

**CENTRAL NEW YORK REGIONAL MARKET AUTHORITY**  
**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
**Tuesday, January 11th, 2022**  
**3:30 P.M.**  
**(Held via Zoom)**

**PRESENT:** C. Pratt, J. Berenguer, A. Emmi, G. Palmer, K. Batman, M. Mahar, M. Broccoli

**OTHERS:** B. Vitale, A. Vitale, H. Poole, D. Mannion, T. Deats, M. Doyle, A. Donovan (News Channel 9), and some others whose names were not available (link to attend was shared publicly)

The meeting was called to order at 3:36 PM by Board President, Chip Pratt.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Resolved; a motion was made by J. Berenguer and seconded by A. Emmi to approve the agenda. All in favor; no one opposed; no abstentions.

**APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES: 10/5/21**

After some discussion, it was determined that there were not enough members in attendance at the meeting who were in attendance at the 10/5/21 meeting, and the approval of these minutes was tabled until the next meeting of the Board of Directors.

**APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES: 12/14/21**

G. Palmer presented the option of posting the 10/5/21 and 12/14/21 board meeting videos on the Authority's website for public viewing. Presuming this would benefit the market regarding the negative backlash from the community in regards to Buda's Meats and Produce leaving the market. After some additional discussion;

Resolved; a motion was made by K. Batman and seconded by G. Palmer to approve 12/14/21 minutes, and to post both the minutes and recording of the 12/14/21 board meeting. All in favor; no one opposed; no abstentions.

**BOARD DISCUSSION**

A. Emmi presented the following statement in response to the Budas discussion;

"At this point in time, we feel that as a Board of Directors it is important that we come together and unify to present a message that is directly from us as Board Members, rather than from our Executive Director or staff of the Authority.

Many people, including the press and local politicians, have spoken out with support on Buda's behalf. Much of the information being publicly shared regarding the circumstances of this event is inaccurate. As a Board, we feel that we have given the tenant ample opportunity to discuss any issues that they had and to bring an acceptable offer to the table. Our responsibility as Board Members for the Central New York Regional Market Authority, is to make decisions that are both fair and equitable to all who participate in the Market, and to the Market itself. With the understanding that the Authority receives no public funding for its operations, we must be very intentional with how we provide this equity for all. The tenant has had a lease with the Authority since fiscal year 2000, at which time, rates and agreements were very different than they are now. As is the case with other leases negotiated at that time, upon their expiration, it becomes time to negotiate new leases that align with current standards and rates. Much of the discussion has been that Buda's provides a unique service that must be saved for the wellbeing of the community. But what is not being said, is that that same service is in direct competition with dozens of our other vendors and tenants. The tenant has been lucky to preserve a favorable rent over the past twenty one years, seeing rent increases of less than 1% each year, and even some years with no increase at all. As a result, this tenant has been in competition with others on our Market at an unfair financial advantage. That has created an unfair circumstance for others on the Market. This Board is formed of both individuals who are vendors on the market, and individuals who do not vend on the Market but are members of the community that it serves. We have chosen to create fairness among everyone at the Market.

Many people have also been responding that this is a profit motivated decision by individuals. I think we should be emphasizing that this is not what we are, literally or metaphorically. We are an Authority with a legal responsibility to provide a very valuable service to our community. We, as the Market, have no income outside of the rent that we collect from our vendors and tenants. Like them we still have costs associated with doing business, and those costs have drastically increased since the year 2000. If we do not insist on market rate rents and fees from our vendors and tenants and force those expectations across the board, then we will be unable to maintain the facilities, staff, or environment that allows our vendors to do successful business here.

At this time, besides releasing a statement of accurate information on behalf of the Authority, there fails to be any other grounds for discussion. On December 30th, 2021, the tenant hand delivered a letter to our business office, terminating the lease for Buda's Meats and Produce effective January 31st, 2022. This was on their own accord and was not advised or encouraged by the Authority. As a staple of the community, the Authority has no ill will toward the tenant or the community, and continues to encourage the community to support the many local businesses at the Regional Market on a weekly

basis. Additionally, to put to rest any concern, there is a great variety of fresh and well priced goods available that can be purchased each week on our Saturday Farmers Market with or without SNAP benefits. "

There was some discussion between board members, sharing their frustration with how the Market and the decision has been painted in the media. The consensus was that the members in attendance agreed that it was important the truth, and the Authority's side of the story be shared and made public. G. Palmer states he can share this statement with the Department of Agriculture and Markets press officer, until he receives their approval he cannot vote to share this statement. K. Batman presented the option of just A. Emmi and C. Pratt signing the statement, as this would not require the board to vote on posting the statement, both agree with their signatures being on the statement.

A. Vitale continues with an update on upcoming deadlines/projects such as NAPMM (March 2022), quarterly meetings, Governance Committee projects, finalizing the 2022-23 rates and final budgets, etc.

G. Palmer presented updates from the State of the State that would benefit the Regional Market, farmers, and vendors.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be on February 8, 2022 at 3:30 PM.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Resolved: a motion was made by J. Berenguer and seconded by K. Batman, to adjourn at 4:26 PM. All in favor; no one opposed; no abstentions.