

- I. **Call to Order:** The RDA Board meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday March 20, 2012, with Chairman Leigh Morris presiding.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: Chairman Leigh Morris, Harley Snyder, Lou Martinez, Bill Joiner, Ed Glover, Jeff Good, and Peter Novak. Seven members were present constituting a quorum.
- III. **Public Comment:** *None*
- IV. **Consent Agenda:** B. Joiner moved for approval of the consent agenda with a second by L. Morris. All were in favor and the consent agenda was approved.
  - a. **Minutes of the Board Meeting of December 12, 2011:** **Approved**
  - b. **Consultant Service's Report:** **Approved**
  - c. **Executive Director's Report:** **Approved**
  - d. **Chairman's Report:** **Approved**
  - e. **MBE/WBE Quarterly Report** **Approved**
  - f. **Buy Indiana Quarterly Report** **Approved**
- V. **Action on Recommendation from Working Groups:** B. Hanna stated that the only recommendation that was brought forward from the Working Group meeting was that we will no longer have a separate RBA and NICTD working group, but a combination of both to form a unified Surface Transportation Working Group.
 

J. Good moved for the approval of the request with a second by L. Martinez. All were in favor and the request was approved.
- VI. **Project Status Review:**
  - a. **Public Comment:** T. Torres brought with her a letter that was put together by a number of individuals. The letter read as follows: "it remains our constant hope that someone, anyone, will have the courage to recognize that the RBA, as it was formed, and as it has been operated, that it is not meeting the objectives that it was designed to meet. That they will put aside pride and personal investment in favor of common sense and good judgment that they will stop throwing away good money after bad, and instead learn to support regional transportation in a way that is truly best for all of our citizens, and that will believe is by building from what we have already instead of trying to take it over. We hope that someone will have the personal strength to stop, regroup and go back to figuring out where they made a wrong turn instead of foregoing ahead with the dangers that lie ahead. You the RDA, you have the ability to regroup and the power to make a difference, we ask that you do both."
  - b. **Regional Bus Authority:**
    - i. **Update:** L. Martinez stated that the RBA is continuing to work with the municipalities to get to where the public wants it to go as far as a regional transportation network throughout northwest Indiana. Going forward, the RBA is also working on a strategy for long-term funding.
  - c. **Shoreline Redevelopment**
    - i. **Public Comment:** *None*
    - ii. **Update:** B. Joiner reported that all of the various projects are within budget and are on time according to the timelines. There are no underlying issues associated with any of the projects.

**d. Expansion of the Gary Chicago Airport:**

**i. Public Comment:** *None*

**ii. Update:** L. Morris reported that he is very pleased to announce that the Airport is on schedule for the completion of the railroad relocation and runway expansion project and is to be completed by the December 31, 2013 deadline. L. Morris also stated that there are currently 17 contractors from northwest Indiana that are working on the various projects. We had learned from the Working Group meeting that many northwest Indiana residents are being employed as a part of the construction projects in and around the Airport. L. Morris also adds that Allegiant Airlines is operating in a success of 70% load factor with a target goal set to be above 80%. Allegiant has already sold 5,000 seats; that number is said to be very important because if the Airline reaches 10,000 seats sold the FAA will increase funding from \$150,000 to \$1 million, which can go towards infrastructure and assist with the cost of the runway expansion. The partnership between the RDA and the Airport continues to be very powerful and both parties are dedicated.

**e. Extension of South Shore Commuter Service:**

**i. Public Comment:** *None*

**ii. Update:** H. Snyder reported that members of the NICTD staff have convened meetings with the Board of Directors of NICTD for the purpose to discuss the development of a long-term business plan. A meeting is set to convene on March 28, 2012 in hopes of bringing out the model of the RDA and the Airport Board to develop a business plan for communication.

**f. RDA Administrative:**

**i. Public Comment:** *None*

**ii. Update:** B. Hanna reported that he has one item in which he wants to bring forward for review. That document is the draft of the financial audit received by the RDA from Whittaker & Company. B. Hanna is happy to announce that there are no material weaknesses reported and that each year, even though the RDA has had a clean audit every year, keeps getting better. Although the audit has been received it can't be released to the public until the fiscal taskforce members of the RDA Board of Director's approve the audit. With that said, B. Hanna requested that the fiscal task force members act upon reviewing the final audit for review.

E. Glover motioned for the review of the financial audit with a second by P. Novak. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

**VII. Unfinished Business:**

**a. Public Comment:** *None*

**i. Policy Manual/ Employee Handbook:** S. Ziller reported that the RDA policy and Procedures Manual and the RDA Handbook and Quality Manual are reviewed each year by the RDA staff as part of the RDA's internal process improvement. As part of last year's annual review, many of the proposed changes in the Policy Manual are to better service RDA grantees that access the Policy Manual for grant-related purposes. In keeping up with the practices consistent with previous reviews, policies and procedures unrelated to the RDA's grant funding program are found in the RDA Employee Handbook and Policy Manual. During the 2011 annual review of

the Policy and Procedures Manual, several revisions and additions were made. The revised Policy and Procedures Manual and Employee Handbook continue to be under legal review. S. Ziller asked that the Board review the revisions.

B. Joiner motioned to approve contingent upon receipt and review of information with a second by H. Snyder. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

- ii. **Financial Audit Update:** B. Hanna complimented the tremendous efforts of S. Ziller and B. Sheldrake in the financial areas of the RDA, each year the audit improves and continues to get better.

L. Morris also emphasizes the positive working relationship between the RDA and Whittaker & Company.

- iii. **Other:** *None*

#### VIII. **New Business:**

- a. **Public Comment:** *None*

- i. **Town of Pines Grant Application:** B. Hanna reported that the Town of Pines has recently submitted a grant application to the RDA. The grant request will be referred to the Shoreline Working Group.

L. Verhage with the Town of Pines thanked the RDA for the opportunity to present their grant request in the amount of \$200,000 to better the scenic Route 12 and assist in truly making it a “gateway” to the dunes. The town has the shortest highway in the United States, “so why not highlight that”, stated Verhage. The town has also talked about plans for trails, park improvements, and capitalizing on the United States shortest highway. “We’re looking to be a little bit more tourist oriented; it’s a small town and were just trying to improve it.”

Kerry Keith, of SEH and also the Town’s consultant, added that the town wants to draw up a comprehensive plan to encompass infrastructure planning, parks and economic development. The Town is excited about the opportunity to submit the application and looks forward to working with the RDA.

- ii. **City of Whiting, Exemption Request:** S. McGuire with ODS gives a brief explanation of the exemption request made by the City of Whiting and the RDA met to discuss the acquisition and allocation of property referred to as, “Roe X”. Although this activity was not considered scheduled at the time of the grant award it does not go outside the original scope of work. The RDA believes that the acquisition of these properties are considered as site preparation and is necessary for the successful completion of the project. The City of Hammond is not requesting any additional funds outside the original grant award, and after consideration, the RDA approves the City’s request to use the remaining grant balance. As an end result, the City of Whiting will transfer the \$52,273.87 balance of its Lakefront Development Project to the Hammond Port Authority to be used with funds from HPA to the purchase of the, “Roe X” property.

B. Joiner motions for approval of the request with a second by E. Glover. All were in favor and the request was approved.

- iii. **Other:** L. Morris called attention to Attachment F, the Buy Indiana/Buy Northwest Indiana Contractor's Report. The report stated that 268 employees are on these projects, with 50% of them residing in Hobart and Lake County. They are currently generating wages of \$228,786.94 which is a significant economic development factor. The monitoring system has been outstanding and L. Morris added that, "there is not a better monitoring system than the RDA's."

IX. **2012 Future Meeting Planning:** The quarterly Board structure and the monthly Working Groups are reflected in the planning calendar.

a. **RDA Board of Director's Meeting, April 17, 2012** *TBA*

b. **Working Group Meeting, May 15, 2012** *TBA*

**General Public Comment:**

X. **Adjournment:** Without further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Amy Jakubin