



**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**Auburn Industrial Development Authority**  
**Wednesday, November 20, 2024**  
**24 South Street, Auburn, NY**

**Board Present:** Gwen Webber-McLeod (Chair)  
William Andre (Vice-Chair & Member of Labor)  
Jimmy Giannettino (Council Member)  
Tessa Crawford (Treasurer & Member at Large)  
Karen Walter  
Terry Cuddy (Secretary & Council Member)  
Dan Lovell (Representative of Auburn School District)

**Excused:** Stephanie Leone

**Staff & Guests:** Rob Poyer, Hancock Estabrook  
Tracy Verrier, MRB Group

**REGULAR MEETING**

Ms. Webber-McLeod called the meeting to order at 5:03pm and a roll call was taken.

**BOARD EDUCATION:**

Ms. Webber-McLeod noted she reordered the agenda to allow for the most critical topics first. She explained that they will discuss developing a 2025 workplan to guide work through next year while the county is further building out economic development.

Ms. Webber-McLeod read the current strategic priorities and asked board members what they believe the organization must focus on over the next 3-5 years in order for AIDA to effectively act on its mission.

Mr. Giannettino would like AIDA to get more involved in advocacy. He noted that they hear from existing and new businesses that there are power shortages, plus the long timelines and high costs required to get adequate power. The City can advocate, but it would be good to have additional support. He would like to consider how AIDA can get involved.

Ms. Webber-McLeod asked if advocacy should become a strategic priority. Mr. Giannettino said yes. AIDA is an advocate for new and existing businesses.

Mr. Cuddy would like to consider how they can enhance their relationship with the City of Auburn, noting that there is a lot of experience at City Hall and in Auburn. They can leverage those assets and expertise. This would have immediate value.

Ms. Walter explained that she has witnessed the board for many years in different capacities. Back in the 1980s and 90s, Au-Steel was still setting up and Bombardier was still there. The school superintendent was on the board and acted as a sort of ambassador because he traveled frequently and spoke about Auburn on his travels. She noted that there are questions about what they want to be targeting: the types or sizes of business? She also explained that it's important to

know what infrastructure they have before they can determine who they'd like to target. As it relates to the first strategic priority, Ms. Walter asked who markets the benefits of doing business in Auburn. Is it the board, is it existing businesses? They should think about who is traveling a lot and could act as an ambassador.

Mr. Cuddy asked if there is a conference or convention that site selectors go to. Ms. Verrier responded that there are, and they are typically organized by industry.

Mr. Andre noted that he can name three or four projects that AIDA shouldn't have gotten involved in, including the John Street, Hilton, and Health Central projects. These don't have anything to do with industrial development. He doesn't want to see PILOTs for projects that only pay \$15/hr. Rather, he wants to see AIDA set some thresholds and priorities for what they require from projects.

Ms. Webber-McLeod summarized that they should clarify what "industrial" means and also look at what other criteria they might want to consider when making decisions.

Ms. Crawford explained that when she first joined the board, there were no projects. She likes the priority of having two projects a year, but is curious about how to make sure that happens.

Ms. Walter said they can think about how they can reach out to businesses directly. Mr. Giannettino noted he has done about 15 business visitations this year. Mr. Giannettino will try to connect businesses to each other, as well as to AIDA and resources.

Mr. Giannettino also noted they also need to think about industrial more broadly than manufacturing. Other industries bring quality of life and services.

Ms. Webber-McLeod asked Ms. Crawford if her point was about being more proactive. Ms. Crawford confirmed it was. She explained they could follow-up with PILOT recipients to bring up concerns from board and also see what else they need.

Ms. Webber-McLeod said that the Marketing Committee has started to talk about how to build those relationships more.

Mr. Giannettino explained that the economic development process is a lot different than it used to be. For example, ESD calls City Hall regularly to inquire about what property is available for projects. There's also a lot available online. He asked how all of those components fit into the proactive strategy.

Mr. Lovell said that the strategic priorities as written are good. They are broad enough to give them flexibility, but to a point. He agreed that they could be doing advocacy, as well as educating the public.

Mr. Andre also agreed that industrial doesn't need to be manufacturing. AIDA can do other work, but he wants them to be cognizant of the true benefits of a project and need for the incentives.

Ms. Walter explained that when she first joined the board she looked at the Oswego and Syracuse IDA missions. In Oswego, they are really focused on the harbor, proximity to Micron, and transportation. They've got a goal and clear targets. If AIDA doesn't have a target, they won't know what they are trying to reach. She asked if that is a part of this plan.

Mr. Lovell noted that the Marketing Committee has started talking about messaging in that way.

Ms. Webber-McLeod explained that AIDA is not in a position to create a goal for the county, but they could create one for themselves. The workplan would be implementation for the first year of

that goal. They can also put in the plan what other IDAs are doing in terms of regional collaboration.

Ms. Verrier will start working on a strategic framework to make sure she is hitting the right points, and will then build out from there. She noted they can also bring back the application criteria that was created about five years ago.

### **MEETING MINUTES:**

The minutes of the September meetings for the marketing and governance committees, as well as the October regular meeting and finance committee meeting were reviewed. Mr. Giannettino motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Lovell. All present voted in favor. Motion carried.

### **BILLS AND COMMUNICATION:**

Ms. Verrier explained that they only need to approve disbursement for the Central Building PILOT. She noted that two PILOTs that had been approved last month have in fact been disbursed.

### **TREASURERS REPORT:**

Ms. Crawford noted they have billed Bo-Mer for the project administration fee. She reviewed the bills from October. She noted that on balance sheet they want to see total equity going upward, which is not currently happening. The strategic plan may help to address this. Ms. Crawford explained that she is able to reconcile bank statements online, so that helps with the separation of duties.

Motion to approve the bills and treasurers report by Mr. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Andre. All present voted in favor, motion carried.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Board Vacancy**

Mr. Giannettino explained that Ms. MacIntyre has resigned and was a member at large. He noted that he strongly feels her replacement should be a woman, and ideally a woman of color. He asked for ideas from the board.

Mr. Andre explained that he is struggling with his concussion and is very busy traveling with work. He would like to step down from being co-chair.

#### **IDA Academy Report**

Ms. Verrier provided a brief overview of the DEC regulation changes for wetlands.

### **BOARD UPDATES**

There were no board updates.

### **CLOSING**

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Cuddy, seconded by Ms. Walter. All present voted in favor, motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:09pm.