

MINUTES  
Cascade Charter Township  
Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors  
Tuesday, April 20, 2021  
5:30 P.M.  
Virtual Meeting

**ARTICLE 1.** Chairwoman Puplava called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.  
Members Present: Kleyla, Vogel, Puplava, Growney, Siegle, DeWitt, and Lesperance  
Members Absent: Stephan, Makkar  
Others Present: DDA Director Sandra Korhorn, Nick Monoyois and Max Dillivan, The Rapid representatives

**ARTICLE 2. Approve the current Agenda.**

**Motion was made by Member Growney to approve the Agenda. Supported by Member Kleyla. Motion carried 7 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 3. Approve the Minutes of the March 30, 2021 Meeting.**

**Motion was made by Member Lesperance to approve the Minutes as presented. Supported by Member DeWitt. Motion carried 7 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 4. Acknowledge visitors and those wishing to speak to non-agenda items.**

There were no visitors.

**ARTICLE 5. Discuss and Consider The Rapid Bus Contract**

Director Korhorn stated that at the March 30<sup>th</sup> DDA Meeting, Staff was directed to set up a meeting with The Rapid to further discuss funding as well as a possible contract. Chairwoman Puplava, Member (Supervisor) Lesperance, and Member Vogel volunteered to attend that meeting along with Manager Swayze and Director Korhorn. Director Korhorn stated that based on the discussion held during that meeting and contract dates, conversation tonight will focus on a short-term contract with The Rapid.

Director Korhorn stated that this contract will begin May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and run through September 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Discussion about the long-term contract to begin in October 2021 (to run through September 2022) will be held during the May DDA Meeting.

At the March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Township Board Meeting, Director Korhorn stated that Board Members voted that in order for this bus service to continue, the DDA must provide 100% of the funding for the 28<sup>th</sup> Street Route. Director Korhorn stated that only a decision on the short-term contract for The Rapid bus service needs to be made tonight.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that all of the questions that were asked during last month's DDA Meeting were answered by The Rapid representatives. The question of whether or

not there were any “free” months of service included in any scenario was answered, and any contract extension will involve payment of a monthly fee. Chairwoman Pupilava states that the DDA has already budgeted their portion of the Rapid funding, so if it is voted tonight to fund this portion of The Rapid service, the money is already allocated to do so.

Director Korhorn stated that the DDA has \$214,000 budgeted for bus service in 2021. Through the end of April, approximately \$63,000 of that money will have been spent on bus service, and with a short term, 100% DDA funded extension, approximately \$98,000 in additional budgeted money will be spent (\$161,000 total).

Member Siegle asked if there have been any alternative routes looked at to shorten the route and lower cost. Chairwoman Pupilava stated there has not been any studies done yet to determine that information, but there was discussion at the last meeting to reconstitute the Bus Committee to further research these options. Director Korhorn stated this will likely be a bigger discussion when the long-term contract is decided.

Member Vogel stated that he is in favor of moving forward with the decision to continue The Rapid Bus service with a short-term contract.

**Motion was made by Chairwoman Pupilava that the DDA recommend approval of the short-term ITP contract with full funding by this DDA. Supported by Member Siegle. Motion carried 7 to 0.**

Member Lesperance requested that a cost estimate of shortening the routes to stop at Meijer/Walmart be obtained before the next meeting. Chairwoman Pupilava also suggested that schedule times/stop frequencies also be discussed as an option to reduce cost.

Member Vogel asked if the Township Boards final decision has been made, and the continuation of bus service is dependent on the DDA funding at 100%. Chairwoman Pupilava stated that is correct. Member Vogel voiced his concern that the DDA allocating more funds to the bus route could impact other projects or plans, in turn possibly creating a need for the Township Board to contribute financially to DDA projects that are beneficial to the Township as a whole.

Chairwoman Pupilava stated that an amendment will need to be made to the budget if the DDA decides to fund the long-term contract in full.

Director Korhorn asked Max Dillivan (The Rapid representative present) for the deadline date in June to have a decision made about a long-term contract.

Mr. Dillivan stated that they need a certain amount of lead time to create efficient schedules and runs for both riders and drivers, and the deadline date for a long-term contract agreement is June 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Dillivan stated that there are future windows for the reduction of service levels, or cancellation of contract.

Member Vogel asked for confirmation that at the May DDA Meeting, a commitment (financial obligation) will need to be made for the fall service. Chairwoman Puplava stated that the contract will be for a full year, but can be terminated on three months' notice.

**ARTICLE 6. Review 2020 DDA Annual Report**

Director Korhorn stated that this report is required annually by the State of Michigan to be reported to both the State of Michigan, and taxing authorities of Grand Rapids Community College, Kent County, Cascade Township, and the Kent District Library.

Director Korhorn reviewed the tax increment revenue received in 2020, and stated that it was just over \$1,000,000. Total expenditures in 2020 were approximately \$771,000.

Chairwoman Puplava asked if the State of Michigan has ever had an issue with the DDA not spending money that was allocated for a project, Director Korhorn stated that to date this has not been an issue.

Member Lesperance asked if the Redevelopment Ready program from the State limits or affects the DDA in any way. Director Korhorn stated that it does not, and is run through the MEDC. Member Lesperance asked if it is a good program to possibly join, Director Korhorn stated that the program is beneficial as it helps with checklists to follow rules and regulations, but the DDA does not need to join it.

**ARTICLE 7. Discuss and Consider Virtual or In-Person (Hybrid) Meetings**

Director Korhorn stated that the Township now has the ability to hold hybrid in-person and virtual meetings, and is looking for direction from the DDA on how they would prefer to hold future meetings.

Member Siegle asked if masks will need to be worn to in-person meetings, Director Korhorn stated that she believes masks will need to be worn. Chairwoman Puplava stated there is a current state health order requiring them to be worn.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that she is in favor of virtual meetings as she believes they are easier for most people involved.

Member Vogel asked if there has been any negative impact seen from holding virtual meetings (such as less community interaction), Chairwoman Puplava stated that she's seen the opposite as virtual meetings make it easier for more people to attend since quantity limitations and physical distancing do not need to be followed.

Director Korhorn stated that physical distancing will need to be followed at in-person meetings.

Member Vogel stated that Board Members who are business owners may be able to participate more via virtual meetings as they can remain "at their desk" while attending the meetings.

Chairwoman Puplava stated that a downside to virtual is there may be technology failures to work around.

Member Siegel is in favor of continuing virtual meetings until requirements are lifted.

**Motion was made by Member Lesperance to continue holding virtual meetings.**

**Motion supported by Member Siegle. Motion carried 7 to 0.**

**ARTICLE 8. Any Other Business**

Director Korhorn stated there is a public comment hand raised at this time. Chairwoman Puplava allowed the comment.

Resident Ken Carey stated that after seeing mask-less in-person attendants at the last Board Meeting, he believes virtual meetings will be best for all involved.

**a. Northpointe Bank – Ribbon Cutting**

Director Korhorn stated the DDA has been invited to the ribbon cutting ceremony being held Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. This will be held at the Northpointe Bank Operations Center, 5303 28<sup>th</sup> St. Ct. Director Korhorn stated that she will RSVP for anyone interested.

Member Lesperance stated that additional police coverage is being looked into for the areas near the hotels as there has been a rise in drug overdoses, shootings, and crime. Member Vogel stated that his business has seen the Kent County Sheriffs Department very actively engaged as a result of these incidents rising in numbers over the last year or so.

**Article 9. Adjournment**

**Motion was made by Member Kleyla to adjourn. Supported by Member DeWitt.**

**Motion carried 7 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rene Growney, Secretary