

**Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency  
Special Board of Directors Meeting Final Minutes  
December 14, 2022 – 1:30 – 2:30 PM  
TC Legislative Chambers  
121 E. Court Street, Ithaca NY 14850**

**Present:** Rich John, Faith Vavra, Jeff Gorsky, Shawna Black, John Guttridge, Todd Bruer, Mike Sigler – remotely

**Staff:** Heather McDaniel, Ina Arthur, Danielle Szabo (IAED), Stephen Maier (Harris Beach)

Board member Michael Sigler attended the December 14, 2022 special meeting via video conference due to an extraordinary circumstance as outlined in section 4e of the Organization’s Public Meeting Videoconference Policy. This determination was made Board Chair Rich John and Administrative Director Heather McDaniel. Mr. Sigler attended at a location **not open to the public** and thus did not count towards quorum, but he was able to vote on any motions on the floor.

**CALL TO ORDER** - Rich John called meeting to order at 1:32 pm.

**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

Tom Knipe – Deputy Director of Economic Development, City of Ithaca

Mr. Knipe spoke regarding the Shared Kitchen Ithaca project, asking for financial support of this vital service to local entrepreneurs. This project will provide a space for small operators to scale their business by having access to a licensed commercial kitchen. A feasibility study was done early in the year funded by the IURA. The study verified that there is a need for such a space and that such a space could be financially sound. The project is looking at the former Green Star Co-Op commissary space and needs funds to secure the space. He asked for funding at the level of \$100,000 - \$150,000 to secure the space and to purchase equipment for the kitchen. There is the risk of losing the space to another interested party if action is not taken soon.

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA** - None

**BUSINESS**

IDA Fund Balance Discussion

Danielle Szabo, Director of Workforce Innovations at IAED, gave an update on the South Works project and the funding request of \$500,000 to support the technology transfer space at the facility. The money requested would be used to support a feasibility study, equipment and a construction training program.

TSTBOCES, the Building Trades Council and Career Pathways have all been working on the construction training program at South Works. This effort would tie into the Direct to Work program IAED is developing.

TSTBOCES would focus on the youth construction program. A parallel track for adult learners would also be built.

Pathways to apprenticeships is a program that would be a paid apprenticeship preparation training program.

This would also tie into the local construction policy by encouraging not only trade unions but other local construction companies to hire ones coming out of these training programs to work on local economic development projects.

John Guttridge had heard of other programs in the area including Unbroken Promises. Are you going to work with them? Yes, these other programs are being included in discussions and there would be a place for their efforts.

A question was asked as to which organization the funds would go to if awarded. One recipient could be TSTBOCES and there would be funding to support the adult learning part. The actual details still need to be worked out.

IAED is not looking to run these programs. It is hoped that other nonprofit entities would have the programs imbedded in their programming.

The TSTBOCES program would be set up at the South Works location.

Heather McDaniel proposed using \$250,000 of funding for the tech transfer space for a feasibility study and equipment and another \$250,000 to support the construction training program at the site.

Jeff Gorsky asked for clarification and how this funding request might tie into other workforce initiatives or programs at IAED.

Danielle Szabo stated that these are not programs but a framework for the workforce initiative that connects existing programs that is already provided by our educational partners and an ongoing gap analysis of what is needed in response to workforce needs. IAED started with manufacturing and built an entry level training program in partnership with Alliance Manufacturing and Technology, and we have worked to get this on the eligible training provider list so that funding via the Workforce Development Board can be received. Regardless of the industry, there will be an ongoing recruitment, assessment, referral, and remediation process. The training will look different because we need to leverage existing training programs. So Direct to Work is a framework to build a workforce ecosystem here in Tompkins County.

Rich John commented that part of the mission of the IDA is job creation. This would be a hands-on approach to job creation versus the passive creation that might come from development projects.

John Guttridge stated that is an excellent concept. He was concerned with who the actual recipients of the funding would be – more specifically the developer who might be asking a higher rent due to funding being received.

Shawna Black asked if the developer would be paying into the concept. Shift, the development partner, is currently applying for a state grant to support the space. The \$500,000 request would be for program development.

Written information was requested for the next time the IDA meetings to discuss the funding request.

Todd Bruer asked if this would be ongoing? Yes, the funding requested is for startup costs, but the program would then be able to sustain itself.

Advantages for the developer were discussed as well as a few more specifics on the level of training the programs would provide.

Questions were next asked regarding the Shared Kitchen Ithaca funding request.

Jeff Gorsky asked who would operate? Friends of Ithaca's Farmers Market. Who would use the facility? Entrepreneurs in the food space who were making and selling a packaged product at a small scale that are looking to expand their production and grow their distribution and sales. There would also those who would just use the facility to maintain their current production.

John Guttridge commented that this initiative also applied to the County for ARPA funds, so it looks like there are multiple funding streams being sought. Yes, there are funds that would go to securing the space and equipment and funds that would sustain operations for the first few years. However, it does not look like the County funding will be received.

The time frame for securing the space was asked about. Currently the landlord is holding the space but there is pressure to lease the space to other entities. The option of getting funding as a loan was discussed. The board was reminded that the IDA cannot loan or grant funds.

Shawna Black stated that this is a good project, and she has heard from the community that this is a needed initiative. The request to the County for recovery funding is not moving forward.

Rich John remarked on the possibility of tying this idea to local farmers and using local milk to make cheese.

Heather McDaniel reminded that even great ideas need a viable financial model. She feels that the person who did the study was a bit biased as he is looking to create a job for himself. There were also several financial fallacies in the study.

Rich John asked How do we want to proceed? Set up a subcommittee or continue discussions as a committee of the whole?

Shawna Black commented that an announcement be made so others know that the IDA has fund balance.

There is no actual need to spend the fund balance. It was also pointed out that the amount of money that could be used from the fund balance is "relatively" low when compared to the \$6M of County recovery funding. Also, how the requests would be evaluated would need to be established.

The IDA Board will continue this discussion for an hour prior to its next scheduled meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm.

**Minutes were approved at the February 8, 2023 board meeting.**