



**BOARD MEETING OF THE PORTSMOUTH PARTNERSHIP**  
**January 8, 2024, 12:00 PM**  
**Bloom Coworking**  
**MINUTES**

**DIRECTORS:** Edward Barham, Jim Bento, Carley Brierre, Don Comer, Joseph M. Donnelly, Mike Fitzwater, Johnny Garcia, Jay Grant, Herbert A. Haneman, Bobbie Hansel-Union, Finn Host, Brad Hunter, Stephen Korving, Ross Morgan, Fred Pasquine, John Paul, Melissa Ramsey, Chris Shelton, Hope Sinclair, Will Taylor, Matt Tuttle,

**EX-OFFICIOS:** Mayor Shannon Glover, Alisa Winston

**STAFF:** Michelle Wren

**CALL TO ORDER**

President, Dr. Johnny Garcia welcomes everyone and calls the meeting to order.

**WELCOME & INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKERS:** Finn Host, CEO/Partner of Riverside Shipping gave an overview of his family's history in the maritime industry and their new Portsmouth-based shipping company.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The board approved the November 13, 2023, board meeting minutes as presented.

**REPORTS**

**City of Portsmouth**

**Mayor Shannon Glover**

Mayor Shannon Glover is running for reelection in November. He wants to continue the progress made over the past few years and needs the support of the business community to continue the momentum and transformation of Portsmouth. Portsmouth will host a Philippine festival in October. This festival will celebrate the Philippine history in Portsmouth. Portsmouth will also host in conjunction with the Virginia 250 celebration the return of Marquis de Lafayette with a festival on October 24<sup>th</sup>. The city is working with Legend Sports to bring NBA celebrities to the Portsmouth Invitational Tournament's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Economic Development**

**Brian Donahue**

Brian Donahue announced the Economic Development team had another successful year in 2023 with over 120 million dollars in new investment and over 520 jobs created. The one-year anniversary of Rivers Casino will be held on January 20<sup>th</sup>. The Casino has exceeded all projections and generated 13.7 million dollars for the city of Portsmouth. Project updates in the city include the industrial site off Elmhurst Lane, Southern Freight line is expanding, which is about a 12-million-dollar project and is tripling its footprint. UNIS transloading facility adjacent to the Virginia International Gateway has constructed a 7,000sq foot distribution warehouse filling a great need for the Port and region. Many projects are coming in 2024 with expectations of steady growth in development this year.

**PDF - Bloom**

**Matt Tuttle**

Bloom currently has 155 members. Bloom has three offices vacant which should be filled in a few weeks. These vacancies happened at year-end. Bloom has a waiting list which have been contacted. We have many waiting for a space in 719. 117 Hours were booked in conference room space for the month of December. The Acoustic panels from Audimute in the conference room have been installed. This has made some difference in the sound – especially with the echo, however the air vents are still problematic. We are looking into more solutions for the airduct sound. Audimute shipped the wrong color panels originally for the conference room. We were able to keep these and added them in the hallways to help with sound.

Bloom has some expenses to incur, the bloom sign, donor board and room donation acknowledgments. Michelle will be working on finishing these last few projects over the next few months. Bloom Market has launched the application portal. We had a great response in the first week with lots of inquiries. The bloom market initiative was featured last week in Inside Business online publication. WTKR will feature the bloom market in their news segment. Please share the bloom market social media posts to create some traction on these posts and to help spread the word for applications. Applications launched January 1<sup>st</sup> and will open until January 31<sup>st</sup>. The selection committee will then pick the participants. These participants will begin the educational program March 4<sup>th</sup> with Retail Alliance. The Participants will receive a retail certificate of operations once completing the course. The Market should open at the beginning of March. The goal is 20 retailers with a mix of products. We are looking for Portsmouth based businesses, who are makers, not service-based businesses. This initiative is a similar concept as our Start-up Stability Program run in 2021. Chealsey consulting has submitted grant proposals to the following: Fulton Forward, Dollar Bank, Geico Charitable Foundation, SEVACF, M&T Charitable Foundation. We are currently working on the following proposals: Virginia Healthcare Foundation: \$55,000 towards Education coordinator for underrepresented entrepreneurs at Bloom in the home healthcare industry. Nasdaq Foundation: \$75,000 for Accelerator program, A state grant: Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation Regional Innovation Fund: \$200,000 for Accelerator Program. Just a reminder our grant focus has changed, and we are now applying for program support, to keep our entrepreneurs supported for all stages of growth and to support the community in the start-up phase. The Cabell campaign is wrapped up, once this money is applied to the line of credit, it will bring the debt down to about \$170,000. The Partnership still needs to raise money to reduce the debt. If you have an organization to whom we should apply for funding, please contact Michelle.

**Education**

No report

**Dr. Bracy**

**Lefcoe Leadership Development**

This year's Lefcoe class has 31 members for 2024. This year many live and work in Portsmouth. The program continues to grow in strength and the connections it provides for its members. The Lefcoe Trustee's in partnership with Volunteer Hampton Roads will host a non-profit forum in bloom on February 16th. The goal of this initiative is to bring Portsmouth non-profits together in a collaborative setting. The Portsmouth Hospital Foundation has awarded Lefcoe a grant to support this innovation.

**Don Comer**

**Maritime Committee**

The number of mono piles delivered to the terminal has doubled. Each mono pile is uniquely engineered for the exact location it will be placed on the ocean floor. AUKUS – Which is a collaboration with Australia, UK and the US is coming to the region. They are working collectively on building submarines. This region has many assets for ship building and this type of collaboration is good for the region. AUKUS is using the VA Class Act Submarine and building at least 5 for Australia.

**Fred Pasquine**

**Military Affairs**

No Report

**Pete Kopacz**

**Nominating Committee**

The nominating committee will call a meeting to propose new board members, officers, and executive board members. Please let Ryan or Michelle know if you have nominations for membership and which committees or board positions you are interested in serving on.

**Michelle Wren**

**OTBA**

No Report

**Charles Brogan**

**Portsmouth Museums**

The Portsmouth Museums Foundation has launched a new website. The foundation is searching for a new Executive Director. This is a part-time position. The Bunny Hop will be held on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. This fundraiser is a 5K and fun run through historic OldeTowne. Please go to the bunnyhope5kVA to sign up for the race and for sponsorship opportunities.

**Stephen Korving**

**PRHA**

**Alisa Winston**

A new 105-unit senior apartment development has broken ground. This facility will include many amenities specifically for seniors. The twin pines development will start later this year, bringing on 82 more senior units. PRHA has been awarded a Department of Labor grant for a Youth build Program to help adults from the ages of 18-25 build skills in the trade industry. The program will offer hands-on experience in these trades. These participants do not need a GDE or a high school diploma to qualify. PRHA is working with TCC for this initiative.

**Transportation**

**Cannon Moss**

No report

**OLD BUSINESS**

The Regional Collaboration team is formalized. The Executive Directors of each organization will meet quarterly. The group will call itself the 4-Cities. The goal is to collectively support legislation for our cities and region. The 4-cities are putting together letters to support regional efforts for this year’s general assembly session.

**NEW BUSINESS**

The Virginia Symphony Portsmouth event will be at the Woman’s Club on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Everyone should have received an invitation. This is a private event and should be a very nice evening, please respond to the invite. The Partnership’s next executive committee meeting will be held on January 25<sup>th</sup> @ 8:00am via Zoom. The next Partnership Board Meeting will be held on February 12th @ 12:00pm at Bloom.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Wren