

**Deferiet Redevelopment Corporation
Appointed Directors Board Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2024**

The Appointed Directors of the Deferiet Redevelopment Corporation held its board meeting on Thursday, October 3, 2024 in the board room at 800 Starbuck Avenue, Watertown, NY.

Present: David Converse, William Johnson, Lisa L’Huillier
Zoom: Paul Smith

Excused: None

Absent: John Condino, Robert Aiken, Joseph Cook

Also Present: Marshall Weir, Lyle Eaton, Peggy Sampson, Robin Stephenson, Rob Aliasso, Paul Warneck, Ed Walldroff, Ryan Piche (Jefferson County Administrator), Craig Fox (Watertown Daily Times)
Zoom: Justin Miller, Esq. (Harris Beach)

- I. Call to Order:** Mr. Converse (Treasurer) called the meeting to order at 9:21 a.m.
- II. Minutes:** Minutes of the meeting held on August 1, 2024 were presented. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Ms. L’Huillier, seconded by Mr. Johnson. All in favor. Carried.
- III. Discuss:**
 - a. Restore NY Grant** – Mr. Weir said that we held a meeting in this office and brought in County officials including the County Attorney’s office, the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC), and Empire State Development (ESD). He said the discussion revolved around the process of the Restore NY grant and how to proceed to clean up and redevelop the site. He said DANC is putting together the project specs and bid documents, will hire contractors and handle the administration of the grant while working with the County. He said that we will support them in any way necessary. He pointed out that the County currently holds title to the property. He said that grant reimbursements will go through Jefferson County with any necessary support from DRC. When the project is complete the County will transfer the property to the DRC.

Mr. Weir said they also discussed the Post Office building which is part of the Restore grant for raising the building as well as clean up. He said the building is falling down and is less secure than others (currently behind snow fencing and signage that is in disrepair). He said the County has agreed to board up the entrances and windows and put more secure fencing around the property. He said the issue is we want to make sure that the demo piece is covered by the grant. He said that if we went ahead and sent some equipment there and pulled it down all of those expenses would not be covered by the grant if it wasn’t done in a timely process of the bidding and all the pieces of the Restore grant. He said that everyone including the Mayor of Deferiet would like that to be done as quickly as possible. He said the mayor understands the process of the grant as well as the financial concerns.

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Mr. Weir thanked the County officials and the Building and Grounds department for making that piece of property as safe as can be until it can be raised. The County is making the property secure, and we have a plan in place for the Restore grant and work through that.

Mr. Piche asked if Jefferson County will maintain ownership of the property through demolition and grant administration – Mr. Weir said yes.

Mr. Walldroff asked how much the grant award was for. Mr. Weir said \$9,000,000. Mr. Walldroff asked if there are any contingencies and what happens if there are overruns. Mr. Weir was unsure but indicated that there are probably a number of contingencies on this project (raising, clean-up, environmental, and redevelopment). Mr. Piche asked what the timeline is for clean-up. Mr. Weir said that we need to get moving on it very quickly since we have to have a contractor in place before the end of the year. Mr. Piche said it's never too early to start marketing the redevelopment of the property whether using a market analysis/study or putting together proformas or a prospectus. Mr. Weir said there is a stakeholder group in place, and they have discussed several options for the redevelopment, and indicated that they are working through that.

Mr. Walldroff asked if there is power on the site. Mr. Weir said there is because Brookfield Power has power-generating equipment in the facility. Mr. Converse said they still have a dam there. Mr. Johnson said there is possibly 5MW of capacity there now compared to 100MW originally, but it's limited. Mr. Johnson said there have been 2 utility grade solar developments proposed and both of them are building their own substation as part of their projects. He said the site might still be an optimal place to put a large solar project and still might be feasible for a developer. Mr. Weir said it could very well be and thinks it's interesting how the narrative that comes out of it is that the lines are down so it's no longer an option, but he doesn't know if that is true. He said it's a tough situation considering the solar farm was at the head of the discussion until it was discovered that the transmission line was removed which was a big surprise to everyone.

Mr. Aliasso asked if a private entity would be able to run their transmission line on National Grid's poles to a project substation or would they have to put up new poles. Mr. Weir said the poles are all gone on the site.

- IV. Adjournment:** With no further business before the board, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. L'Huillier. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Sampson