

Worcester Redevelopment Authority

Vincent A. Pedone
Chairman

Peter Dunn
Chief Executive Officer



WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Friday, July 31, 2020

9:00 A.M.

City Hall, Esther Howland Chamber
Worcester, MA 01608

Present:

Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board

Vincent Pedone, Chair
David Minasian, Vice Chair
Jennifer Gaskin
Sumner Tilton

Staff

Peter Dunn, Chief Development Officer
Jennifer Beaton, Deputy City Solicitor
John Odell, Energy & Asset Management
Amanda Cornwall, Office of Economic Development
Jane Bresnahan, Office of Economic Development

Pursuant to a notice given (attached), a meeting of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority was held at 9:00 A.M. on Friday, July 31, 2020.

1. **Call to Order**

Mr. Dunn called the meeting to order at 9:07 A.M.

2. **Roll Call**

Mr. Dunn called the roll.

3. **Authorize the use of FTA funding for elements of the center platform project, in the amount of Two Million, Six Hundred Twenty Two Thousand, Ninety Five Dollars and No Cents (\$2,622,095.00)**

Mr. Dunn reviewed with the Board the Center Platform at Union Station in partnership with the MBTA which will allow two trains to access the station at the same time. The MBTA has agreed to have the contractor install the new platform and demolish the existing platform, the existing platform will no longer be needed. The plaza deck beneath the platform will be replaced with a waterproof membrane. The item is the cost of the demolition of the existing platform and subsequent upgrades. The total cost is \$3,146,514.00 that amount includes both design and construction, the 80% FTA share is

\$2,622,095.00 is the grant funding and the WRA's 20% match is \$629,302.80. Mr. Dunn explained the time sensitive FTA Grant, State of Good Repair funding is from Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2017 and that would expire September 30, 2020 year-end of Federal Fiscal Year. Due to the review process to take place after the authorization we need to move quickly in order to not lose the funding before the end of the year. This is a brief overview of the item. Mr. Tilton stated in one point of our deliberations about setting up a link to Providence on a track to be determined does this have anything to do with that project. Mr. Dunn responded that this does not relate to Providence, it would be the center platform improvements for transportation to Boston and with potential additional future express trains as well. Mr. Minasian mentioned it also increases efficiencies if a train is late, so this is a win-win. Mr. Minasian advised when we spoke previously about the project it was upwards of Five Million or a little over and it is good to see the number come down and a better sense of the work that needed to be done since our last discussions. Mr. Odell advised that is due in part to not needing a new platform, there is an existing platform and the costs for a replacement platform are no longer need. Mr. Minasian stated there was a phasing discussion regarding disruptions for commuter traffic and is that still part of the plan. Mr. Odell advised specifics are to be worked out in broad terms, but do not expect any significant disruptions on the Monday – Friday work schedule. Any disruptions would be extremely minimal and would happen on the weekend. During disruption temporary platform will be built at the old train station which is under the I-290 Bridge. Commuters can walk from Union Station if they need to if they park there or they can park as many do under the bridge now in the MBTA Lot and access that way. Mr. Minasian expressed thanks for the update, knowing the Board had concerns in the past and wanted to expand access, but not disturbing commuters. Mr. Minasian asked if due to the dollar value of the project this would be a Chapter 149A project. Mr. Odell advised the MBTA will be playing point on the project and will follow their processes. Chair Pedone agreed that this is for future expansion and help with delays. Chair Pedone advised future expansion is not necessarily our expansion, it's the expansion at South Station in Boston or changing in North Station, so our expansion is contingent upon their expansion. Chair Pedone asked if this will increase the opportunities for Amtrak to revisit Worcester as a stop and whether there are any conversations or negotiations with Amtrak at this time. Mr. Odell advised he would have to get back to the board on that, there are currently no conversations that he's aware of with Amtrak but it does present an opportunity. Mr. Tilton asked about this center project platform being contingent upon something happening at South Station and maybe something happening at North Station in Boston, and how are those linked? Chair Pedone clarified that the expansion of high speed commuter rail is mostly contingent upon the ability to get those trains into South Station or somewhere else. South Station is almost at capacity. One of the challenges over the course of the last fifteen years for Worcester and points west of Framingham have been getting capacity at South Station.. Chair Pedone continued that he doesn't believe the specific projects are linked in any true fashion just fundamentally and practically speaking it's very difficult for preparing for more high speed rail of any significance without changes to the scheduling of South Station trains. Mr. Tilton asked whether we would still build the center platform as described by Mr. Odell. Chair Pedone advised yes because it also addresses the issue of late trains and not backing up and there is an absolute need for this.

Mr. Tilton offered the following motion:

Voted that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes Two Million, Six Hundred Twenty Two Thousand, Ninety Five Dollars and No Cents (\$2,622,095.00) of Section 5337 State of Good Repair funds to be appropriated to

**the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority for MBTA Project No. X72CN01,
Worcester Union Station Accessibility Improvements & Associated Trackwork.**

Ms. Gaskin seconded the motion.

The item was approved 4-0 on a roll call vote.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Dunn called the roll to adjourn the meeting, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Dunn
Chief Executive Officer