

LAWRENCE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

LAWRENCE MASSACHUSETTS

Vice Chair
Ramon Quezada

Treasurer
Ana Medina

Members
Pedro Tejada



Executive Director/Secretary
Octavien Spanner

Administrative Assistant
Marisol Rodriguez

Chair
Eric D. Walker

LAWRENCE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MINUTES REGULAR MEETING – JANUARY 21, 2026

The members of the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority met in a Regular Session on Wednesday, January 21, 2026. The meeting was held in person at 255 Essex Street, 1st Floor, Lawrence, MA 01840. Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this public meeting of the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority was ALSO conducted via remote participation.

A copy of the NOTICE OF MEETING pursuant to Section 23A of Chapter 39 of the General Laws with the Certification as to Service of Notice of Meeting attached was read and order spread upon the minutes of this meeting and filed for the record.

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 23A of the General Laws of Chapter 39 that a Regular meeting of the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority will be held on **Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.** The meeting will be held at 255 Essex Street, 1st Floor, Lawrence, MA 01840.

CERTIFICATION AS TO SERVICE OF NOTICE OF MEETING

I, Marisol Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant to the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority, Lawrence, MA do hereby certify that on January 16, 2026, there was filed in the manner provided by Section 23A of Chapter 39 of the General Laws with the Clerk of the City of Lawrence a NOTICE OF MEETING of which the following is a true copy. IN TESTIMONY THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority.

Marisol Rodriguez
Administrative Assistant

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Eric Walker.

Present:

Eric Walker, Chairman

Ramon Quezada, Vice- Chair – via Zoom

Ana Medina, Treasurer – via Zoom

Pedro Tejada, Member – via Zoom

Octavien Spanner, Executive Director

Carlos Matos – Acting Director of Planning and Development Strategy

Marisol Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant

Ryan Gagne, RAG Associates

James Carras, LRA Consultant – via Zoom

Ernie Cintron, Accountant – via Zoom

Ruben Nieves, Consultant

Roll Call: All members were present

Key Discussions

1. Discussion and review of the Director of Planning and Development Strategy Position

Motion to take item Z. (Discussion and review of the Director of Planning and Development Strategy Position) out of Old Business – Upon a Motion made by Mr. Quezada and seconded by Mr. Tejada – Motion was Approved Unanimously

Motion to enter Executive Session – Upon a Motion made by Mrs. Medina and seconded by Mr. Quezada – Motion was Approved Unanimously

Motion to return to Open Session – Upon a Motion made by Mr. Quezada and seconded by Mrs. Medina – Motion was Approved Unanimously

New Business

2. Review and discussion of RFPs for the Microenterprise Loan Program and Credit Builder Loan Program, including associated technical assistance services through the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce

Presenter: James Carras:

- Draft RFPs were created for the Microenterprise Loan Program and Credit Builder Loan Program
- Alignment with LRA Urban Renewal Plan priorities
- Goals include supporting small businesses and underserved borrowers
- Participation encouraged from qualified financial intermediaries including banks, credit unions, and CDFIs
- Technical assistance to be coordinated with the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Potential modification discussed to structure microloan initiative as a revolving loan program
- Proposal to hold a financial institution meeting prior to RFP issuance
- Introduction of Ruben Nieves as consultant assisting coordination

3. Update on the Urban Renewal Plan and coordination with the City of Lawrence Economic Development Plan

Presenter: James Carras:

- Update of Urban Renewal Plan will align with the City of Lawrence Economic Development Plan
- Merrimack Valley Planning Commission retained to assist
- Community engagement strategy titled “One Lawrence - Two Plans” introduced
- Community outreach required under state law
- Timeline goal: completion by mid-summer following 2–3 months of engagement

4. Proposal to hire an audit firm to conduct an audit of the LRA financial statements

- The Board discussed the benefits of obtaining an independent financial review or audit to strengthen financial transparency and funding eligibility
- Clarification made that a financial review or audit may vary in cost and scope

Motion to authorize staff to advertise for letters of interest from qualified professionals to conduct a financial review of the LRA’s financial statements. – Upon a Motion made by Mrs. Medina and seconded by Mr. Quezada – Motion was Approved Unanimously

5. LRA Internship Program: Proposal to create an internship program for Lawrence students enrolled in university programs related to urban development sciences, sociology, human development, community capital, and finance

- A proposal was introduced to create an internship program for Lawrence university students in fields including:
 - Urban development
 - Sociology
 - Engineering
 - Community development
 - Finance
- Board emphasized workforce development and youth engagement
- Staff directed to develop program framework including:
 - Eligibility criteria
 - Compensation/stipend structure
 - Program scale and partnerships

Motion to authorize staff to develop and present a formal internship program proposal – Upon a Motion made by Mr. Quezada and seconded by Mrs. Medina – Motion was Approved Unanimously

6. Executive Director’s Report

Hydro Facility – Pacific Mills

- LRA exploring the sale of the Unit Hydro facility
- Tours conducted; positive feedback reported
- Two interested organizations conducting due diligence

7. Financials were presented by the LRA Accountant

- LRA Accountant presented October 2025 through December 2025 financial statements

Motion to accept financial statements – Upon a Motion made by Mr. Quezada and seconded by Mrs. Medina – Motion was Approved Unanimously

8. Mayor's Strategic Meeting

- Purpose: Coordination of approximately 17 redevelopment initiatives and funding strategies.
- Board informed of upcoming meeting with:
 - MassDevelopment
 - Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce
 - Lawrence Partnership
 - Workforce Investment Board
 - Related stakeholders

9. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve minutes – Upon a Motion made by Mr. Quezada and seconded by Mrs. Medina – Motion was Approved Unanimously

10. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting – Upon a Motion made by Mr. Quezada and seconded by Mrs. Medina – Motion was Approved Unanimously