

Warren County Port Authority

Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2015

Opening:

The meeting of the Warren County Port Authority was called to order at 12:03 pm on July 15, 2015 at the Warren County Administration Building, Room 318 by Warren County Port Board Chairman, Greg Sample.

Present:

Warren County Port Authority Board Members: Mr. Bolton, Mr. Ficke, Mr. Gully, Ms. Reindl-Johnson, Mr. Sample and Mr. Wilson.

Warren County Economic Development Staff: Martin Russell and Matt Schnipke

Other Attendees: Larry Hollingshead – Resident

Brenda Stier – Bishop Fenwick

Matt Crossin – Commerce Bank

Dwight Erdbruegger – Commerce Bank

Steve Bloemer – Commerce Bank

A. Approval of Agenda

The agenda and additional resources were distributed to the board for review and consideration without disapproval.

B. Approval of Minutes

- There were no minutes to approve from the month of June. That meeting was cancelled due to lack of business. **Mr. Gully made a motion seconded by Mr. Steve Wilson to approve the minutes from the May 18, 2015 meeting. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.**

C. New Business

- Port Chairman, Greg Sample, allowed New Business to be moved ahead on the agenda, thus allowing all actionable items to be addressed first. This accommodated schedules for the Board as well as others in attendance.
- Executive Director, Martin Russell, requested that the Board review resolution #2015-07. The resolution authorizes the Port Authority to issue bonds in an amount not to exceed \$8.5 million to aid Bishop Fenwick High School in refunding bonds previously issued on behalf of Bishop Fenwick by City of Middletown. The Port Authority would act as a conduit to help Bishop Fenwick gain access to the tax-exempt bond market. A fee of \$20,000 would come to the Port with an additional \$750 annually for administration. Ms. Brenda Stier from Bishop Fenwick said the Port's assistance was vital in allowing the project to move according to the preferred timeline. The project, if approved by the Port Board would also require approval from the Warren County

Board of County Commissioners. Pending that approval, the assumed closing date would be July 30.

- **Mr. Gully made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wilson to approve Resolution #2015-07 as presented.** Chairman Sample opened discussion and questions relating to the resolution. Mr. Bolton shared that he was having difficulty understanding the Port's involvement in a religious affiliated project and shared concerns about any precedent this would set that could bind the Port in the future. Further discussion, led by Mr. Sample, revealed that the Board believed Bishop Fenwick High School to be a regional draw and vital to the economic development of the State Route 122 corridor in Hunter/Middletown. Further, Mr. Russell said counsel advised this to be treated the same as any other non-profit. The bonds will be directed toward Fenwick's educational portion, and not any religious chapels, temples, etc. Therefore, according to the IRS, the transaction is no different than helping any other non-profit organization. The Board decided to schedule a strategic planning work session to identify areas the Port should avoid and, conversely, areas in which the Port should focus. **There being a motion, Mr. Sample asked for a roll call vote. The motion passed by a 5-1 margin using a roll call vote of all present Board members.**
- Mr. Gully left at 12:15pm to attend another appointment.

E. Old Business

- Executive Director, Martin Russell, updated the Board on potential projects. He shared two projects in the medical field which he is in conversations with. He reiterated possibilities that IDI in Monroe may build a few new buildings, one of which could be over 1 million square feet. Mr. Russell further shared a prospect in Preble County with which staff is working. Mr. Russell said Darke County has not produced any projects to date, although there are a few possibilities. Further, he stated that conversations are beginning to take shape with Clarke County about utilizing the Port for services.
- Mr. Russell shared that the Chamber Alliance is looking to repeat an annual advocacy day in Columbus with the Butler County Chamber Coalition. This year, Warren County will seek a few changes based off successful lessons learned in Washington D.C. The Chamber Alliance will seek to advocate priority projects to State elected representatives and their staff, as well as key agencies. Mr. Russell said this year will be crucial in building relationships heading into 2016 which is a Capitol Budget year.
- Mr. Russell shared the status of WIIN with the Board. Workforce initiatives have hit a few stalls due to scheduling inability between the education and business contingents. The first offering from the two schools was too expensive to be feasible, so conversations are on-going as to lowering the price while still maintaining a quality product. Staff shared frustrations with the seemingly slow process. Ms. Reindl-Johnson shared that she has vast experience in the field of education, and many of the issues being encountered by Port staff now have always existed in the past.
- Mr. Russell shared that the Port once again has a suite at the ATP Western and Southern tennis tournament. Staff is working to invite brokers, bankers, developers, community partners, private sector companies, etc. and believes the event will be a success as always. The final night is being held for Port members and prospective Port clients from outside Warren County. Attendance seems to be taking shape well.

- Mr. Russell shared the resume of Tammy Laine from Atrium Medical Center. The Board has shown interest in asking Tammy to fill the vacated Board seat. Ms. Laine handles business development for Atrium and has a very strong presence in the community. All Board members who have interacted with Tammy attest to her capabilities and believe she would bring excellent talent and knowledge to the Board. **Mr. Wilson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ficke instructing staff to draft a resolution for Ms. Laine's Board appointment, and sending that resolution to the County Commissioners. The motion passed using a unanimous voice vote.**

Adjournment:

At 12:35 pm, Mr. Wilson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Reindl-Johnson, to adjourn the meeting of the Warren County Port Authority. The next Warren County Port Authority meeting is scheduled for the third Monday of August at 5:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Matt Schnipke

Approved by: Martin Russell