



RUTLAND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
CITY OF RUTLAND
1 Strongs Avenue
RUTLAND, VERMONT 05701
(802) 775-2910

Regular Meeting / March 25, 2025
Minutes

Attendance: Edward Clark, Mary Markowski, Chris Ettori, Lori Arner, Israel Mac and Stephanie Romeo

Also attending: Emily Field, Justin Brown, Hali Issente, Alexandra Jakab, Faith McClure, Fred Watkins, Ed Bove, Tyler Richardson, Barbara Spaulding and Alderman Larry Cupoli

Absent: Dick Courcelle

- I. Edward called the meeting to order at 8:04 am.
- II. Additions/Deletions – The BIAP applications were moved after Warrant.
- III. Chris moved to approve the minutes of March 11, 2025. Stephanie seconded. Motion was approved 6-0.
- IV. Public Comment – None.
- V. Warrant – Israel moved to direct the Chair to sign the warrant for 800 expenses totaling \$150.65 and recommend approval to the Board of Finance for payment of Fund 100 expenses totaling \$17,930.75. Lori seconded. Chris asked for information regarding the payment to CEDRR. Ed explained that the payment covers the VEPC meeting and included food and transportation. Motion was approved 6-0.
- VI. New Business – BIAP application Heritage Workshop

Barbara introduced Emily Field's BIAP request for a \$10,000 Forgivable Loan and referral to HFCU for a secured loan. The application meets the criteria through \$20,000 or more of new financial investment. The new business is an antique furniture repair shop located at 148 North Main Street. Emily introduced her partner, Justin Brown. She said her background is in museum curator and preservation but, that she pivoted during COVID to restoration repair and general repair. She has participated in Women's Business Network and hopes to include financing structures in the future. Mary asked about the location. Emily said she just moved to the space six days ago and it is at the corner of North Main Street and North Street Extension. She is leasing the space and has plans to redo the parking lot at the end of April. She has hopes of incorporating a food cart and music nights. Edward said the application will be tabled for two weeks.

BIAP application Bailey's Place - Barbara introduced Faith McClure's BIAP request for a \$10,000 Forgivable Loan and referral to HFCU for a secured loan. The application meets the criteria through \$20,000 or more of new financial investment. The venue is located at 13 Evelyn Street and will serve food and spirits, as well as, be a place where the LGBTQ+ community feel welcome. Faith discussed the need for the space amongst the LGBTQ+ community. She introduced Fred Watkins who has done the construction. He gave details as to the amount of work needed at the location including a fire suppression system, grease trap, repairing leaks, installation of all new equipment and a cold air intake electric damper. Faith invited the Board to the Grand Opening on April 12.

Chris asked what experience Faith had to be successful because the loan is required to be repaid in the event that the business fails. Faith said she has been in the food business for nearly six years and while at Olivia's Market had trained staff and been a manager. She understands the food process and has consulted with peers who have 40+years in the restaurant business and 30+years in the bar industry. She has a large support system to help her be successful. Mary asked if there was a long-term lease. There is a 5-year lease for \$2,000 per month. Barbara mentioned that she has encouraged Faith to reach out to either Nancy Shuttleworth or Kevin Canney to create a business plan which is required by HFCU. Ed asked if the exterior renovations were going to be completed. Fred said those are the responsibility of the property owner and he understands they are waiting for better weather. Hali said there has been a lot of support from the LGBTQ+ community in smaller places like Barre and Bethel who have seen enormous success. Faith said there is no shortage of excitement and the positive support has outweighed the negative comments. Chris encourage Faith to follow through with a business plan as it will guide her through difficult times. Lori asked if she has a bookkeeper. Faith said the accounting system is "Toast" which keeps track of inventory and payroll. Edward said the application will be tabled for two weeks.

- VII. DRP Update – Hali said they have been very busy planning for the budget, workplan and shaping events. He recently celebrated his one year anniversary as Executive Director. He discussed the robust and detailed advertising plan and metrics. They are proceeding with FNL with tweaks due to the rising costs in order for the event to be sustainable. They will need to adapt in 2026 due to the pending construction of the hotel. Alex discussed the upcoming Women in Business mixer on March 26 at the Mad Rose from 5-8 pm. The mixer is funded through a \$5,000 grant received from the Vermont Women's Fund which will also pay for a day-long workshop event on April 29 at the Hub. Nancy Shuttleworth will present at the workshop. Hali added that the feedback from the mixer will help shape the workshop.

Ed asked about the parklets. Hali said the Center Street businesses are still interested in using the parklets even with the construction. They are in need of maintenance and he understood there are funds available. Mary said there is about \$6,000. Hali will reach out to Barbara and Tyler at the Rec to access the funds and repair the parklets.

VIII. BOA Update – Barbara said at the March 17 Aldermen’s meeting, the Board referred the issue of tax stabilization for 24 Wales Street back to the Community & Economic Development Committee because the tax stabilization agreement was not made available to the newly elected Aldermen. Mary added that there was also concern about how the project would affect the TIF.

IX. Old Business –EIR Wellness Spa BIAP application

Chris moved to recommend approval of a \$10,000 BIAP forgivable loan to EIR Wellness Spa with the condition that at the end of three years, to be considered operational, there will be a minimum of two employees with 15 clients per week. Lori seconded. Mary said the applicant has past due taxes for the second and third quarter on the property. Chris moved to amend his motion to include a condition that the applicant be current with regard to paying taxes. Stephanie suggested adding the language to the milestones in the loan agreement. Lori seconded the amended motion. Motion passed 5-1.

StartUp Rutland Talking Points for Update – Edward asked the Board to consider what questions they have for the presentation by Lyle Jepson on StartUp Rutland. Mary said the RRA Board authorized \$125,000 for the program and she would like an update on what those funds leveraged and how much has been spent to date. Ed would also like an update on whether the funds supported the original mission.

X. New Business – Treasurer’s Report for February 28, 2025.

Mary said the budget is on target. She did some forecasting and believed there will be a \$60,000 surplus at the end of the year. Barbara asked if that amount takes into consideration the Gallagher & Flynn contract. Mary said that payment would come from Admin Reserve. Stephanie asked if the surplus was due to the open executive director position. Mary said that and healthcare.

Executive Director Search Update – Edward said he sent out language for the interim position with no response. The Board consensus was that it looked good. Edward will follow up with Ellen Coyle to post the position. He added that Sam Lewiston of Gallagher & Flynn asked for a kickoff meeting next week. Edward, Stephanie and Chris agreed to noon on Thursday April 3 and Edward will inform them.

TIF District – Ed said he will be attending the VEPC meeting on Thursday in Montpelier and hopes the City’s district will be approved. If it is, the issue will be referred to Committee in the hopes that all conditions will be met for the April 21 Board of Aldermen meeting. Edward asked about public approval of the TIF and Ed Bove noted that a potential bond vote in November would require voter approval.

Barbara reminded the Board there is a ribbon cutting for Pure Restorative Wellness and the Wellness Café on Friday March 28 at 10:30 am 230 N. Main Street.

XI. Adjourn – All items on the agenda were addressed. The meeting adjourned at 9:02 am. The next meeting will be held on April 8 at 8 am.

These minutes were approved this ____ day of _____, 2025.

Mary A. Markowski, Secretary