Manchester Development Authority

Regular Meeting

Minutes

February 20, 2025

 9:00 a.m.

The Manchester Development Authority Board of Directors Regular meeting was held February 20, 2025 at the MDA office located at 117 Callaway Street, Manchester.

Board of Directors in attendance were Chairman Danny Wadsworth, Solomon Ferguson, Beverly Wadsworth, Jimmy Mitcham, Suzanne Bartels Pengelly, and Glen Gosa.

MDA Executive Director Jodi Sharpe was present.

Guests included Vanessa Teague (business owner), Virginia Strait (citizen), Mayor Mark Trimble, and city manager Mark Pullium.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Wadsworth called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Mr. Wadsworth then led the board in an invocation.

1. Approval of Agenda for February 20, 2025, Regular Session

Suzanne Bartels Pengelly made a motion to amend the agenda to add discussion about July 3 event. Beverly Wadsworth seconded and all were in favor.

Beverly Wadsworth made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of July 3rd discussion. Jimmy Mitcham seconded, and all were unanimously in favor.

Approval of Minutes for January 16, 2025, Regular Session

Suzanne Bartels Pengelly made a motion to approve the January 16, 2025 minutes. Solomon Ferguson seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

1. Citizen Comment- Ms. Sharpe stated that no one had signed up for citizen comment as of the close of business Wednesday, February 19, 2025.
2. New Business
3. Approval of Minutes Information- Ms. Sharpe reminded the board members that if they make a motion to approve minutes from previous meetings please make sure that it is a meeting that they were in attendance.
4. Board Member Appointments- Danny Wadsworth discussed the board members whose terms had expired. He said that in the past it had been common practice that if someone’s term ended and they wished to continue to remain on the board. Ms. Sharpe said that she had received an email from MDA attorney Nathan Lee, saying he had been contacted by city manager Pullium that the MDA had four board seats that expired December 31, 2024. Ms. Sharpe stated that she had contacted all four board members but was not able to reach Mr. Atticus Mathis. The three board members- Glen Gosa, Suzanne Bartels Pengelly, and Solomon Ferguson told Ms. Sharpe that they would like to serve another term if possible. Ms. Sharpe stated that after she spoke with the board members, she emailed all city council members, city manager, and city clerk that they would like to be reappointed to the Board of Directors. She said that she requested that they be reappointed because the MDA was working on several projects that would help that there was continuity on the board. She stated that she had not received a reply from anyone.

Suzanne Bartels Pengelly asked why there were so many members coming to an end at the same time. Ms. Sharpe said that as she went through the records that she had been able to find start dates, from many years ago, but no terms. She said that she used her best judgment to come up with an end date. Mr. Pullium spoke up that several of the previous board members had to resign because they did not live in the city limits of Manchester. This might be the reason for the number of expiring terms.

Danny Wadsworth asked to postpone the discussion of terms of Board Members.

Danny Wadsworth made a motion to accept the recommendation of reappointing Suzanne Bartels Pengelly, Glen Gosa, and Solomon Ferguson to the Manchester Development Authority. Glen Gosa seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

1. Air Quality Testing Results and Follow-up- Ms. Sharpe told the board that on January 28, Eagle Indoor Air came to the Mill and tested the air quality in the office and in the event space. She said his results stated that air quality in both areas was normal. She said that he suggested that the loading dock be cleared of the moldy paper, furniture and other debris that is back there.

Glen Gosa said that he would begin looking for a contractor that could clean the area. Danny Wadsworth also suggested a company in LaGrange that we could contact.

1. Budget Committee Members and Meeting- Ms. Sharpe said that after Donnie Brown and Marty Mitchell resigned that left two vacancies on the Budget Committee. She said Mr. Solomon Ferguson was the sole member. Ms. Sharpe said she usually begins working on the MDA budget in March and would need to meet with the committee soon. Suzanne Bartels Pengelly and Beverly Wadsworth both volunteered to serve on the committee. Ms. Sharpe said that she would look at the calendar and get a date set to begin working on the fiscal year 2025-2026 budget.

Glen Gosa made a motion to accept Suzanne Bartels Pengelly and Beverly Wadsworth onto the Budget Committee.

1. July 3rd Celebration- Suzanne Bartels Pengelly told the board that the events team was beginning to work on the July 3rd celebration. She said that she had some concerns about the city’s commitment to the event. She has secured a band and needs to pay a deposit. She said that she is hesitant to pay a non-refundable deposit without knowing the city is completely committed.

Glen Gosa asked what she thought the city would be responsible for. Ms. Bartels Pengelly said she expected the city to pay for the fireworks and make available public safety- police and fire, like they have in the past. Mark Pullium assured the board that the fireworks would be paid for, stating that the contract had been signed and the deposit had been made.

Ms., Bartels Pengelly then addressed the rumors that there had been a conversation between the mayor and city manager that they wanted to “dissolve the MDA.” After much heated discussion the mayor and city manager denied having such a conversation. Members of the board requested support and better communication from the city.

1. Save the Water Tower Campaign- Jodi Sharpe discussed with the board that the historic Mill water tower was in desperate need of restoration. She said that about a year ago she had contacted American Tank Company to look at the water tank while they were in town working on the city tanks. She said at that time she was given an estimate of between $300-500k to completely restore the water tower. They also gave her a price of $40-50k to tear down the structure. Ms. Sharpe said that she was determined not to tear down the tower as it was one of the few remaining historical structures in town. She said that the water tower was an important part of Manchester history, as were the smokestacks and remaining part of the Mill. These structures needed to remain.

Ms. Sharpe said that she had a meeting with Joe Walter, mayor of Zebulon who had been involved in projects where water towers had been restored. She said that the city of Cuthbert, GA had created a group to save their water tower. She said the water tower in Cuthbert was unique because it was the only water tower in the US that is between a federal highway. Ms. Sharpe said that she plans to visit the city of Cuthbert and talk to the mayor and others who were involved in the fundraising campaign.

Ms. Sharpe said that she would like to start a fundraising campaign for the mill water tower. She said she would like to begin by selling the Manchester koozies at the March Market Days.

Ms. Sharpe stated that she had spoken with Commissioner Bryan Threadgill and he is a supporter of the campaign to save the water tower.

Ms. Sharpe said that she is looking into different ways to raise funds for the project, including historic preservation grants.

She said that she has also been in touch with the MDA attorney to make sure that fundraising for the renovations of the water tower is legal. He assured her that it was.

Danny Wadsworth made a motion to allow Jodi Sharpe to investigate ways of saving the water tower. Suzanne Bartels Pengelly second the motion and all were in favor.

1. Old Business

Repairs of the Mill - Mill Cleanup

Ms. Sharpe reported to the board that the Mill property has been in very bad shape. Weeds and brush have taken over the fence line and will only get worse this spring and summer. Ms. Sharpe said that she has personally weeded around the building, her husband has used the weed-eater around the building and a friend has sprayed for weeds in the back of the building for the last 2 years. She has also treated the property for ants. Ms. Sharpe said that we have a contract with the Harris Co. inmates to mow the front section of the property between Callaway and Truitt St. as well as the corner lot on Callaway and Glen Fowler. She said that they never cut on the mill side of Callaway. She said that she has asked that the city extend their contract to include cutting the weeds inside the fence in the back of the mill twice a year to help manage the area. She said she has never received an answer to this request. She said before the first Christmas at the Mill, Phillip Denure’s crew cut the back and that is the only time it has been done.

She reported that as far as the rubble and pieces of mill structure remaining from the fire, she met with Herman Ward to discuss the possibility of cleaning up that area . She said that they walked the property and discussed a plan. Mr. Ward proposed bringing in some of his equipment to test the possibility of him being able to break up some of the concrete structures. He said the thickness of the walls and the amount of rebar that is in the walls might cause a problem.

Ms. Sharpe shared that she was still looking for information about any possible environment issues with the property. She said that she had read in MDA minutes that an environmental study had been done since the MDA acquired the property. She said she was afraid Brownfield Remediation might be something that would eventually need to be addressed.

1. Financial Report- Ms. Sharpe presented the monthly financial report and balance sheets to the board.

Beverly Wadsworth made a motion to take a five-minute break before continuing the meeting. Suzanne Bartels Pengelly seconded. All were in favor.

Suzanne Bartels Pengelly made a motion to leave regular session and enter into Executive Session for Real Estate. Jimmy Mitcham seconded the motion and all were in favor.

1. Executive Session- Beverly Wadsworth made a motion to leave executive session and return to regular session. Jimmy Mitcham seconded the motion and all were in favor.

No action needed to be taken after Executive Session.

1. Adjourn – Glen Gosa made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Beverly Wadsworth seconded the motion and all were in favor.