

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/MAIN  
STREET CITY OF OTSEGO  
OTSEGO CITY HALL  
April 11, 2022  
7:30 A.M.

A Regular Meeting of the Otsego Downtown Development Authority (D.D.A.)/Main Street Board was held Monday, April 11, 2022.

Chairman Bennett called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m. with the following members present: Ben Pobocik, Toby Esterline, Olivia Andrade, Bruce Meles and Stacey Withee. Absent: None. Also present: City Manager, Aaron Mitchell; City Finance Director, Matthew Storbeck; Main Street Manager, Kahler Sweeney; and Economic Development Director, Dave Rayman.

APPROVAL OF REGULAR MINUTES

Member Withee moved to approve the Regular Minutes of March 14, 2022, seconded by Member Pobocik. CARRIED

TREASURER'S REPORT

Member Meles moved to accept the March 2022, Treasurer's Report, seconded by Member Pobocik. CARRIED.

TEAM LEADER UPDATES

Arts Committee – Main Street Manager Sweeney gave an update on the following: Artisan Market.

Member Withee, EV Committee – she gave an update on the following: Shop Small Win Big.

Chairman Bennett, Design Committee – he gave an update on the following: Ice Rink removal, and Pavilion – Parking Lot.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Main Street Manager Sweeney gave an update on the following:

- Student Council Partnership
- Riverfront Pictures
- Vibrancy Grant

CONSIDERATIONS

1. CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF A \$5,000, BUDGET ADJUSTMENT TO THE 21-22 BUDGET FOR VIBRANCY GRANT PROJECTS

Chairman Bennett stated that Main Street had received a Vibrancy Grant. He commented that a budget adjustment would need to be made in the amount of \$5,000, which would be the “match”. At this time, Finance Director Storbeck asked if the dollar amount could change and if the grant was tied to the longevity of the Main Street program, and what specific projects were included in the grant. It was explained that a fifteen percent minimum match was required, and the total would be twenty-five thousand dollars, twenty thousand from the grant and five thousand from the “match”. Member Pobocik moved to accept the Vibrancy Grant and a budget adjustment for \$5,000 for matching funds that are required, seconded by Member Withee. CARRIED.

## 2. CONSIDERATION OF 2022-23 WORK PLANS

Member Andrade moved to approve the “Art Thing” Work Plan, seconded by Member Esterline. CARRIED.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 1. FUTURE OF MAIN STREET

Chairman Bennett stated that there have been many discussions regarding the lack of funding. He commented that we have to plan for the future of Main Street and how Main Street will go forward. He commented that MS Manager Sweeney had put together several options for consideration. At this time, MS Manager Sweeney presented five different options for the Board to discuss. City Manager Mitchell stated that he had prepared a document that he had intended to be in the packet, which would have answered many of the questions that were being discussed. He commented that the City needs the LCSA funding that has been distributed to the DDA/Main Street. He commented that the DDA does have fund balance and will continue as a Capital Improvement Board. Member Withee gave a brief overview of the state of the City which included: trimming the budget; PA33 funding mechanism that didn’t survive; proposed ballot options, short two Commissioner at this time; Main Street can’t run on fund balance; and the DDA will be dissolved in 2025.

Member Andrade asked if internal audits are performed on each department, as Main Street can’t be the only wasteful department. City Manager Mitchell explained that with funding depleting over the years and everything being pushed back, we are at a point where we need to make purchases, like Police cars. At this time, the Board members asked questions of City Manager Mitchell, if there were other places to cut and other departments that could be cut to obtain the needed funding.

Chairman Bennett asked if the City could look at the options that MS Manager Sweeney provided and make a compromise. He stated that Main Street is a seven-year-old program and he feels that Option “C” should be considered, at least for six months. City Manager Mitchell commented that funding options for Main Street have been discussed for the past two years and it is too late, as the City’s General Fund needs the funds that have been going to Main Street. A discussion took place regarding the duties of the Main Street Manager, the future of the Committees, who will run the events and how events will move forward.

Member Andrade commented that she doesn’t think that the events will be successful without Main Street Manager Sweeney, and foresees events going away with the lack of volunteers.

Member Pobocik asked why are we even discussing this, as City Manager Mitchell stated that nothing short of raising \$100,00, would work. Member Pobocik asked why can't Option "B" work? City Manager Mitchell commented that he had intended that his memo be put in the packet, so that the DDA/Main Street Board had an outline of the process going forward. Chairman Bennett stated that MS Manager Sweeney has options, but since there will be no more discussion – so you will screw the Main Street Program. City Manager Mitchell commented that it is not giving up when the future of Main Street does not exist past 2025, when the DDA Plan expires. He also commented that discussions regarding fundraising have taken place for the past two years. Chairman Bennett stated that the money the City is taking away from Main Street is not going to solve the City's problems. City Manager Mitchell explained that the funds can help the City's budget deficit. City Manager Mitchell reiterated that fundraising has been talked about for two years. Member Pobocik asked when the next City Commission Budget Meeting was going to be held. City Manager Mitchell stated that the DDA Budget will be presented at the April 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting, and the General Fund will be presented at the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting. Chairman Bennett suggested that they attend the meetings. Main Street Manager Sweeney asked if options that do not use the LCSA funds and are respectful to the City's financial situation be considered. City Manager Mitchell commented that the remaining DDA Fund Balance will be used to maintain the downtown.

Main Street Manager Sweeney commented that if the options that he presented are not ways to move forward, it is not respectful to hit the Main Street Program and the DDA continue. He stated that he is confident in fundraising – but, not in the immediate future, and that the DDA and Main Street can be maintained. He stated that Main Street is a good investment, but he doesn't know if there is time to make this happen.

Member Esterline stated that this was discussed two years ago when MS Manager Saukas left, and at that time a plan for moving forward never happened. He commented that it doesn't matter how dear Main Street is to our hearts – the money is gone. He stated that we have to be productive with our time and sustain the events that we do have and move forward. A discussion regarding how to move forward and the events took place.

Member Withee suggested that it might be a benefit to extend Kahler Sweeney's employment for an additional ninety days (September 30, 2022), to assist in moving forward with work plans without the assistance of Main Street. She continued that this would help the new board members and assist with winding down the program which will be substantial. Treasurer Storbeck stated that the proposed budget has funding for the MS Manager until June 30, 2022. She also stated that he should move to City Hall by June 30, 2022. Chairman Bennett commented that it is better than nothing.

The Board and the members of the audience had an open conversation on how the events and committees would look after June 30<sup>th</sup>, and possible grant writing opportunities. Member Meles commented that no one is going to be on a Board that is going to end in two months. City Manager Mitchell commented that it will continue on as a DDA Board. Member Withee stated that there will be monthly meetings and the Board will come together and move forward. Member Andrade asked who would be liable for events in the future. City Manager Mitchell and Treasurer Storbeck

commented that it will be the City, unless it is a private event and insurance would have to be provided.

Member Pobocik asked if anyone is stepping up for fundraising. MS Manager Sweeney commented that he and Member Andrade had met with an individual who can help Main Street with fundraising. Member Pobocik stated that if \$100,000 is raised, Main Street should disconnect from the City and he would help to improve Otsego.

Member Withee moved to extend the employment of Kahler Sweeney until September, 30, 2022, seconded by Member Andrade. CARRIED.

## 2. BUDGET PROCESS AND SCHEDULING OF SPECIAL MEETINGS

Treasurer Storbeck stated that he will put together the three-month extension of salary for Kahler Sweeney.

8:31 a.m. – Member Pobocik left the meeting.

### ECONOMIC DIRECTOR REPORT

Economic Development Director Dave Rayman provided a written report and the report from the Chamber.

### MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Member Withee, seconded by Member Esterline.

8:32 a.m.

Angela M. Cronen, MMC  
City Clerk