

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/MAIN STREET
CITY OF OTSEGO

May 11, 2020

10:00 A.M., Otsego City Hall – Zoom Meeting

A Regular Meeting via Zoom of the Otsego Downtown Development Authority (D.D.A.)/Main Street Board was held Monday, May 11, 2020.

Chairman Bennett called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. with the following members present: Stacey Withee, Cyndi Trobeck, Ben Pobocik, Scot Reitenour, Toby Esterline, Kim Rayburn, and Sue Cramer. Absent: Bruce Meles. Also present: Joel Saukas, Main Street Manager; City Manager, Aaron Mitchell; City Finance Director, Matthew Storbeck; and Economic Development Director, Dave Rayman.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MINUTES

Member Pobocik moved to approve the April 13, 2020, minutes with one correction, seconded by Member Rayburn. CARRIED

TREASURER'S REPORT

Member Pobocik moved to approve the April Treasurer's Report, seconded by Member Reitenour. CARRIED.

PRESENTATIONS

COMMITTEE CHAIR UPDATES

Main Street Manager Saukas, Community Engagement Committee – he gave an update on the following: ways to support the downtown businesses during COVID19 – which included making a list of struggling businesses, support to setup business websites, Rotary Easter Egg Hunt in the downtown businesses, virtual tour of downtown and mini grants through crowdfunding.

Main Street Manager Saukas, EV Committee – he gave an update on the following: no closings in the downtown, Match on Main has changed, learning lunches have been canceled, trainings canceled, shopping/eating events, the Chamber's recent changes, and a Gus Macker meeting will be held this week.

Chairman Bennett, Design Committee – he gave an update on the following: received the final drawings and cost estimations for the Pavilion, which did not include itemized sheets – DPW Supervisor Bosch and Bryan Winn are putting a list together, and the bids should be coming back later this week. He commented that a special meeting might need to take place to make a recommendation to the City Commission for awarding of the bid.

CONSIDERATIONS

DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. RECENT DISCUSSION AT CITY COMMISSION MEETING REGARDING THE
MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Chairman Bennett stated that help and support from the Board is needed to retain the Main Street Program and will determine what the City Commission will do. He gave an overview of the

City Commission meeting held on May 4th. He stated that City Manager Mitchell reviewed three options and his final recommendation was to dissolve the Main Street Program to save money for the City's Sinking Fund. He commented that Commissioner Withee suggested going out to bond for the Sinking Fund. He then reviewed possible ways that Main Street could save money – moving out of the museum, having MS Manager Saukas become a contract employee, MS Saukas not participating in the City's health insurance program, and the Historical Society offering to reduce the rent. He stated that the Main Street Program has this fiscal year to come up with funding options to generate funds, possibly through private donors and grants.

Member Pobocik commented that he appreciated the Main Street Program and he is willing to be a part of it, but if it reverts back to the DDA he will step away from the Board, as his civic duty would be done.

B. OPTIONS MOVING FORWARD TO FUND THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM

At this time, a discussion took pace regarding the costs of certain projects and what could be cut from the City's General Fund and Sinking Fund. Member Trobeck commented that this discussion is in relation to the Main Street funding not specific City projects or equipment. She explained that this is about the City subsidizing Main Street out of the General Fund, which is \$253,000. She stated that the funding for the City is going to get smaller and smaller especially with the pandemic, so we have to be prepared. She concluded that Main Street has from now until June 2021, to find funding. City Manager Mitchell commented that the Sinking Fund in the past has subsidized buildings, and now we need funding to maintain them – like replacing roofs, which could be \$50,000 or more, which would be coming out of the General Fund which is stressed. Member Trobeck commented that there is strong support of Main Street and it would be nice to see Main Street fund itself and not rely on the City's General Fund to maintain it. MS Manager Saukas commented that he had researched some of the Main Street programs which are independent of the municipality.

He reported the following:

- Programs usually get between \$10,000 and \$25,000, from the municipality to support Main Street.
- Main Street Programs in Saline and Charlotte-Reising have corporate sponsors that contribute annually.
- Grant funding is harder to get because the program has already been established, but possibly could get funds from the Allegan County Community Foundation.
- Donations could be sought – annually or monthly
- Special Event to generate funds

Member Reitenour departed at 10:29 a.m.

Chairman Bennett commented the Main Street has supported the businesses in the downtown during the pandemic. He also stated that many of the businesses came to the downtown because of the Main Street program, as they saw activity at events. Chairman Bennett also noted that Main Street has always been financially conservative with the budget, noting that only one year they went over budget.

Member Cramer commented that finances are going to rule and there are so many unknowns right now. She commented that she has seen pivotal growth in the downtown and the events have helped bring people to the downtown. She said could it happen without Main Street, yes -

but, best case scenario – no. She said with so much being unknown she would support Main Street or help on how to navigate it if it did not continue. At this time, she announced that Mezzo will have new ownership when it re-opens. She stated that she is still vested in this community and has just become the president of the Chamber of Commerce. She commented that she wants the community to thrive and she supports the community. She thanked MS Manager Saukas for the work he does and for working on options moving forward. She also thanked City Manager Mitchell for the information.

Member Rayburn asked what would happen to the money that was borrowed by the DDA/Main Street for the pavilion. City Manager Mitchell stated that the City Commission would have to make a decision and follow proper protocol.

Member Trobeck commented that this is a good start to get people thinking and to get things started.

DDA/MAIN STREET MANAGER'S REPORT

Chairman Bennett commented that the Adopt a Bed program will begin this week. There will be a trailer at the DPW with names of volunteers on the flowers.

The Main Street Manager provided a written report.

ECONOMIC DIRECTOR REPORT

Chairman Bennett commented that FEMA will be having a groundbreaking ceremony on May 19th. Economic Development Director Dave Rayman provided a written report.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Member Pobocik thanked MS Manager Saukas for assisting with the PPP and sharing the information, as it helped him keep his staff.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

City Manager Mitchell commented that even with potential changes, he is still planning on keeping Gus Macker and Hometown Christmas either as a City or DDA function.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Member Rayburn seconded by Member Trobeck. 10:45 a.m.

Angela M. Cronen, MMC