

**CITY OF ALPENA, DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY BOARD
APPROVED 4/8/2025**

Meeting date of Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 3:00 pm

Meeting was held at City Hall Council Chambers, 208 N. First Ave. with the option for members of the public to join virtually.

Present: Todd Britton, Loren Jackson, Brian Peterson, Melissa Tolan-Halleck, Ben Young, Andrea Yoxsimer

Absent: Corey Canute, Mike Mahler (attended virtually), Quintin Meek, Rachel Smolinski, Matt Wojda, Cassandra VanHorn

Staff Present: Anne Gentry

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Britton, in absence of Chairman Mahler and Vice Chairman Meek.

2. Citizens Appearing before the Authority:

- Kevin Ginter of 114 E Wisner St in Alpena addressed the Board. He acknowledged all the work being done to improve the downtown, including the Social District and new events like Flower Festival. The DDA's efforts have made a positive difference to improve the downtown.

3. Approval of the Agenda: It was moved by Jackson and seconded by Tolan-Halleck to approve the agenda as presented. All ayes. Motion passes.

4. Review and Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meetings (February 2025): It was moved by Peterson and seconded by Tolan-Halleck to approve the minutes from the February 2025 Board Meeting as presented. All ayes. Motion carries.

5. Hearings: None.

6. Executive Director's Report: Gentry reported on the following:

- The DDA should receive grant notifications in the upcoming month on the Revitalization and Placemaking grant and Healthy Food Financing Initiative grant submitted earlier this year. She also gave an update about the upcoming Match on Main funding round and a grant secured by Huron Pines to install rain gardens in the grassy area next to the DDA Office and the parking lot on 3rd and River St.
- Fresh Waves applications are open and due April 20th.
- Gentry is the team lead for the Walkability Action Institute, a training program that will take place this year. The city was invited to participate given our interest in re-envisioning Chisholm St. There will be design technical assistance provided and prepare us to submit a Transportation Alternatives Program grant in the future.
- Ice Festival happened on February 15th; overall feedback was positive, although the snow limited some attendees. Next year's date has been set for February 21st, 2026.

Gentry also shared there is an increasing number of complaints about vacant storefronts downtown. The Board tasked the Economic Development Committee and Education & Promotions Committee to both discuss what the DDA might be able to beautify and encourage the redevelopment of buildings that are vacant in the downtown core.

7. Correspondences: None to share.

8. Review and Acceptance on Monthly Financial Reports (February 2025): It was moved by Tolan-Halleck and seconded by Peterson to receive and file the financial reports from February 2025. All ayes. Motion carries.

9. Committee Reports:

a. Budget/ Finance:

- Budget Draft FY25-26 & FY26-27: Gentry gave an overview of the budget draft for the remainder of FY24-25, FY25-26 and FY 26-27. The DDA's tax settlement is projected to come in higher than budgeted. With the County's prepayment of the boundary expansion's taxes, the DDA is in a healthy fund balance position. The tax abatement on the Holiday Inn Express also expired at the end of 2024, which will positively impact the budget. The DDA has until the end of April to make any adjustments before it goes to City Council for approval.

b. Education & Promotion: Tolan-Halleck gave an update on Flower Festival, which is Friday, June 6 through Sunday, June 8. The committee whittled down fifty ideas for this year's festival and is prioritizing adding the following: a Thursday night pub crawl to kick off the festival, more music, and a Sunday Funday bike parade.

c. Design & Beautification: Britton reported on the committee's discussion about the project at 123 Water St (the Alpena Power Company site), including determining a layout, interior finishes for the sheds, and other site improvements to ensure it is accessible for all.

d. Economic Development: Mahler reported on the committee's discussion about the project at 123 Water St. This committee reviewed the business application process and overall goals of the project to bring foot traffic downtown, activate the riverfront, and offer low-risk spaces to businesses that have the potential for a long-term future downtown.

10. Report from the City of Alpena: Mayor Cindy Johnson reported on the following:

- The renovation of Culligan Plaza is going to bid this month. Construction should begin this summer. The planters for Culligan will still be planted for this summer and can be relocated once construction starts.
- Construction at Bay View Park will begin this spring, including building the new courts and public restrooms near the Band Shell.
- Glass recycling will soon be coming available for country residents. The materials management board has been working with the County leadership to move forward with the new facility and expand services for residents.

11. Unfinished Business:

- Jen Calery- DDA Board Resignation: It was moved by Britton and seconded by Jackson to accept the resignation of Jen Calery from the DDA Board of Directors, effective immediately. All ayes. Motion passes.

12. New Business:

- 123 Water Street Project: Gentry gave an update on the 123 Water Street. The DDA Economic Development and Design & Beautification Committees have been working on the site layout, tiny shop design, rental rates, business application, and project parameters

over the last several months. Gentry reviewed the goals of the project which are to activate the riverfront, provide linkage between parts of downtown, provide attainable, draw foot traffic downtown, and provide low-risk commercial space for businesses that have the potential for a long-term future downtown.

Gentry also reviewed the project budget, which is approximately \$130,000 for the purchase of sheds, electrical work, site preparation, pathways, tables, and a music pavilion. The City's Department of Public Works would provide site preparations, including laying crushed limestone pathways and ramping each shed so that they are accessible for all. Mahler reviewed a pro-forma for the project based on proposed rental rates and operational expenses including insurance, electric bills, rent to Target Alpena in future years, and seasonal rentals of portable toilets. Gentry then reviewed various funding options for the capital investments to launch the project, including from the DDA Fund Balance, and matching funds through a Patronicity crowdfunding campaign.

Board members discussed the merits of the project and what impact such a large investment would have on the DDA's fund balance. No decision was made; a decision was postponed until the April Board Meeting when more board members can weigh in and be in attendance.

13. Adjournment: There being no other business, it was moved by Tolan-Halleck and supported by Peterson to adjourn the meeting at 3:59 pm.

Minutes prepared and submitted by Anne Gentry.