

- I. **Call to Order:** The RDA meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, November 17, 2009 with Chairman Leigh Morris presiding.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: Leigh Morris, Harley Snyder, Lou Martinez, Bill Joiner, and Peter Novak. Five members were present constituting a quorum.
- III. **Welcome of RDA and Guests:** Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance Michelle Bollinger, Town of Porter Town Council President welcomed the RDA to the Town of Porter.
- IV. **Public Comment:** L. Morris took the opportunity to address the public regarding the misconceptions and misinterpretations of the RDA. L. Morris discussed the following:
- a. Key Points: four priority projects, funding, and the uniqueness of the RDA to northwest Indiana.
 - b. Misconceptions and Misinterpretations: most commonly mistaken thoughts regarding the RDA
 - c. How the RDA multiples Local Funding
 - d. The RDA as a Good Investment
- Al Piney of Beverly Shores questioned if the RDA Board is actively collaborating with Everybody Counts in Merrillville, one of the most renowned independent living centers in the United States, to facilitate a viable transportation system for individuals with disabilities.
- London Sullivan of Chesterton does not see the difference between the RDA and NIRPC. He believes that after reading the RBA's application, he's seen better studies through NIRPC in the past 30 years – during a time when northwest Indiana had a good transportation and para-transportation system.
- V. **Consent Agenda:** B. Joiner moved to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by H. Snyder. All were in favor of the motion, and the consent agenda was approved.
- a. **Minutes of the Board Meeting of 10/27/09:** **Approved**
 - b. **Minutes of the Working Group of the Whole of 11/12/2009:** **Approved**
 - c. **Treasurer's Report – October, 2009:** **Approved**
 - d. **October Consultants Report:** **Approved**
 - e. **Executive Directors Report:** **Approved**
 - f. **Chairman's Report:** **Approved**
 - g. **2010 Board and Working Group Meeting Dates:** **Approved**
- VI. **Special Order of Business:** Bill Sheldrake with Policy Analytics discussed the financial options for the RDA. B. Sheldrake discussed the following:
- a. Catalytic Mission, Sustainable Results
 - b. Implications of the Current Fiscal Reality
 - c. Present Options for Expanding the RDA's Financial Reach
 - d. Consideration of Benchmarks for Reporting the RDA's Financial Health
- VII. **Action on Recommendations from Working Groups:**
- a. **Public Comment:** T. Torres stated that the RBA findings of the independent audit that the RDA funded was said to be wrong by RBA members. The RBA believes that they do not have to operate under any specific by-laws, nor do they have to file reports with the federal government. T. Torres hopes that if the RBA is funded that the RDA will put into place mechanisms by which the RBA will be accountable to the RDA. She hopes that the RDA will expect fiscal responsible, ethical conduct and quality performance. She hopes that they meet those expectations. On behalf of those individuals who can not be

here today, T. Torres demands that from day one the RBA act at full compliance with the ADA requirements.

London Sullivan stated that northwest Indiana needs transportation and para-transportation, and questioned who on the Board represents the disabled communities in our region? If the RDA does not have an individual, then he requests that it be corrected.

Dennis Hodges spoke in favor of the RBA application and he felt that Tim Brown and the RBA did a great job in drafting the application.

Cliff Fleming spoke in support of the Porter application. He is very excited by the efforts of the people who understand the value of upgrading the community. He encourages the RDA to continue their efforts in spite of the criticisms.

Pat Jackson with the Northwest Indiana Federation is please to see the RDA supporting the efforts of the RBA to provide regional transportation.

- b. RBA Application for Financial Support:** L. Martinez complimented the City of Hammond, RBA, and the Hammond Transit Authority in their efforts for such heavy lifting in such a short period of time.

B. Hanna reported that the RBA application for financial support in the amount of \$500,000 is a part of a transition and a much broader project. This is to cover administrative costs associated with the Hammond system transferred to the RBA. This is being advanced from the RDA Working Group meeting for approval.

Mayor McDermott with the City of Hammond commended the RDA for their regional effects. Many people need this service, and currently their needs are not being met. The bus system would operate best if regionalized. Hammond s committed to the RBA for the next two years to assist in its successes as a regional system. The Mayor believes that this is an important step in the right direction, and sends a positive signal to communities across northwest Indiana. He believes the RDA is important and he appreciates all the solid work and effort put forward by the organization.

T. Brown stated that this is a two phase project. The first phase will stabilize the Hammond bus service for six months. This enables the RBA the time to re-bid the RFP process and will give the RBA the opportunity to gain public input. Phase II will be fund the main portion of the regional route.

L. Morris stated that he supports the recommendation that is being made, but this is a stop-gap measure that we must get to the point of determining how we are going to fund the bus service operationally on an ongoing basis. Providing operational funding is not the role of the RDA, however the role of the RDA is to make sure we have bus service in northwest Indiana. We have to find a dedicated source for bus funding in northwest Indiana.

H. Snyder moved approval of the Regional Bus Authority (RBA) request of \$500,000. The awarding of the grant to the RBA is contingent upon the RBA fulfilling and implementing the consent decree approved by the Federal District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, Hammond Division, in *Everybody Counts, Inc., et al. v. Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission, et al.* Cause Number 2:98CV97JM-1 as well as compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and all other federal, state, and local laws concerning access to transportation services for disabled citizens. The motion was seconded by P. Novak.

H. Snyder added his commendation to the City of Hammond and RBA for their outstanding job in recognizing the importance of bus service in northwest Indiana.

Roll Call Vote on Motion:

P. Novak	yes
B. Joiner	yes
L. Morris	yes
H. Snyder	yes
L. Martinez	yes

All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.

- c. **Financial Audit Recommendation:** S. Shabaz stated that the Working Group voted to recommend Whittaker & Company to conduct the RDA's annual financial audit. She brought this recommendation to the entire Board for formal approval. Before the Board takes action, there was an issue on conflict of interest voiced by the Board. Attorney Hollenbeck addressed this issue in email form which was provided to you today. If the legal issue is resolved, S. Shabaz requested the Boards formal approval of Whittaker and Company to conduct the RDA's 2009 financial audit.

S. Shabaz deferred to Attorney Hollenbeck to present an explanation of his legal opinion.

D. Hollenbeck is satisfied that there is no legal impediment.

B. Joiner offered a motion to approve Whittaker and Company to conduct the RDA's annual financial audit. L. Martinez seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote on Motion:

P. Novak	yes
B. Joiner	yes
L. Morris	yes
H. Snyder	yes
L. Martinez	yes

All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.

- d. **Town of Porter Application for Financial Support:** B. Hanna is before the Board for approval that would affect the corridor area that leads to State Park assets. The application has been subject to several alterations. The application provides funding leverage, partnerships and identifying items that we have the ability to increase the quality of in our region.

Mike Genger with the Town of Porter stated that the Town understands the circumstances that have impacted the ability for the RDA to assist in funding this application. They have some plan and capital improvements pending, and without action additional funding may be lost.

AJ Monroe reported that the project involves the Indiana 49 Bridge over US 20; the repaving of Indiana 49; Engineering Feasibility Study; and the Dunes Kankakee Trail. This is a three year project. However, through the financial assistance of Phase I from the RDA will assist in securing \$525,000 in matching dollars for the Town of Porter Gateway to the Indiana Dunes project.

M. Genger requested the RDA take a more conservative approach and positive approval of Phase I of the application, and looks forward to the positive relationship between the Town of Porter and the RDA.

L. Martinez moved to approve the Phase I request of \$1,816,500. B. Joiner seconded the motion.

H. Snyder commended the Town of Porter for their persistence and commitment.

Roll Call Vote on Motion:

P. Novak	yes
B. Joiner	yes
L. Morris	yes
H. Snyder	yes
L. Martinez	yes

All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.

VIII. Project Status Review: The status of each of the Working Groups, expected outcomes, actions taken thus far, major issues, and current activities are outlined in the work plan review.

- a. **Public Comment:** *None.*
- b. **Regional Bus Authority:** L. Martinez reported that the RBA presentation this morning is what transpired from the Working Group meetings.
- c. **Lake Shore Development:** B. Joiner reported that the follow-through with the Town of Porter application has just been completed.
- d. **Expansion of the Gary Chicago Airport:** L. Morris reported that major efforts regarding the L&B Business Plan are moving along as planned.
- e. **Extension of South Shore Commuter Service:** H. Snyder reported that the RDA will continue discussions as they relate to firm plans of the expansion of NICTD services in northwest Indiana.

IX. Unfinished Business:

- a. **Public Comment:** *None.*
- b. **Amended Hammond Port Authority Exemption Request:** B. Hanna stated that at the October 27, 2009 Board meeting the Board approved an exemption request for the Hammond Port Authority in the amount of \$3.5 million for the purpose of land acquisition. B. Hanna requested approval at a new amount of \$4.025 million. The reason for the exemption has not changed, there has only been a change in the amount to purchase the land. D. Hollenbeck stated that in granting the exemption monetarily the RDA is not changing the other aspects of the land acquisition policies that they have adopted, and the grantee will still be required to implement those strategies. H. Snyder moved to approve the recommendation, including in it D. Hollenbeck's clarification. B. Joiner seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote on Motion:

P. Novak	yes
B. Joiner	yes
L. Morris	yes
H. Snyder	yes
L. Martinez	yes

All were in favor of the motion and the motion was approved.

- c. **MIC Coordinator Job Search:** The RDA has engaged ODS to assist in hiring a Marquette Implementation Coordinator. They are in the process of face to face interviews.
- d. **Policy Update:** B. Hanna reported that the RDA staff will be developing a new policy as it relates to financial aspects, and will be presenting it to the Board at the next Working Group meeting. Also, the Chairman suggested that the RDA pay close attention to northwest Indiana in regards to compliance, and to look at ways to encourage contracts be awarded to contractors of northwest Indiana. After reviewing the Buy-Indiana policy it does not indicate specificity to northwest Indiana firms. A policy will be created to that respect to come before the Board at the next Working Group meeting for further consideration.
- e. **Other:** *None.*

X. New Business:

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

XI. Other Business:

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

XII. Future Meeting Planning:

- a. **12/29/2009:** Purdue Technology Center, Crown Point. L. Martinez reported that he would be unable to attend.

XIII. General Public Comment:

D. Hodges stated that it would be beneficial to raise money outside the public partnerships, as those sources will deplete over time.

Pat Carlyle thanked the RDA for convening their Board meeting in the Town of Porter, and the RDA's financial support for the Town of Porter.

M. Bollinger thanked the RDA Board for their faith in the Town of Porter.

- XIV. Adjournment:** Without further business the meeting was adjourned with special thanks to the Town of Porter for their hospitality to the RDA.

Respectfully submitted by Jillian Huber on December 10, 2009