

- I. **Call to Order:** The RDA meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. with Chairman John Clark convening and announcing the 6-month anniversary of the NWIRDA.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: John Clark, Howard Cohen, Gus Olympidis, Lou Martinez, Ned Ruff and Bill Joiner. Harley Snyder was present via telephone. All members were present constituting a quorum.
- III. **Approval of Minutes:** J. Clark requested approval of minutes from the previous meeting. On a motion by Bill Joiner and a second by Howard Cohen, the minutes of February 7, 2006 were approved.
- IV. **Report of Chair:** As chair, John Clark expressed gratitude to public officials including Governor Mitch Daniels, Senator Earline Rogers, Mayor Scott King, and General Assembly Republicans for the generous 10-year funding stream now in place from Major Moves. This will eventually enable the RDA to bond and further leverage our resources.
 - Taking a look at bonding and leveraging financial support, J. Clark noted that this is still insufficient in some people's minds. This is an ongoing focus of the RDA Board. J. Clark thanked the leadership of the RDA with the General Assembly. The RDA will continue the commitment of making the best possible use of available resources.
 - Sherri Shabaz, Executive Director Tim Sanders' new Administrative Assistant, was introduced.
 - Board Member Lou Martinez thanked Sen. Earline Rogers for all that she has done. J. Clark concurred.
 - J. Clark requested that Executive Director, Tim Sanders, walk us through the Conference Report.
 - Tim Sanders: Made note that the Conference Report provided was an excerpt with multiple references to the RDA, Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties, but was not the entire report. Clarified what county made up the indicated population. T. Sanders explained that during the state fiscal year beginning July 1, 2006, the RDA must pay at least twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000) of the distribution received to the Gary Airport expansion.
 - It was clarified that eighty million dollars (\$80,000,000) will be distributed in installments of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) during the state fiscal year beginning July 1, 2007, and each of the seven (7) state fiscal years thereafter.
 - However, no distributions will be awarded until the RDA's comprehensive strategic development plan has been reviewed by the budget committee and approved by the director of the office of management and budget. T. Sanders noted that the RDA can complete the strategic development plan whenever they choose. However, the RDA will not receive subsequent funding (the next ten million dollars) until the strategic development plan is approved.
 - Chairman J. Clark clarified that the 80 million dollars to be distributed in subsequent years is subject to that plan, but the 20 million dollars to be distributed to the Gary Airport is not subject to the strategic plan.

- V. **Treasurer's Report:** Howard Cohen provided an overview of the Treasurer's Report. It was announced that the RDA currently has \$6,805,629.22 in the bank invested in a variety of interest-bearing accounts. Monthly expenses for March were announced. On a motion by Bill Joiner and a second by Lou Martinez, the Treasurer's Report was approved.
- J. Clark asked Bill Joiner to help us understand options that may be available to the RDA now that we have money.
 - B. Joiner suggested keeping toll dollars in tact during period when we are trying to understand the bonding process and get leveraging. He introduced the concept of a line of credit.
 - N. Ruff is concerned about paying interest on the line of credit.
 - J. Clark suggested that Ryan Kitchell be involved in this matter to help us understand if there is a requirement that the Indiana Finance Authority has with any bonding that we may want to do.
 - H. Cohen made it clear that the line of credit would only be necessary if there is not enough funding available from the RDA. H. Cohen pointed out that we don't know at this point if that is ever going to happen. He stressed the importance of understanding this option without committing to it at this point.
 - It was concluded that the RDA is going to arrange a meeting with bankers after we receive a list of underwriters from Bill Swhier, Special Counsel at the Attorney General's Office.
- VI. **Executive Director's Report:**
- a. *Ethics:*
- T. Sanders concluded that we are bound by the State Ethics Commission to abide by their ethics policy. T. Sanders mentioned that he is the appointing authority and decided that the board members must take the online ethics quiz and print their certification of completion. T. Sanders urged all who have not taken the online ethics quiz to do so. T. Sanders also stressed the importance of all future applicants of the RDA to adhere to ethic codes similar to the RDA.
 - G. Olympidis asked Steve Carter, Attorney General, if we can require our ethical standards to the recipients of RDA funding. G. Olympidis further inquired if the RDA has the capacity to require the best practices.
 - Steve Carter responded by stating that there is no ethical limit on what to expect from future RDA funding recipients. However, there is a state minimum but assured us that there is no cap. Basically, we can impose ethical standards on recipients as long as they are not inconsistent with any other law.
 - B. Joiner asked the board whether the code of ethics was more geared toward the RDA board and staff or the applicants themselves.
 - G. Olympidis believes that while there is a high standard expected for all the RDA staff and board, it is more important that the recipients of our money abide by the highest of ethical standards.
 - N. Ruff stated that while we expect all applicants to abide by the highest of ethical standards, it is not the RDA's sole purpose.
 - H. Cohen requested a working group on ethics to look into what we should require from applicants.

- J. Clark appointed G. Olympidis, H. Cohen, and N. Ruff to the ethics working group.
- b. *Proposal Review Protocol:*
 - T. Sanders reviewed the procedure in which the RDA should follow when approving and monitoring any funds for development projects in Lake and Porter counties. It was understood that these are general guidelines which could change in the event of unanticipated situations.
 - J. Clark requested that the board member look over the guidelines and approve it. All present board members were in favor.
 - c. *Marketing and Image Development:*
 - A short-term working group was created comprised of H. Cohen, G. Olympidis, and L. Martinez.
 - This working group will develop marketing and image development.
 - d. *By-Law Discussion:*
 - T. Sanders prefers that we possess by-laws.
 - T. Sanders wishes to meet with N. Ruff and D. Hollenbeck to get this resolved.

On a separate note, T. Sanders announced that the RDA's Request for Proposal for accounting services has been made available on the RDA web site (www.rda.in.gov). The deadline of April 10th, 2006 is the deadline for submittal of this proposal.

It was reported that the next RDA Board meeting will be held at the Portage Yacht Club on April 11th, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. The South Shore Railroad will be meeting with the board for an information session beginning at 2:00 p.m. All meetings are open to the public.

- VII. **Phase I Planning Document Discussion:** H. Cohen reported on the result of the working group assigned to the Phase I Planning document. An outline has been created. Phase I began in January 2006 and will continue until the RDA adopts a strategic plan on or before January 1, 2008. Phase I includes creating and implementing a planning process to guide future allocations and investments. It also includes funding for specific projects related to the RDA's mission of transportation infrastructure investment and lakeshore development.
- B. Joiner motioned for Phase I Planning Document to be the working outline. Motion seconded by H. Cohen.
 - The working group for this project consists of H. Cohen, G. Olympidis, and N. Ruff.
 - H. Cohen would like T. Sanders to lay the groundwork for this project.
- VIII. **Action Items:**
- a. *Regional Bus Authority Request:*
 - L. Martinez reported on the RBA request. The RDA will contribute up to \$125,000 as the non-federal share of a grant for \$625,000 for a detailed study of bus transportation in NW Indiana. The RDA will contribute \$100,000 a year for the next two years to fund professional and clerical staff positions. The remaining \$100,000 of the RBA request is contingent upon negotiations between the RBA and the RDA staff. The RBA and RDA will collaborate to determine the metrics, performance benchmarks, reporting timetable and a timeline for the distribution of funds.

- L. Martinez also reported on the rationale of the RBA request for funding. The RBA application met the standards of the RDA in several ways: There is clear leveraging of federal money through the RDA contribution; the application was within the scope of HB 1120 which established the RDA during the 2005 session of the General Assembly; there is a considerable economic impact cited as a result to improve bus service in NW Indiana.
- L. Martinez indicated that while recognizing the need for long-term administrative support, it is clear that the RBA is not without some resources. The RDA will work with the RBA to meet the needs of the RBA while carefully managing the resources of the RDA.

The RBA was awarded \$125,000 from the RDA to qualify for a \$500,000 Federal planning grant. All were in favor.

IX **Public Comments:**

Calumet Press: Reporter Ron Johnson requested to the board that when voting to make it a roll call.

Chairman John Clark responded that with such a small venue, roll calling during a vote is not necessary.

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