

# MINUTES FOR THE INLAND PORT AUTHORITY SPECIAL MEETING THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2024

LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS @ 8:30 A.M.  
1819 Farnam Street, Omaha, NE 68183

Agenda and materials are available online at the City of Omaha web site [here](#).

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brook Aken  
Mike Helgerson  
Jacob Hoppe – arrived after roll call  
Terrell McKinney  
Davielle Phillips  
Mike Riedmann  
Carmen Tapio  
Tom Warren  
Ernest White

STAFF PRESENT:

Jennifer Taylor, Deputy City Attorney  
Elizabeth Butler, City Clerk  
Kimberly Hoelsing, Deputy City Clerk

Chair Terrell McKinney called the meeting to Order.

1. Roll Call

CERTIFICATION OF PUBLICATION – NOTIFICATION OF OPEN MEETING ACT

2. City Clerk certifies publication in the Daily Record on September 27, 2024, notice of the Inland Port Authority Meeting, October 3, 2024.

A current copy of the Open Meeting Act is posted in a white binder on the east wall of the Legislative Chambers.

**ACTION ITEMS**

3. Approval of minutes from the September 19, 2024 Special Meeting – [see attached](#). **(VOTE TODAY)**

**MOTION by Tapio, SECOND by Phillips to approve minutes.**

**Yeas: Aken, Hoppe, Phillips, Riedmann, Tapio, Warren, White, McKinney**

**Abstain: Helgerson**

**MOTION APPROVED 8-0-1**

4. Community Advisory Committee Appointment Recommendations – [see attached](#). (VOTE TODAY)

Mike Helgerson explained the process for selection of the Community Advisory Committee appointments. The committee went through the list and used the reference from City Clerk's office to see which applicants were residents and business owners within the district and used the statute to confirm the requirements. The committee is recommending 8 appointments and would recommend re-opening the application period for the remaining appointment which needs to be from a business owner within the district. It was explained that the recommendation for the City Council District 2 representative as well as the State Senator District 13 representative be ex officio positions pending the November election. The timing of the first meeting was discussed and it was explained that the survey needs to be done as soon as possible and therefore it was recommended that the committee be seated ASAP. The board discussed coming up with a calendar for the strategic planning sessions, including the requirement that quarterly meetings are held. It was decided that the remaining vacancy would be opened and available on the City Clerk's web site and would remain open until filled.

**MOTION by Warren, SECOND by White to approve.**

**Yeas: Aken, Helgerson, Hoppe, Phillips, Riedmann, Tapio, Warren, White, McKinney**

**MOTION APPROVED 9-0**

5. RFP for Innovation District – [see attached](#). (VOTE TODAY)

Chair McKinney opened the public hearing on Item 5.

No one came forward and the public hearing was closed.

The board discussed what type of business is expected to respond to the visioning portion of the RFP. It was explained that it would preferably be businesses that have experience with projects around innovation and working with the community. It was explained that based on the statute, there are three different models to consider and that whoever does the consulting can look at all three and see which one works best for our community. The idea of having initial presentations from potential entities that may be interested in the visioning was discussed. This would allow the board to learn about what already exists in the community. The board decided that it may be best to see who is interested first and then have them present. It was also mentioned that more information can be added to the scope in the RFP if the board wishes. It was mentioned that language about benchmarking should be added to the RFP, and that there could be a unique partnership with several consultants already in the community.

The one month deadline may be too short for a response from companies if we are looking for consultants to collaborate. Collaboration is important and there is a lot of activity happening right now and we need to maximize that effort. Do we want to create competition? It was mentioned that true innovation can probably not exist without competition. There may be confusion surrounding the relationship of I-HUB and the innovation district. It was explained that the Inland Port Authority can be an I-HUB without partnering with anybody and that this RFP process should be competitive. Setting up the process for evaluating the RFP is ok, but people doing the work should be the ones telling the board what is available out there. One idea discussed was to develop a short list and have those people present to the board, and then have a review period for the board to select the company. It was also mentioned that it is normal for RFPs like this to have a short list process and the benchmarking and indexing need to be clarified in the RFP to understand other models that may have been used. This may be a two-step process with benchmarking first and then visioning.

**MOTION by Warren, SECOND by White to postpone this item to the November meeting.  
Yeas: Aken, Helgerson, Hoppe, Phillips, Riedmann, Tapio, Warren, White, McKinney  
MOTION APPROVED 9-0**

6. RFP For Banking – [see attached](#). (VOTE TODAY)

Chair McKinney opened the public hearing on Item 6.

No one came forward and the public hearing was closed.

Questions about whether having an RFP for banking was normal and whether companies are selected based on certain criteria. It was explained that whether or not we use an RFP the same process would be used to select a bank. The Finance Committee is taking the lead on this and the timeline needs to be accelerated because the DED is prepared to transfer the funds. It was proposed that there be a 30 day timeline for responses which will mean approximately 60 days before an account is opened and available. The timeline can be reduced if necessary. Assuming the Executive Director search is going to take some time, as well as engagement with consultants, the Finance Committee will work to get this done as soon as possible. The City Clerk's office will post the RFP today on the web site with proposals due November 8<sup>th</sup>.

**MOTION by Helgerson, SECOND by White to approve.  
Yeas: Aken, Helgerson, Hoppe, Phillips, Riedmann, Tapio, Warren, White, McKinney  
MOTION APPROVED 9-0**

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

7. Governance Committee report – [see attached](#).

The RFP for the Innovation District was discussed as well as potential deliverables for the Airport Business Park. In addition, there was discussion about the need for a central website, a strategic visioning retreat for the board, recommended changes to the executive director job description, potential search firms to use for the positions for the Inland Port Authority, and the need to coordinate projects and activities within the standing committees. Chair McKinney will send out a Doodle Poll for the strategic visioning retreat and the board will move forward with finalizing and posting the job description for the executive director of the Inland Port Authority. Once that position is filled, a job description will be posted for the executive director of the Innovation District.

8. Real Estate and Development Committee report – [see attached](#).

The importance of having a partnership with OEDC and Burlington Capital was discussed as well as creation of an oversight process for the release of funding. The committee needs to understand what is needed for office space for the district. A couple potential locations for space for the Inland Port Authority were discussed. Questions were raised about staying within the boundaries of the Inland Port Authority when looking for space. It was clarified that funds are supposed to be used within the boundaries. It was mentioned that potentially a temporary space for the executive director of the Inland Port Authority may not be within the boundary and part of their job would be to find a permanent location within the boundary. There have been previous discussions about expanding the district beyond the two miles and it was decided that this would be a good topic for the board retreat. The committee will research staffing of other inland port authorities in the state.

9. Finance Committee report – [see attached](#).

Researching standard operating procedures for other inland port authorities within the state was discussed. It was mentioned that best practices should be used as well as a potential milestone timeline.

10. Operations Committee report – [see attached](#).

The status of the funding was discussed. The HR director is ready to assist with the selection process for the executive director. Hiring of a consultant for the visioning exercise was also discussed. Brook Aken offered to take the lead with Metro to see if board meetings can be scheduled there beginning in January 2025.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

11. Updates to the Executive Director Job Description – [see attached](#).

The title needs to be changed to Executive Director of the Inland Port Authority. The job description for the executive director of the Innovation District will be discussed at a later date. There is a reference made to working with local state and federal entities and other inland port authorities as well as grant staff. The job description will be posted after the board retreat as well as discussion of potential search firms.

12. Plan for the Airport Business Park Project

The need to be clear about what the board wants to see going forward from OEDC/Burlington Capital was discussed. The board was provided with a copy of the 10-year pro forma. A question was raised about whether the grantees would consider receiving a portion of the funds to do the pre-development work as well as the need for this discussion to continue at the board retreat. The requirement is that a letter of support is to be received before the funds can be released. The board discussed potentially creating an oversight process to control the release of funding. This would provide an opportunity to give a portion of the funding so they can continue moving forward with the pre-development work. Some board members are concerned that OEDC/Burlington are in a holding pattern right now.

The board was given a 2017 market analysis. Some board members would like to see a 2024 market analysis as well as a plan of how they plan to engage with the community. There should be a specific requirement for engaging the community. Some board members expressed interest that partnering with OEDC/Burlington Capital may be beneficial to be clearer about community engagement, which could include active community engagement sessions. It was mentioned that this process could potentially start with the Community Advisory Committee and then move on to community forums, etc. A question was raised about whether it would be appropriate for the Real Estate and Development Committee to put together a list of milestones and specific pre-development activities that need to occur. The release of funds couldn't happen until December under the schedule/timeline that the board has previously discussed. Unless there is continuing work on the pre-development side the board cannot answer some of the outstanding questions. OEDC has a contractual agreement with the Department of Economic Development with the following three requirements:

1. 10-year pro-forma
2. 2 community engagement sessions
3. Letter of support from the Inland Port Authority

One idea discussed was to have OEDC and Burlington Capital participate in the board retreat to try to come to an agreement. The funds are very time sensitive and there needs to be agreement on what conditions need to be met so that the project can proceed. The Real Estate and Development Committee will engage with OEDC and Burlington Capital before the board retreat to discuss what is needed, including criteria and potential requirements, for the project to move forward.

Called to speak:

George Achola, Burlington Capital, 1004 Farnam Street, Suite 40

Joe Fox, East Omaha Neighborhood Association, 461 Hartman Avenue

Joe Higgins, Levi Sherman Neighborhood Association, 1110 East Camden Avenue

*BROOK AKEN LEFT THE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS AT 11:01 A.M.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION by Helgerson, SECOND by White that the meeting be adjourned**

**Yeas: Helgerson, Hoppe, McKinney, Phillips, Riedmann, Tapio, Warren, White**

**Absent: Aken**

**MOTION APPROVED 8-0**

**MEETING ADJOURNED AT: 11:03 A.M.**