



## MIDCOAST REGIONAL REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Meeting Minutes of MRRA Board Meeting

March 29, 2017

**Present:** John Peters, John Moncure, John Kilbourne, Lois Skillings, Sharon Eggleston, and Carl Flora (via phone)

**Excused:** Rita Armstrong, Steve Weems, and John Bouchard, George Gervais,

**Staff:** Steven Levesque, Kathy Paradis and Tom Brubaker

**Location:** Topsham Town Hall

**Time:** 4:00 p.m.

**Welcome & Introductions.** Board Chair John Peters welcomed the Board and invited the attendees at the meeting to introduce themselves.

**Host Community Comment.** Rich Roedner, Topsham Town Manager, welcomed the Board to Topsham. He said he appreciated the MRRA's efforts to keep its partners informed. He commended the Board and staff for MRRA's remarkable successes in its redevelopment efforts, noting that Topsham and Brunswick have both benefited. Mr. Roedner said he has had good meetings with the prospective buyer for the former Navy housing in Topsham. He said he was happy that the Small Company Business Leader of the Year award from Maine Biz was given to Wicked Joe Coffee. Rich said the Town is excited to be partnering with MRRA to facilitate this development.

**Minutes from the January 25, 2017 Board Meeting.** John Moncure made a motion to accept the minutes of the January 25, 2017 meeting, which was seconded by Sharon Eggleston. The vote was unanimous of the Board members in attendance and participating via conference call.

**Business Showcase.** Steve Levesque said that Wicked Joe was the first business to open at the Topsham Commerce Park and remains the anchor tenant for the park. JHR Development purchased the former Commissary (Building 333) from MRRA in November 2013 and renovated the 30,000 SF building for Wicked Joe. The building features improved energy efficient solar panels for electrical generation. Wicked Joe is committed to green power and sustainable growth.

Owner Bob Garver, presented an overview Wicked Joe Coffee. Bob said that he was very proud to address the Board and feels Wicked Joe is a beneficiary of the hard work MRRA is doing in supporting them and businesses like them. Bob said he was very pleased to have recently been given the 2017 Small Business Leader of the Year Award from MaineBiz.

Bob gave a PowerPoint on its coffee roasting company, Wicked Joe Coffee, and noted or provided:

- Before and after photos of the recycled former commissary.
- This year's launch of Wicked Joe's rebranding (initial feedback extremely favorable).
- Wicked Joe brand is in 15 grocery retail chains nationwide and over 150 independent stores and distributed in 48 states.
- Coffee Non-GMO Verified, Organic. GMP Certified, Bird Friendly, Fair Trade Guaranteed, recognized by Maine DEP has an Environmental Leader in the Governor's Carbon Challenge.
- Wicked Joe is the #3 top selling 100% organic and fair trade coffee in Northeast behind industry giant brands Green Mountain & Newman's Own Organics.
- Visits growers all over the world, sometimes in remote regions, and give financial support to growers' communities.
- Has had steady, sustainable growth. Never had a month that wasn't up.
- Pillars: Quality; Community; and Sustainability
- Quality Focus/Best Practices: Very exciting time to be working in the coffee business. Coffee quality has never been higher. Tremendous focus on quality at every step of supply chain.
- From farm to mill to roaster to coffeehouse, coffee professionals are experimenting with new methods. Coffee has never tasted better.
- Moved into expanded space (10,000 SF)
- Two different kinds of solar energy collectors.
- Have a solar photovoltaic system on the roof that provides electricity.
- Has to electric car charging stations. Owns two electric cars.
- Any energy that they are not making themselves, comes from a Maine resource.

- Uses LED lighting.
- They compost everything.
- They are Certified B Corporation.
- Proud to be from Maine.
- Own Bard Coffee in Portland, Maine. Won Good Food Award.

John Peters thanked Mr. Garver for his presentation and said Wicked Joe Coffee has definitely benefited the community and he congratulated him for receiving the Small Company Business Leader of the Year award from Maine Biz. Mr. Garver thanked MRRA and the Town of Topsham, notably John Shattuck and Rich Roedner.

**Featured MRRA Employee.** Executive Director, Steve Levesque, introduced Tushima Sims, MRRA’s bookkeeper and newest addition to its staff. Tushima thanked Steve and briefly told the Board a little about herself and her background:

Tushima was born in South Carolina and has two brothers. She is married with four children – ages 19, 13, 7 and 1 (she said “there is never a dull moment”).

Tushima spent 10 years in the Navy stationed at Norfolk, Virginia; Whidbey Island, Washington, and her last duty station, Naval Air Station Brunswick. While in the Navy she was a Personnel Specialist/Disbursing Clerk.

Tushima received her AA Business Administration degree from Coastline Community College in California; B.A. and M.S. in Accounting with Specialization in Forensics and Fraud Examination degree from Southern New Hampshire University in Brunswick, as well as her Masters in Business Administration.

For the past three years prior to working at MRRA, Tushima worked at Preble Street as a bookkeeper, a nonprofit located in Portland, Maine.

She said she is very happy at MRRA and is looking forward to being with MRRA for a very long time.

### **Committee Reports.**

#### Finance Committee.

John Peters gave the Financial Report in Committee Chair Steve Weem’s absence. He noted that the Committee last met on March 21, 2017. He said that MRRA is 66% through the year at the end of February, and is financially solvent. He advised that staff is working on the new budget.

John Peters noted that MRRA's Utility Manager, Tom Brubaker, talked to the Finance Committee about MRRA's electricity rates because of its concern that electric revenues were less than expenditures. A large portion of this shortfall is attributable to the cost of street lights (about \$110,000) not being passed along to our electric customers. We are taking another look to see if our rates compare to other provider's rates. Steve Levesque pointed out that the Town of Brunswick pays for street lights from tax revenue, and MRRA gets a portion of the tax sharing from the Town. In order to stay competitive, Steve said that we are conducting interviews with energy brokers to get better prices; our goal is to keep rate at or below rates outside the gate.

Steve said there are three components to electricity rates: energy, transmission and distribution (T&D), and a demand charge (which is maximum capacity that a customer-demands from the system). We are averaging our T&D and billing our customers. The good news is we are not far off – street lights are the only issue.

### **Electrical Distribution System.**

Executive Director Steve Levesque said the distribution system is a key element at Brunswick Landing. We have 85 direct customers and when the power goes out we have to answer to the customers. He thought it would be a good idea to have Tom Brubaker, MRRA's Utility Manager, talk about our system at Brunswick Landing. Tom gave a PowerPoint presentation on the electrical distribution system which is attached to these minutes. It was noted that MRRA's most worrisome risk was our reclosers; however, they have now been replaced.

At the end of the presentation, Steve Levesque said that early on we decided to maintain the system ourselves (rather than turn it over to CMP) to maintain our vision for a renewable energy campus; however, ultimately, we would like a strategic partner to take it over and partner with us.

### **Continuity of Electrical Service and Liability Policy.**

Steve Levesque addressed the issue of what happens when there is an outage to our customers and our liability. MRRA has drafted language for a policy statement on continuity of electrical service, much the same as CMPs. If there is an outage because of a storm, bird strikes, etc. MRRA has no financial responsibility. We encourage customers to have generators or fuses to protect their equipment (like surge protectors). Lois Skillings noted that many businesses have insurance for power outages. Steve said staff is asking the Board to approve a policy. If approved, MRRA will send the policy to its customers with their invoices.

**Action Item:** John Moncure made a motion that the Board of Trustees adopt the Policy for Continuity of Electrical Service and Liability as presented (a copy of which shall be attached to the official minutes of this meeting), which was

seconded by John Kilbourne. The vote was unanimous of the Board members attending.

### **Executive Director's Report.**

TechPlace.

TechPlace has 30 companies and continues to exceed expectations.

We have now completed the construction and outfitting of BioWorks and TechWorks shared production spaces. Both these facilities are ready for use by TechPlace members and other businesses. In addition, we have recently completed the demolition and new construction to open up an additional 25,000 sf of industrial space adjacent to Hangar 4 for additional occupancy. The final piece is to outfit the shared composites lay-up facility and re-establishment of the paint facility. I am pleased to report that we were awarded a \$495,000 grant from the Maine Technology Institute to assist with this important element. This final major work will be completed this summer.

In addition to our tenants' use of the facility, TechPlace is continually being utilized by a number of partner organizations for training and networking events.

### Redevelopment Activity

Between MRRA controlled property and those properties owned by others, there are now over 100 private and public entities doing business at Brunswick Landing and the Topsham Commerce Park. As of this month, collectively, these entities employ approximately 985 people on a full-time basis and 249 on a part-time basis for a total of 1,234.

The opening of Flight Deck Brewery has exceeded expectations, and Steve said that they are actually looking for more storage space at Brunswick Landing. John Moncure said he was there Sunday and it was like Oktoberfest!

Steve reported on the HubZone certification for Savilinx (the first company on Brunswick Landing to be certified by the Small Business Administration since the new law took effect).

Priority Group's 15,000 SF medical office building at Brunswick Landing is going to the Town's Planning Board.

We should be closing soon on Lots 14 and 15 for the industrial condos being developed by Bill Moore and Matt Hancock (14 Willey Road, LLC).

Avita of Brunswick is having its grand opening today until 8:00 p.m.

Steve congratulated Wicked Joe Coffee on its Small Company Business Leader of the Year award from Maine Biz.

#### Marketing Update

MRRA staff is very busy in their business attraction marketing efforts. Staff will be attending two trade shows next week and one at the end of April.

#### **Other Business:**

The legislature has passed the so-called speed limit bill for Brunswick Landing unanimously in both houses to enforce speed limits at Brunswick Landing. The bill will go before the Governor within a week or two.

Being up for reappointment, Board members John Peters and John Moncure were recently sworn in.

**Executive Session:** A motion was made at 5:22 p.m. by John Moncure and seconded by John Kilbourne to go into Executive Session pursuant to MRSA Sec. 405(6)(A) and (C). The vote was unanimous of the Board members present.

At 5:50 p.m. a motion was made and seconded to adjourn from the Executive Session and resume the Board meeting. The vote was unanimous of the Board members present. The Board reported on the following action items:

**Action Item:** John Moncure made a motion to approve the terms of a lease with Brunswick Aviation Services for space in 112 Orion and authorize the Executive Director to enter into a Lease, which was seconded by John Kilbourne. The motion was unanimous of the Board members present.

**Action Item:** John Moncure made a motion to extend the term of the Executive Director's employment to December 31, 2021, which was seconded by Lois Skillings. The vote was unanimous of the Board members present.

**Adjournment:** A motion was made by John Moncure at 5:55 p.m. to adjourn from the Board meeting, which was seconded by John Kilbourne. The vote was unanimous of the Board members present.

---

Lois Skillings, Secretary