REPAIR, SERVICES, SUPPLIES AND/OR MATERIALS, was read by Mr. Cohen and considered by the Board.**

Mr. Onorato advised the Board that the Authority is asking that the current threshold for expenditures not requiring a bid, phone or written quote to be increased from less than \$4,000 to any commitment lower than \$11,500. He then advised that the second category requiring three written quotes or three phone quotes be increased from the range of \$4,000 to \$25,000 to a higher range of \$11,500 to \$28,700 and, finally, to increase public bid or RFP requirement from \$25,000 to \$28,700. He advised that these increased amounts are all in compliance with State governance and have been endorsed by our legal team.

Mr. Wilson asked why the previous amounts were so low.

Mr. Onorato advised that these numbers were based on the State Procurement requirements adopted in March 2015.

Mr. Wrona stated that while these increases are not proportional, they are the amounts are published and are deemed acceptable by the Department of Labor and Industry.

Mr. Barron stated that he supports this proposed change and believes that having more flexibility for smaller purchases makes sense. He stated that where possible, the Authority should continue to use the Co-Stars system and piggy-back off existing State and City contracts.

Mr. Cohen asked if there were any comments.

There were none.

Upon motion by Mr. Barron and seconded by Mr. Wilson, Resolution No. 1 of 2021 was approved as follows: Mr. Barron, yes; Mr. Wilson, yes; Ms. Ricks, yes; Mr. Cohen, yes

**RESOLUTION NO. 2 OF FEBRUARY 2021, "A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO APPROVE FINAL PAYMENT TO LUGALIA MECHANICAL, INCORPORATED FOR UPGRADES TO THE FIRE AND PANIC ALARM SYSTEMS AT EIGHT (8) GARAGE LOCATIONS,** was read by Mr. Cohen and considered by the Board.

Mr. Onorato advised that the work performed by Lugalía Mechanical on the fire and panic alarm system upgrade, together with the project's punch list items, have been completed to the Authority's satisfaction. He advised that the original contract amount was \$1,928,317 and said a change order for \$119,736, approximately six percent of the contract amount, represented a change in scope initiated by the Authority based on code requirements from the fire inspection. He noted that the actual MBE percentage of the work performed was 19 percent while WBE participation was at five percent.

Mr. Onorato noted that this is an example of one of the projects that was self-funded through our capital repairs program and, without an increase in revenue, we currently would not have been able to be completed as the Authority does not now have the excess cash required.

Mr. Cohen added that the Authority is not alone in going through this. He added that the Authority is a well-managed and solid organization that needs to stay on top of things and be sure that we address any issues sooner rather than later based on the short-term financial hardships we are facing. He stated that he was concerned that revenues have not returned like he believed they would have by now but repeated that we are a strong Authority with a solid reserve and good fund balance. He said that, as a revenue-based enterprise, those conditions are not guaranteed to be permanent. Mr. Cohen added that, while he views the Authority's situation as difficult, he placed its condition at the concerning state and not at a panic level.

Mr. Cohen asked if there were any comments.

There were none.

Upon motion by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Barron, Resolution No. 2 of 2021 was approved as follows: Mr. Barron, yes; Mr. Wilson, yes; Ms. Ricks, yes; Mr. Cohen, yes

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Onorato asked if there were any new or old matters to discuss.

There were none.

Upon motion by Ms. Ricks and seconded by Mr. Wilson, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m. with all Board members in approval.

**APPROVED TO CONTENT**

  
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**Chairman**

**ACCEPTED FOR FILING IN THE AUTHORITY'S BOOK OF MINUTES**

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**Approval**

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Mr. Cohen asked if there were any comments.

There were none.

Upon motion by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Mr. Barron, Resolution No. 2 of 2021 was approved as follows: Mr. Barron, yes; Mr. Wilson, yes; Ms. Ricks, yes; Mr. Cohen, yes

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