

**VAN BUREN CHARTER TOWNSHIP  
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
“Regular Meeting”  
Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.  
DDA Conference Room  
Meeting Minutes**

Chairperson Atchinson called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Members present: Chairperson Atchinson, Director Chappell, Director Delibera, Director Laginess, Supervisor McNamara, Director Thomas, and Director Willis. Members absent and excused: Vice Chair Bird, Director Baskins, Secretary Brown, and Director Rochowiak. Also, in attendance: DDA Executive Director Coburn, Chris Wall of Wade Trim and a zoom audience of five (5), Secretary Brown, Public Services Director Ron Akers, Brian Gaughan of O.R. Colan, Jason Long of WWRP Law, and Rosemary Otzman of the Belleville Independent.

**24-DDA-076**

**Approval of Agenda:** Laginess moved, Delibera supported to approve the agenda as presented. Motion Carried.

**24-DDA-077**

**Minutes:** Delibera moved, Laginess supported to approve the DDA Minutes of Tuesday November 28, 2023. Motion carried.

- **Reports:** \*DDA Executive Director Coburn provided a copy of her report and a brief update on the following:  
*Belleville Banner Program* – MI Custom Signs will be changing out the couplings and the banners in the next three weeks. So far, we have thirty new business banners sold. *Marketing* - Staff is working on content for the content for the first quarter of 2024 TODAY magazine. *Grants* - Staff continues to have regular check-ins with our Funding Scout Wayne Hofmann to discuss grant opportunities. Together we are continuing to pursue all grants that meet our project goals. SS4A – Safer Streets for All (FHWA) in the amount of \$384,900.00. SEMCOG Planning Assistance Program Award in the amount of \$40,000. RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity) Grant – The deadline for this grant submission is February 28<sup>th</sup>. Due to no board meeting in December, staff requested permission from Chairperson Atchinson to allow Wade Trim to assist with the grant submission in the amount of \$26,000. (agreement attached for your record). This grant application is being submitted for additional funds for the Belleville Road Widening Project. MIO (Michigan Infrastructure Office) Grant – Wade Trim submitted a grant writing and/or match funding grant for Belleville Road Widening and Tyler Road Non-Motorized Improvements (RAISE Grant application on January 3, 2024. *VBT DDA Small Business Resource Sessions* - Staff received a lot of positive feedback and is currently having conversations with the Belleville Area Chamber and Belleville DDA Director to partner on the next round of programming. The VBT DDA still has an earmark in the amount of \$60,000 from Senator Peters office we’re waiting on confirmation on receipt of funding. *Right of Way Acquisition* - Staff has regular check-ins with OR Colan for property status updates. We currently have received three (3) signed easements back, eleven more needed. Wade Trim did stake the properties to give the owners a better understanding of the project limits on their properties. In your packet there is a proposal to consider for approval to move to the next level of the acquisition process. *Tyler Road Sidewalk Project* - The application was submitted on October 11<sup>th</sup>, we received initial comments from MDOT requesting additional information, one being having the County sponsor as the Act 51 Agency to receive funding through the TAP Grant process. Staff met with Wayne County to discuss the project and to get their support to be the sponsor for the funding, they are willing to be the recipient of the funding and allow the Township to take the lead on the project, however we did not receive the necessary document from the county to resubmit to MDOT. It is our intent to submit for the next

round of funding. *Aerotropolis* - Executive Director Girdwood continues to work on marketing, business attraction and lead generation. *Miscellaneous updates* – Staff is updating the landscape proposal documents, working with the Communication Department to create a tri-community calendar, and is looking into the cost to have a flag pole installed at Harris Park.

**New Business:**

Chris Wall of Wade Trim provided an update on grant initiatives and the design concept status for the Belleville Road Widening Project.

**24-DDA-078**

Laginess moved, Delibera supported to approve the professional services agreement from Jerome Pesick, Attorney at WWRP to assist with the acquisition/condemnation of the remaining eleven rights-of-way along Belleville Road between Ecorse and Tyler Roads under the terms and conditions of their January 17, 2024 proposal and invoice the project under the rates detailed in their billing rate included in the proposal to be expensed from DDA line item #248-000-801-002 Legal Fees and authorize the DDA Executive Director to execute appropriate documentation as well as approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$50,000.00 from the fund balance to cover the costs associated with the proposal. Motion Carried.

**24-DDA-079**

Delibera moved, Laginess supported to approve the budget amendment to move \$740,740.00 from the fund balance to allocate the funds to DDA line item 248-000-977-002 Belleville Road Right of Way to cover costs associated with the easement takes. Motion Carried.

**24-DDA-080**

Laginess moved, Willis supported to approve to advertise the VBT DDA with the Belleville Area Council for the Arts – advertising at Music Lakeside and to match the funds given from the Belleville DDA in the amount not to exceed \$3,000.00 as well as advertise the VBT DDA with the Belleville Central Business Community 2024 events in the amount of \$550.00 to be paid from line item 248-000-822-000 Public Relations. Motion Carried.

**Communications:** Director Coburn informed of the updated Board Member contact information list in your packet.

**Closed session:** None

**Non-Agenda Items (including audience)**

**24-DDA-081**

Delibera moved, Willis supported to adjourn at 3:52 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Merrie Coburn, Executive Director

Chris Brown

Chris Brown, Secretary  
Approved March 26, 2024