FINAL

Minutes

Portland Development Corporation

Remote Zoom Meeting

Held on November 16, 2023

A remote meeting, via Zoom, of the Portland Development Corporation (PDC) Board of Directors was held at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 16, 2023. Present from the Board of Directors were President James Dowd and Directors Blaine Grimes, Nathan Henry, Thomas Mitchell, Kierston Van Soest, and Beverly Werber. Directors Krista Cole, Sam Dargan, Eammon Dundon, Councilor April Fournier, and Danielle West could not be present. Present from the City staff were Housing and Community Development Director Mary Davis, ARPA Program Manager Kaela Gonzalez, Business Programs Manager Nancy Martin, Associate Counsel Amy McNally, Principal Administrative Officer Lori Paulette, and Housing and Economic Development Director Greg Watson.

Item #1: President's Comments

President Dowd thanked City of Portland staff for their efforts in hosting the PDC Annual Business Awards held November 15, 2023. President Dowd also thanked Ms. Davis for her time serving as Interim Housing and Economic Development Director and her work with the PDC Board. President Dowd welcomed Housing and Economic Development Director Greg Watson, in which Mr. Watson then gave a brief introduction. President Dowd then welcomed the new Board Director, Nathan Henry.

Item #2: Review and vote on draft meeting Minutes for Board meeting held on October 19, 2023.

On a motion made by Ms. Grimes and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted 4-0-2 (Mr. Henry and Ms. Werber abstained) to approve the October 19, 2023 meeting minutes as amended by Mr. Mitchell.

Item #3: Review and vote on proposed amendments to the ARPA Microenterprise Grant Program guidelines.

Ms. Martin requested the Board consider amending language in the Microenterprise Grant program guidelines that would exclude start up businesses that have not yet been formed from being eligible for grant funding.

On a motion made by Ms. Grimes and seconded by Ms. Van Soest, the Board voted 5-0-1 (with Ms. Werber abstaining) to approve the revised language as put forth in the meeting materials.

Item #4: Review and vote on the following new application received for the ARPA Microenterprise Grant Program in the amount of $5,000. (Note: Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(F) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119—A, the Board may go into executive session to review proprietary confidential information associated with this application.)

Rewild Maine's application was tabled at the October 19, 2023, meeting to allow the applicant time to provide further information. Ms. Martin summarized the additional information brought forth by the applicant, including how the business serves low-moderate income individuals and stated that both staff and the underwriter recommend approval based on the additional material provided.

On motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Ms. Grimes, the Board voted 5-0-1 (Ms. Werber abstained) to approve a $5,000 ARPA Microenterprise grant to Rewild Maine.

Item #5: Review and vote on the following new application received for the ARPA Microenterprise Grant Program in the amount of $5,000. (Note: Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. 405(6)(F) and 5 M.R.S.A. 13119—A, the Board may go into executive session to review proprietary confidential information associated with this application.)

Ms. Martin summarized an application for grant funds by Still Life Studio, LLC, with recommended approval by both staff and the underwriter.

On motion made by Ms. Van Soest and seconded by Mr. Henry, the board voted 5-0-1 (Mrs. Werber abstained) to approve a $5,000 ARPA Microenterprise grant to Still Life Studio, LLC.

Item #6: Vote to recommend James Dowd to execute Letter of Support

Ms. Martin described a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application that she is currently working on requesting $105,000 in funding to support a Business Assistance Job Creation Grant Program that would support businesses with creating new full and part-time jobs. One of the required materials is a Letter of Support, due Monday, November 20, 2023. Ms. Martin is seeking Board approval to allow President Dowd to sign this letter. President Dowd asked for clarification regarding a potential conflict of interest, due to his work with Preble Street. Ms. Davis and Ms. McNally confirmed that in this context, they believed there would not be a conflict of interest based on the types of funding available and the funds that Preble Street would likely be applying for. Ms. Martin clarified that the employees hired using these funds must be low-moderate income, and not the business owners themselves.

On a motion made by Ms. Grimes and seconded by Mr. Henry, the Board voted 6-0 to authorize President Dowd to sign the Letter of Support.

Item #7: Vote to approve Greg Watson as Assistant Secretary.

There being no discussion on this matter, a motion was made by Ms. Grimes and seconded by Ms. Werber, with the Board voting 6-0 to approve Greg Watson as the Assistant Secretary.

Item #6: Staff verbal update.

Ms. Martin updated the Board regarding meeting with Ms. Gonzalez and Ms. Werber to brainstorm marketing opportunities for businesses to receive funding from the PDC, especially within the arts community. Ms. Martin thanked President Dowd for his comments asking banking organizations to consider the PDC as a funding partner during the Annual Business Award Event. Ms. Martin finished the staff update by updating the Board on upcoming Brownfields assessment grants and an upcoming Regional Brownfields Summit to be held in Portland on May 29 and 30, 2024.

Item #7: Treasurer's Report - October, 2023.

This item was not discussed.

Item #8: Other items to be discussed/brought up by Board Directors and/or staff.

Ms. Werber asked if we are doing any outreach regarding smaller Brownfield projects. Ms. Martin said she recently attended a Maine Real Estate & Development Association luncheon to expand her network with the development community, and welcomes any input and suggestions for increasing awareness for smaller real estate developers.

There being no further business, on motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Grimes, the Board voted 6-0 to adjourn at 4:39 p.m.

Respectfully, Kaela Gonzalez