

# Worcester Redevelopment Authority

Vincent A. Pedone  
Chairman

Peter Dunn  
Chief Executive Officer



## WORCESTER REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Friday, October 8, 2021

9:00 A.M.

City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber  
Worcester, MA 01608

### CALL IN INFORMATION:

+1-415-655-0001 US Toll

Access Code:

### Present:

#### *Worcester Redevelopment Authority Board*

Vincent Pedone, Chair  
David Minasian, Vice Chair  
Jennifer Gaskin  
Michael Angelini

#### *Staff*

Peter Dunn, Chief Executive Officer  
Michael Traynor, City Solicitor  
Alexis Delgado, WRA Finance Manager  
Paul Morano, Office of Economic Development  
Amanda Cornwall, Office of Economic Development  
Jane Bresnahan, Office of Economic Development  
John Odell, Energy & Asset Management  
Robert Stearns, City Auditor

Pursuant to a notice given (attached), a meeting of the Worcester Redevelopment Authority was held at 9:00 A.M. on Friday, October 8, 2021

Chair Pedone announced that all votes would be roll call.

### 1. Call to Order

Mr. Dunn called the meeting to order at 9:06 A.M.

### 2. Roll Call

Mr. Dunn called the roll – Ms. Gaskin, Mr. Minasian, Mr. Angelini, and Chair Pedone. Chair Pedone advised as we are operating remotely, all votes will be taken by roll call.

### **3. Approval of Minutes: September 10, 2021**

Mr. Angelini made a motion to approve the minutes,

Mr. Minasian seconded the motion.

The minutes were approved 4-0 on a roll call.

### **New Business –**

#### **1. Status Update – Midtown Mall**

Mr. Lana joined the meeting and Chair Pedone requested an update on the progress over the last few months. Chair Pedone also referenced to the Board, the amount of work that has taken place at the Midtown Mall. Mr. Lana stated that they are about ninety percent completed with the façade work. There have been very little delays with materials fortunately, to continue this project as fast as we have been with material shortage throughout the country. We have been able to receive glass and aluminum. Mr. Lana is looking at a completion on November 1 or 15, for the staging to be removed. The first floor of Midtown Mall has been very successful renting out stores and are ninety-six percent rented out with LOI's and deposits in hand. We have four percent of space to lease out. The occupancy depends on materials delivered, there is a labor shortage but we still have tenants interested. First occupancy expected December 1 on the main floor. We also have a signed LOI with a fitness company and deposit in hand depending on a couple of approvals. We have a deposit and an LOI signed for a restaurant. Mr. Angelini said congratulations. Mr. Minasian asked if the ninety-six percent for the whole Midtown Mall, to include the basement, first floor, second floor. Mr. Lana the ninety-six percent is for the main level only. If you were to walk by the building, you see many stores with signage stating that they are leased or reserved. We have had an incredible amount of interest in the last ninety days showing the spaces, at least two or three times a week. Mr. Minasian said it is great to see that kind of activity in the market that we have. Mr. Lana replied it seems to be coming back stronger than it was before. Mr. Lana made reference that the new business are not coming from the 446 Main Street or 100 Front Street; these are new businesses coming into the City. Mr. Lana explained the new businesses they want the area to be walkable and a huge piece of the project that we have. Mr. Dunn as I referenced at the last meeting there was a liquor license approved for the first floor, at that time I would like to share some of the nice renderings that Mr. Lana submitted on behalf of his tenant, and Mr. Angelini is attending the meeting by phone, Mr. Dunn shared renderings of the wine store. Chair Pedone it is a wine cellar but you are also having tastings. Mr. Lana they will be having wine and craft beer tastings. The store will also include a cheese area. Chair Pedone will it also be a retail and serving beer, wine and cheese or just limited to tastings. Mr. Lana they will not be serving in the space they will be holding tastings only and retail for purchase to take home. Mr. Lana we do not want to take away from other establishments; we have had two calls this week for a butcher shop, but it will take away our idea for the front of the mall the whole idea of developing the front and someone coming in to develop the market. Chair Pedone this is helpful, would like to have Mr. Lana back before the Board, congratulations again, this is moving forward the way we envisioned, and during a difficult time and muscling through it and the Board appreciates that. Mr. Lana thanked the Board for their support

throughout the process. We would not have been able to accomplish the projects alone, and will continue with the projects.

**2. Authorize Execution of a Subrecipient Agreement between the WRTA relative to Federal Transit Administration Funding for Union Station Capital Improvements**

Chair Pedone inquired if the item is a transfer of funds. Mr. Dunn the Federal Transit Administration funds go through the Worcester Regional Transit Authority and the WRA is a subrecipient. This agreement is the most updated for the current fiscal year and ending with Fiscal Year 2023. This is the mechanism for the WRA to obtain the FTA funds that are used for Union Station Capital Improvements.

Mr. Minasian offered the following motion:

**Voted, that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute a subrecipient agreement with the Worcester Regional Transit Authority to facilitate the Authority's receipt of Federal Transit Administration Section 5337 State of Good Repair Apportionment Funds for the financing of certain capital improvement projects at Union Station.**

Mr. Angelini seconded the motion.

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

**3. Authorize Execution of Amendment No. 1 to the Contract with UEL Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$137,597.58 for the Pickett Plaza project.**

Chair Pedone inquired of Mr. Dunn if the \$137,597.58 will be the actual cost incurred by the WRA. Mr. Dunn the amount is a combination of two items and initiated by the City, and not the contractor coming back with a change in price for the scope that we bid out; it is actually two items being changed that were initiated by us. The first is related to the lighting fixtures. The lighting fixtures that were originally part of the design in the bid are not the same lights as we used on Green Street in the typical street infrastructure. In a discussion with the City Manager, he also wanted to make sure that we had that consistency and have changed the specifications on the type of lighting fixtures in Pickett Plaza to match the rest of the street infrastructure at a cost of Thirty Thousand Dollars. The second item is a new perimeter fence along Canal Street that we wanted to add to the scope and will match the perimeter fence around the Ballpark as well. Trying to tie in the consistency of the aesthetics around the area, the cost is roughly One Hundred Four Thousand Dollars. For both of these items they are covered under our Mass Works Grant for Pickett Plaza. Mr. Dunn at this time we are under budget with UEL Contractors and have additional Mass Works funding available because the Mass Works funding was in excess of what the contract amount was for UEL to complete the work. Chair Pedone summarized that we are fronting this money but the Mass Works Grant allocation has already been authorized and will be covered through that allocation of State funds. Mr. Dunn confirmed the Board vote is necessary to change the contract with UEL and Chair Pedone is correct as to the way the Mass Works grant works as a reimbursement. We have the contract for the total dollar amount we pay the invoice and the State reimburses us.

Mr. Angelini offered the following motion:

**Voted, that the Worcester Redevelopment Authority hereby authorizes its chair or vice-chair to execute Amendment No. 1, in the not to exceed amount of One Hundred Thirty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Seven Dollars and Fifty Eight cents (\$137,597.58), to the Contract dated April 12, 2021, with UEL Contractors, Inc., for the construction of Pickett Plaza.**

Mr. Minasian seconded the motion.

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

**4. Canal District Ballpark Project workforce diversity and inclusion report**

Ms. Skilling reported that on the Ballpark Project is complete with the workforce-hanging steady with less than one hundred hours on the few punch list items last month. We finished out between Worcester - 21 %, People of Color - 25% and Female between 5% and 6%. The MWBE for the Ballpark as I mentioned at the last meeting we are in the process of finalizing last change orders. We have lost a quarter to a fifth percent last month and have gained that back this month as we continue to close out the contracts. The work on Container Park is complete other than a few small items that the Team is working on. The Garage Project ongoing is still holding strong at 17.2% for MWBE and increase from 18.1% last month. The workforce on the Garage Project to date is Worcester Residents - 19%, People of Color - 14%, and Female – 5%. The People of Color and Female for the month of September was slightly down but the Residents was actually up to 35%. It is a little bit more challenging on the work for the Garage because there are more non-union contracts; it may be helping come of the local workforce and does not give us the ability to make requests for a more diverse workforce. They do not have the pool of workers to pull from that a union company might. Last month you had asked where we were on the Garage Project. Right now, the site work and roadways are going; the electrical CMU fire protection and roofer have just started. The roofer is an MBE; coming up next is painting and drywall work.

**5. Financial Update Report**

**a. Report on Prior Month's Executed Contracts and Payments**

**b. Report on Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan Expenditures**

Mr. Dunn for the period September 8, 2021 and October 5, 2021 total expenditures were \$3.087 Million Dollars. The main expense was Gilbane-Hunt requisition primarily all Garage costs over the last month of \$2.7 Million Dollars. Skanska oversight and wrapping up design invoices from DAIQ. The majority of the expenses for the month.

**6. Status Reports**

**a. Union Station**

**b. Downtown Urban Revitalization Plan**

Chair Pedone requested Mr. Dunn provide a status update on the Food Hub. Mr. Dunn advised we actually have a quite a bit of activity going on at Union Station. The Food Hub is making progress. I believe they have, if not the final draft design I think they make be taking one last look at it see if there are any additional changes that are going to be recommended to that. They have advanced the design work since they presented to the Board a couple of months ago. As they described at that meeting, they have a number of good prospects in terms of a variety of different funding sources to help with the buildout costs, including local, State and Federal sources. We are looking for the design

and construction estimate in detail for lease terms to present to the Board. Inside Union Station, we have been having conversations with someone who has expressed interest in the space across the Grand Hall from Luciano's, the former Byblos space and their interest in a lease for that space. The RFP was issue for the café space. One of the things I would like to point out the WRA does have the ability to do direction negotiations, but because we knew there were a number of people interested in the café space, that's why we choose to do an RFP process, so that we could see a number of proposals and evaluate them. We had a walk through earlier this week with six different interested parties attending, which is a good sign. We have also received a couple of calls on the garage space as well, a number of different interests, good news. Chair Pedone, Mr. Dunn you and I discussed this yesterday. Whomever you are engaged with to look at the former Byblos space, I think this Board has indicated a number of times, the problems that we have had with the main floor of Union Station. The leases are not co-terminus and we are always trying to put something in a space without being able to look at the whole area. I recall conversations a couple of years ago with both Mr. Angelini, Mr. Tilton, Mr. Minasian and Ms. Gaskin and looking at the building as a whole project and not piece-mealing it. I understand that the other tenant's lease is up in two years. It might be worth it, before we move forward with putting anything into the Byblos space, a conversation that we have with the Board and the Administration, about if we can have someone come in and look at the whole area and having a discussion about the best and most productive use for that space. Mr. Dunn so noted. Mr. Angelini well said.

## **7. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Dunn called the roll to adjourn the meeting, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Dunn  
Chief Executive Officer