

Pine Bluff Urban Renewal Agency
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 19, 2018

The Pine Bluff Urban Renewal Agency (PBURA) held its regular monthly meeting on June 19, 2018 at The Baim Law Firm.

The following commissioners were in attendance:

Jimmy Dill, chair
Rita Conley
Lloyd Franklin, Sr.
Kirby Mouser via conference call

Commissioner Travis Martin was absent.

Also in attendance were:

Leigh Cockrum
Michael Neary
Angela Parker
Ryan Watley

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Commissioner Dill.

Commissioner Franklin made a MOTION to approve the May 22, 2018 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Conley and was APPROVED.

Commissioner Franklin made a MOTION to approve the May 30, 2018 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Conley and was APPROVED.

Commissioner Franklin made a MOTION to approve the June 6, 2018 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Conley and was APPROVED.

Commissioner Franklin presented invoices to pay for the Executive Director's iPad, computer and printer. The equipment is being stored in the City's IT department.

Commissioner Franklin made a MOTION to approve the invoices as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mouser and was APPROVED.

Commissioner Franklin reviewed the Balance Sheet, Income Statement and Budget Performance Report through May 31, 2018.

Commissioner Conley made a MOTION to approve the financial statements as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mouser and was APPROVED.

In Other Business, Ryan Watley discussed the Professional Service Agreement he emailed to the commissioners between Go Forward Pine Bluff (GFPB) and the Pine Bluff Urban Renewal Agency on June 15.

Dr. Watley stated the agreement was necessary to pursue action on the PBURA's Plan (Plan). Until now, the two organizations have been working together in good faith. The Agreement would allow the public to understand the relationship between the two entities.

Commissioner Conley stated she would like to have the City Attorney look at the Agreement before the PBURA considers entering into the Agreement.

Commissioner Franklin asked what would happen if we didn't sign off on the Agreement.

Mrs. Conley stated that GFPB has stated on numerous occasions and its own organizational chart shows that no public funds will go to GFPB. The professional services agreement that includes costs and expenditures undermines public confidence and now appears to funnel public funds through PBURA to GFPB. After much discussion, Dr. Watley stated that the costs and expenditures section would be deleted.

Mrs. Conley asked Dr. Watley if GFPB provided professional services for other entities and if so a request for reimbursement should come from the Public Funds Committee and not from funds allocated to PBURA. Therefore, the public will be aware of what funds are being requested and for what purpose.

Commissioner Conley stated she had suggested in an earlier meeting that the Community and Economic Development department hire someone to perform the duties of the job in order for the City to build their capacity.

Commissioner Franklin stated the PBURA should take the Agreement under advisement and not act on it at this meeting and have the city attorney review.

Commissioner Mouser agreed and stated the Agreement could be improved if the PBURA seriously considers entering into an agreement with GFPB. He also stated he was sensitive to Commissioner Conley's comments and would like to know what the mayor says. Commissioner Mouser also stated that until the matter is settled, the PBURA should meet more often.

Commissioner Conley made a MOTION that action on the Agreement be postponed until the city attorney can review it and any modifications be made. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mouser and was APPROVED.

Dr. Watley wanted on record to say that the proposal does not reflect that GFPB receives funds. Projects submitted on behalf of the PBURA will have to be approved by the PPRC, appropriate city council committee and the city council itself.

Commissioner Dill asked for any thoughts about the executive director position. The last candidate interviewed for the position has withdrawn his application.

Commissioner Franklin made a motion to advertise and take applications for two weeks. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Conley and was approved.

The job posting will be sent to Larry Reynolds and the Municipal League, and will be advertised in the *Pine Bluff Commercial*, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and on Indeed.com as well as being posted on the City of Pine Bluff's website.

Dr. Watley wants anyone who has suggestions for improvement to the Agreement to contact him. Section 3 will be deleted. After everyone submits their suggestions to him, he will submit to the city attorney for review.

A decision will need to be made whether to engage in contract services versus hiring an executive director. Commissioner Conley stated the PBURA needs to consider how the public will perceive the Agreement as the PBURA is an independent body.

Dr. Watley stated there is a lot of work to do and a house hasn't been torn down yet. Commissioner Dill stated things were progressing well when Dr. Williams was on board and is a good indicator of what can happen.

Commissioner Dill also echoed Commissioner Conley's comments. The PBURA is an independent body, wants to maintain independence, wants to work with others and are accountable to the public.

Dr. Watley stated the Agreement doesn't alter the PBURA's independence. GFPB is a partner with the PBURA.

Commissioner Franklin is concerned with public perception. Commissioner Conley asked why the Agreement wasn't discussed when the Plan was being developed and why now.

Commissioner Dill stated the PBURA has to maintain public confidence in the manner they were told when implementing the Plan, and yes the PBURA has been partners with GFPB from the beginning. There is frustration that the PBURA isn't moving at the pace we would like.

Commissioner Franklin stated there is a public perception the PBURA is hard to work with.

During Public Comments, Angela Parker, Health Unit Administrator of the Arkansas Department of Health spoke. She is trying to get the word out about that they do and wants to collaborate more with the community.

There being no further business or public comments, the meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

/s/ Leigh Cockrum
Leigh Cockrum
Recorder

/s/ Wm. Kirby Mouser
W. Kirby Mouser
Secretary