



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 5, 2023 at 12:00 PM

Board Members in Attendance

Dana Hollenbeck
Craig Talmage
Josh Miller
Peter Gillotte
Marc Rodriguez
Dave Linger
Kyle Ackart
Chevanne Devaney*

Others in Attendance

Tracy Verrier, MRB Group
Amie Hendrix, City Manager
*denotes remote attendance

Agenda Items

Call to Order:

Dave Linger called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm with a quorum present.

Minutes Approval:

- Motion to approve the June regular meeting minutes by Kyle Ackart, second by Josh Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report:

Tracy Verrier reviewed the June financial report noting that interest would have come in after the report was generated. Otherwise the MRB Group contract fees were the only transaction.

- Motion to approve the June financial report by Peter Gillotte, second by Dana Hollenbeck. Motion carried unanimously.

Project & Other Updates:

City of Geneva

Amie Hendrix, City Manager, gave an update on the City of Geneva. She noted that the City has filled the Director of Planning and Economic Development position. David West, the incoming Director, will start at the end of July and has a background in both planning and economic development. Amie noted that the City is moving into budget season and that City Council is engaging in discussions regarding food trucks.

Dave Linger inquired when the new Director of Planning and Economic Development will be able to take on some of the responsibilities of MRB Group, while also noting his desire for MRB Group to remain involved with the LDC in some capacity. Amie Hendrix noted that now that the City has a Comptroller and Director of Planning and Economic Development, there are many roles and tasks that can start to be transitioned over. Amie stated the new Director will attend the LDC's August meeting and plans for a transition in Q4. Tracy noted that she will get the Director up to speed on the LDC's activities in the coming months.

GENEVA LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

CITY HALL- 47 CASTLE STREET- GENEVA, NEW YORK 14456

(315) 781-6104 – tverrier@mrbgroup.com - www.cityofgenevany.com

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Geneva City School District

No Update. Dave Linger asked Tracy to reach out to Bo Wright to advise him to attend LDC meetings quarterly or as special issues arise.

Audit Contract

Tracy noted that she was able to get the MMB contract fees down from the initial proposal. She stated that while the fees are still more than anticipated, the pricing seems to be the norm for the market as accounting regulations have increased and more accounting firms are no longer offering auditing services. Following discussion, Dave suggested that the LDC consider finding other community organizations to partner with to hopefully get a better deal in the future. Tracy emphasized the need to get on an audit firm's schedule as soon as possible. Tracy also noted that the IDA already signed a 3-year contract with MMB for 2023 – 2025. Additionally, Amie Hendrix noted that the City is currently in its 2nd year of a 3-year contract with MMB. Multiple people emphasized the need for consistency with one audit firm to help lower the fees. Josh Miller stated that he will contact Rob Sollenne from the EDC regarding their relationship with MMB.

Checking Accounts

Tracy stated that the Bank of the Finger Lakes is currently offering a municipal checking account with 1.5% interest rates for accounts with a balance of at least \$50,000. She noted that the LDC's current checking account is a money market account with minimal interest. The LDC also has a CD. Tracy noted that the CD will mature soon and that she will shop around for rates. Dave suggested looking at Bank of the Finger Lakes, LNB, as well as other options.

- Motion to approve transferring the LDC's current money market account to the Bank of the Finger Lakes municipal checking account with a 1.5% interest rate by Kyle Ackart, second by Josh Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Banking Updates

Tracy noted that Stefanie Newcomb, the City's Comptroller, is ready to start taking over more financial responsibilities for the LDC and IDA. Tracy stated that the two of them have met and to review the books and responsibilities. Tracy noted that Stefanie should be added as an administrator for the LDC's online account and signer for the bank accounts. Once the books are fully transferred and she's added to the account, Stefanie will be able to do the financial reports and sign the checks. Tracy noted that once Stefanie can sign the checks, and the LDC will most likely want to create a process to ensure the board stays informed of the LDC's transactions.

- Motion to add Stefanie Newcomb as a signer and administrator to the LDC's online and bank accounts by Craig Talmage, second by Peter Gillotte. Motion carried unanimously.

BID Beautification

Tracy indicated that Catherine Price, Executive Director of the BID, created a new report for the BID's beautification project that includes their expenditures and shows some increases in labor hours and supply purchasing. Tracy noted that she will review the report and coordinate with Stefanie to ensure the LDC is supporting their portions of the project based on the contract.

Tracy gave an overview of projects the LDC has considered over the past few years.

- Gateway Project – a joint initiative with the IDA for pre-development and sale of a parcel on North Exchange Street.
- Marketing – BID submitted a proposal for marketing assistance, but BID and LDC did not come to agreement on the use of that funding so it did not move forward. A joint marketing committee of the IDA and LDC were also meeting for a while as well, but this effort has been on hold while the City searched for a Director of Planning and Economic Development.
- The City's Ice Rink – the LDC was approached by a developer to examine the maintenance and operation of the City's Ice Rink. Following initial contact, the LDC connected the developer with the City to examine the costs of operations and examine the viability of a private entity taking over the space. Amie Hendrix noted that currently

this project is paused as the City wants to ensure it makes the most responsible decision regarding this public space.

- Stiver's Boat Cruise & Recreation Equipment Shed – the LDC was contacted by Bob Stivers as he was interested in running a dinner cruise out of the lakefront and building a small shed to house rental recreation equipment. Tracy and Amie noted that at the time other entities were already exploring similar projects, so this initiative has not moved forward.
- Joint Marketing Committee – members from the LDC and IDA formed a joint-marketing committee that used to meet regularly but stopped while the City searched for a new Director of Planning and Economic Development. This Committee advocated for gathering the LDC, IDA, BID, City, and Chamber together to do some strategic planning. Tracy and Amie emphasized how this can now take place with the City's new Director, as well as the need for all entities to understand the direction of Geneva and their roles within the community.

Dave Linger noted a few successful projects over the past few years:

- Joint LDC & IDA business development video - Dave emphasized that the Joint Marketing Committee has expressed interest in updating the video.
- Microenterprise Program – The LDC funded the grant writing for the current round of the City of Geneva Microenterprise Program, which provides grants to small businesses and entrepreneurs.
- Main Street Program – The LDC spoke with the City about also applying for NY Main Street, but it wasn't the right time. Dave noted that the City might want to consider to applying in 2024.
- Race for Space – A downtown business promotion campaign with marketing, advertising, and monetary assistance. Dave noted how this program was integral in kickstarting Lake Drum Brewing.
- Live Where You Work – A program to entice people to move to Geneva if they work in the City with a \$3,000 incentive.
- Housing Rehabilitation – the LDC helped to rehabilitate a 2-family house back into a single-family house and sell it.

The Board engaged in discussion regarding the role of the LDC in helping with housing development and rehabilitation. Josh Miller expressed his interest in supporting affordable housing in Geneva and a desire for the LDC to examine other opportunities to help rehabilitate and sell property. He stated he is connected with the local Habitat for Humanity and knows there are a lot of different grant programs that can make rehab more financially viable. The board was interested in hearing more about how they might be able to partner with Habitat.

Amie Hendrix noted that the City is starting to inventory city-owned properties and anticipates that City Council will soon engage in discussions on how best to utilize or sell the City's properties. Amie emphasized how the City is trying to increase transparency on how they deal with their properties, recognizing that not all properties are the same. Dave Linger encouraged Amie to consider the LDC for potential partnership opportunities.

Craig Talmage stated that the LDC should be open to smaller-scale projects, such as improving distressed signs, as they can be stepping stones to larger projects. Craig also emphasized the need for more workforce development in the City, and that there are a lot of different things the LDC could do.

Tracy Verrier noted a property maintenance initiative in Jamestown that she had recently come across. It provided grants to groups of neighbors to help with property updates and maintenance, as long as they had a cohesive and collaborative plan. This has been a great way to get neighbors to invest in their properties together. The Board engaged in discussion regarding past LDC and City neighborhood and housing improvement initiatives.

Executive Session

- Motion enter Executive Session for the proposed sale or lease of real property at 12:51 by Craig Talmage, second by Josh Miller. Motion carried unanimously.
- Motion to exit Executive Session at 1:03 by Craig Talmage, second by Josh Miller. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment:

- Motion to adjourn by acclamation at 1:04.