

SO ORDERED.

Dated: February 28, 2013



  
Eddward P. Ballinger Jr., Bankruptcy Judge

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7 **UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT**

8 **DISTRICT OF ARIZONA**

9 In re:

10 GILBERT 3600, LLC,

11 Debtor.

CHAPTER 11

Case No. 2-11-bk-00872-RTB

**FINDINGS OF FACT AND  
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW ON  
CONFIRMATION OF DEBTOR'S  
FOURTH AMENDED PLAN OF  
REORGANIZATION DATED  
DECEMBER 18, 2012**

15 This matter came before the Court on January 10, 2012 for a trial ("Trial") regarding the  
16 contested confirmation of Gilbert 3600, LLC's ("**Debtor**") *Fourth Amended Plan of*  
17 *Reorganization Dated December 18, 2012* ("**Plan**"). The Debtor appeared through counsel,  
18 Paul Sala and Michael Jones of Allen, Sala & Bayne, PLC. Multibank 2009-1 CRE Venture,  
19 LLC ("**Multibank**") appeared through counsel Peter Sorensen and David Cleary of Greenberg  
20 Traurig, LLP. Maureen Gaughan, Chapter 11 Trustee for Larry Miller's Bankruptcy Estate  
21 ("**Gaughan**"), appeared through counsel, Steven Brown of Steve Brown & Associates, LLC.  
22 Multibank holds a secured claim against undeveloped real property located at 14800 N. 78th  
23 Way, Scottsdale, AZ ("**Property**"), the Debtor's primary asset, and opposed confirmation of the  
24 Plan.

25 At Trial, the Debtor and Multibank presented witness testimony and other evidence by  
26 declaration, with such witnesses available at the Trial for cross examination. Based upon the  
27 evidence presented at the Trial, together with the arguments and representations of counsel and  
28 the entire record before the Court, and good cause appearing, the Court makes the findings of

1 fact and conclusions of law set forth below.<sup>1</sup>

2 **THE COURT MAKES THE FOLLOWING FINDINGS OF FACT:**

3 A. Kari Miller (99.9%) and Miller Matrix, LLLP (1%) are the current members of  
4 the Debtor.

5 B. The Debtor's primary asset is the Property, a 9.54 acre parcel of undeveloped  
6 real estate located near the Scottsdale Air Park. After real property taxes, Multibank holds the  
7 first priority lien on the Property. Multibank's debt exceeds the value of the Property based  
8 upon an appraisal by Stephen G. Leach, CBRE, Inc. – Valuation & Advisory Services, dated  
9 April 9, 2012 establishing the value of the Property to be \$5,200,000.00. Accordingly,  
10 Multibank holds both a secured and unsecured/deficiency claim. Diversified Funding Group,  
11 LLC (“DFG”), which pre-bankruptcy held a second priority lien on the Property, is rendered an  
12 unsecured creditor pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 506. The Property is necessary for the Debtor's  
13 reorganization.

14 C. Post-confirmation financing is necessary to the continuation of the Debtor's  
15 business operation, and the Debtor's incurring of post-confirmation indebtedness is within the  
16 exercise of the Debtor's sound business judgment. DFG and Ms. Miller will provide the  
17 funding necessary to fund the payments under the Plan. That funding includes a loan from DFG  
18 of \$4.1 million to the Debtor. Additionally, DFG has agreed to provide two loans to Ms. Miller,  
19 individually and not as community property. The first, in the amount of \$1,100,000.00, will be  
20 provided on a secured and limited recourse basis. The second, a line of credit in the amount of  
21 \$700,000.00, is unsecured and with full recourse against Ms. Miller. Ms. Miller will contribute  
22 the full amount of the \$1,100,000.00 loan and an initial draw of \$500,000.00 on the line of  
23 credit in exchange for 100% of the equity in the Reorganized Debtor. The funding will allow  
24 Debtor to pay its secured creditors based upon the value of the Property. Indeed, on the Plan's  
25 Effective Date the Debtor will pay Multibank's secured claim in full. Additionally, on the  
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27 <sup>1</sup> To the extent that any provision designated herein as a finding of fact should properly be characterized as a  
28 conclusion of law, it is adopted as such. To the extent that any provision designated herein as a conclusion of law  
should properly be characterized as a finding of fact, it is adopted as such.

1 Effective Date the Debtor will have sufficient funds to pay administrative claims in full and to  
2 make a payment of \$600,000.00 to general unsecured creditors; neither of which will be paid if  
3 the Plan is not confirmed.

4 D. The essence of the different iterations of the Debtor's plans of reorganization  
5 have all involved the same basic structure and economic terms. Ms. Miller, the Debtor's  
6 primary interest holder, would take ownership of the Debtor by virtue of a "new value  
7 contribution", a new loan would pay in full Multibank's secured claim, and the other creditors  
8 would receive a partial payment on their unsecured claims all assertedly in compliance with the  
9 "new value exception to the absolute priority rule" which is partially set forth in Section  
10 1129(b) of the Bankruptcy Code ("**Code**").

11 E. Pursuant to Bankruptcy Rule 3017(d) and the *Order Approving Debtor's First*  
12 *Amended Disclosure Statement and Fixing Time for Filing Acceptance or Rejection of Plan,*  
13 *Combined with Notice of Hearing* ("**Order and Notice**") (DE #68), and as evidenced by the  
14 *Affidavit of Mailing* (DE #69), the Debtor timely served all interested parties in this case with  
15 the following: (i) the Order and Notice; (ii) Debtor's First Amended Disclosure Statement (with  
16 all exhibits); (iii) Plan (with all exhibits); (iv) Voting Instructions; and (v) Ballots.

17 F. Pursuant to the Order and Notice, written objections to the Plan were required to  
18 be filed on or before October 11, 2011, with copies served on Debtor's counsel.

19 G. The following parties filed objections to the Plan: (i) Maricopa County; (ii)  
20 Multibank; (iii) Gaughan; (iv) MW Housing Partners III, LP ("**MW Housing**"); and (v) the U.S.  
21 Trustee. Resolution of the Plan Objections is summarized as follows:

22 (i) Maricopa County's Objection was resolved by amendments incorporated into the  
23 Plan. Maricopa County did not appear at the Trial.

24 (ii) Multibank presented its Objections at the Trial and the Objections are overruled.  
25 Multibank made a number of assertions that the Plan fails to comply with Section  
26 1129 and, therefore, cannot be confirmed. Multibank alleged there is a lack of  
27 good faith by the Debtor and that DFG's vote should be designated and not  
28 counted due to its conduct pursuant to Code Section 1126. Based on the actual

1 terms of the three DFG loans, the Court rejects Multibank’s bad faith and  
2 designation arguments. It is very significant to this conclusion that the actual  
3 terms are materially different from proposed terms or stated goals of DFG. If the  
4 actual terms were certain of the terms or goals asserted or sought at an earlier  
5 time by DFG, the decision would probably be different. The fact that the final  
6 loan terms do not include the payment of DFG’s pre-petition claim which was  
7 apparently sought by DFG during the negotiations, is compelling evidence to this  
8 Court of the Debtor’s good faith and good faith efforts to obtain loan terms that  
9 are consistent with the Code.

10 Multibank also asserts that (1) the Plan’s classification of its deficiency  
11 claim in a separate class and (2) the new value standard and requirement, both do  
12 not meet the Code and case law requirements. The Plan’s separate classification  
13 of Multibank’s deficiency claim meets the requirements set forth in In re Loop  
14 76, LLC, 465 B.R. 525 (9th Cir. B.A.P. 2012) because Multibank’s debt was  
15 guaranteed by a third party [“... We reject Wells Fargo’s argument that a third-  
16 party guarantor does not render its deficiency claim dissimilar from other  
17 unsecured claims”]. The new value exception/corollary to the absolute priority  
18 rule has been a less than clear “rule” for bankruptcy courts to apply in specific  
19 cases. In this case, it is undisputed that (1) on a balance sheet analysis this  
20 Debtor has a large negative net worth and (2) that the Debtor’s exclusive right  
21 and time to file a plan of reorganization ended months ago. Based upon the  
22 rationale and analysis of Bank of America v. 203 N. LaSalle St. P’ship, 526 U.S.  
23 434 (1999) and In re Red Mt. Mach. Co., 448 B.R. 1 (Bankr. D. Ariz. 2011), this  
24 Court concludes that this Plan satisfies the requirements for the new value  
25 exception; the new value is new, money, necessary and substantial. Specifically  
26 and as in Red Mt. ...“Because exclusivity has expired long ago, the Court finds as  
27 a fact that there is no “option value” (or any other value) ... to the exclusive right  
28 to propose a new value plan” 448 B.R. at 19. Hence and based upon the

1 “balance sheet approach” the new value contributed by Ms. Miller, the Debtor’s  
2 interest holder, far exceeds the value, if there is any, to the equity interests  
3 received under the Plan.

4 Multibank further asserted that the Plan fails both the best interests of  
5 creditors test and is not feasible. These assertions are inter-related and not  
6 correct. Multibank purported that the best interests of creditors test is not met  
7 because it was losing its collateral to a junior lien holder and that it would  
8 receive more in a Chapter 7 liquidation. There is no credible evidence that  
9 Multibank would receive more in a Chapter 7 case. To the contrary, in a Chapter  
10 7 case Multibank would foreclose on the Property and there would be nothing for  
11 the other creditors; here they are receiving more by virtue of the full payment of  
12 their secured claim and a partial payment on their unsecured claim. Also,  
13 Multibank is not losing its collateral to a junior creditor. Rather, the debtor is  
14 retaining its asset, the Property, by paying in full the one secured claim of  
15 Multibank, making a significant payment to its unsecured creditors, and  
16 providing the Debtor with the capital/new value to significantly fund its future  
17 obligations. As to the feasibility of the Debtor’s Plan, the Plan has a reasonable  
18 probability of success; that is the standard and the Court so finds and concludes.

19 Finally, Multibank claims that the Debtor does not own the Property and  
20 that Miller is not the equity security holder. The Court has previously ruled that  
21 Multibank is not correct on the ownership issue and DFG by its representations  
22 to this Court agrees that the Debtor is the record owner of the Property. Finally  
23 Multibank asserts that the amendments to the Plan require that there is a new  
24 disclosure statement and balloting. The core aspect of the Debtor’s Plan has  
25 remained essentially the same, i.e., a substantial new value/equity contribution  
26 and new loan allowing for full payment of Multibank’s secured claim, partial  
27 payment to the remaining unsecured claims, with a “new value” Plan. The actual  
28 changes are not sufficient to require further disclosure and balloting.

1 (iii) Gaughan presented her Objection at the Trial and the Objection is overruled.  
2 Ms. Miller's equity interest in the Debtor is not absolute or conclusive due to her  
3 spouse's Chapter 7 bankruptcy but Gaughan does not object to the confirmation  
4 of the Plan on the terms proposed. The Court could conclude that any interest of  
5 the Chapter 7 estate has been effectively abandoned because it is of  
6 inconsequential value, as more fully explained above.

7 (iv) MW Housing joined in Gaughan's Objection. The Objection is addressed in the  
8 same manner as Gaughan's Objection and is overruled. MW Housing did not  
9 appear at the Trial.

10 (v) The U.S. Trustee's Objection is addressed in the same manner as Gaughan's  
11 Objection and is overruled. The U.S. Trustee did not appear at the Trial.

12 H. Votes on the Plan have been accepted from all creditors and equity security  
13 holders whose acceptances are required by law, as evidenced by the Ballot Report (DE #83).  
14 Three classes of impaired claims voted to accept the Plan. The accepting classes are Classes  
15 III(c) (DFG's secured claim), III(d) (Michael Smith's secured claim), and IV(b) (general  
16 unsecured claims). Two classes of impaired claims voted to reject the Plan. The rejecting  
17 classes are Class III(a) (Multibank's secured claim), and Class IV(a) (unsecured claims with  
18 third party obligors). One class did not vote on the Plan, consisting of Class III(b), the  
19 Maricopa County Treasurer's secured claim.

20 I. After the balloting was completed, the Debtor amended the Plan and provided  
21 notice of such amendments to all interested parties in this case. With each amendment, the core  
22 concept of the Plan essentially remained the same, and the actual changes were not sufficient to  
23 require further disclosure and balloting.

24 J. The Plan has been proposed in a good faith attempt to satisfy creditor claims,  
25 including Multibank's secured claim based upon the \$5,200,000 valuation of the Property. The  
26 Plan further provides for Effective Date payment of all administrative claims and \$600,000.00  
27 to unsecured claims; each of which would otherwise go unpaid.

28 K. The Plan is feasible and confirmation is not likely to be followed by liquidation

1 or by the further reorganization of Debtor.

2 L. Each holder of a claim or interest in the Debtor has accepted the Plan or will  
3 receive or retain under the Plan property of a value, as of the Effective Date, that is not less than  
4 the amount such holder would receive or retain if Debtor were liquidated under Chapter 7 of the  
5 Bankruptcy Code on the Effective Date. With respect to the objecting claims, the secured  
6 creditor claims are being paid in full on the Effective Date, and unsecured claims are receiving  
7 \$600,000.00 that they would otherwise not receive; which is coming from Ms. Miller's new  
8 value cash infusion. Ms. Miller's contribution of new value is (1) new; (2) substantial; (3) in  
9 the form of money or money's worth; and is (4) necessary for successful reorganization.  
10 Additionally, the new value contribution provides more than reasonably equivalent value of the  
11 Debtor's equity interests.

12 M. The Plan does not unfairly discriminate, and is fair and equitable, with respect to  
13 any class of claims or interests that is impaired under the Plan and has not accepted it.

14 N. All of the Debtor's payments made or promised for services, costs, or expenses  
15 in or in connection with the cases, or in connection with the Plan and incident to the cases, have  
16 been fully disclosed and approved or, if to be fixed after confirmation of the Plan, will be  
17 subject to the approval of the Court.

18 O. The Debtor has fully disclosed the identity and affiliations of any individuals  
19 proposed to serve after confirmation of the Plan as a director, officer, or voting trustee and the  
20 nature of all compensation to be paid to such individuals. The employment of such individuals  
21 after confirmation of the Plan is equitable and consistent with the interests of creditors and  
22 equity security holders, and with public policy.

23 P. All fees payable under 28 U.S.C. § 1930 have been paid, and the Plan provides  
24 for the payment of any unpaid fees on the Effective Date.

25 Q. The Plan provides for the payment, on the Effective Date, of all administrative  
26 and priority claims and expenses, except as the holders of such claims and expenses may  
27 otherwise agree.

28 R. The estate is not obligated for the payment of any "retiree benefits" as that term

1 is defined in 11 U.S.C. § 1114.

2 S. The Debtor, as proponent of the Plan, has complied with the provisions of the  
3 Bankruptcy Code, and the Plan has been proposed in good faith and not by any means forbidden  
4 by law.

5 T. The principal purpose of the Plan is not the avoidance of taxes or the avoidance  
6 of the application of Section 5 of the Securities Act of 1933.

7 **BASED UPON THE FOREGOING, THE COURT MAKES THE FOLLOWING**  
8 **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

9 1. The classification of claims and interests in the Plan is proper, complies with  
10 applicable law, and satisfies the requirements of the Bankruptcy Code, including but not limited  
11 to 11 U.S.C. §§ 1122 and 1123.

12 2. The notices provided to creditors and interested parties in regard to approval of  
13 the First Amended Disclosure Statement and confirmation of the Plan satisfy the requirements  
14 of Rules 2002(b), 3017, and 3018, Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure.

15 3. All members of classes designated as unimpaired in the Plan are conclusively  
16 presumed to have accepted the Plan, pursuant to 11 U.S.C. § 1126(f).

17 4. The Plan complies with the applicable requirements of the Bankruptcy Code  
18 including, without limitation, 11 U.S.C. §§ 1122, 1123, and 1129.

19 5. The Plan complies with the applicable provisions of the Bankruptcy Code.  
20 Accordingly, the Plan complies with the requirements of 11 U.S.C. §§ 1129(a)(1) and (2).

21 6. The Plan has been proposed in good faith and not by any means forbidden by  
22 law. Accordingly, the Plan complies with the requirements of 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(3).

23 7. Any payments made by the Debtor, or the reorganized Debtor, for services or for  
24 costs and expenses in or in connection with the case, or in connection with the Plan and incident  
25 to the case, have been approved by, or are subject to the approval of, the Court as reasonable.  
26 Accordingly, the Plan complies with the requirements of 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(4).

27 8. The Debtor has provided adequate disclosure pursuant to 11 U.S.C. §§  
28 1129(a)(5)(A) and (B).



1           9.       The Plan does not require any rate change for which approval from a government  
2 regulatory commission is necessary. Accordingly, the Plan complies with the requirements of  
3 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(6).

4           10.       Three impaired classes of claims have accepted the Plan and the “cramdown”  
5 requirements of 11 U.S.C. § 1129(b) have been satisfied. The Plan does not discriminate  
6 unfairly against, and is fair and equitable as to, each non-accepting impaired class.  
7 Additionally, each class of claims will receive or retain at least what they would if the Debtor  
8 were liquidated in a Chapter 7 bankruptcy. Accordingly, the Plan complies with the  
9 requirements of 11 U.S.C. §§ 1129(a)(7)(A)(i) and (ii) and (b)(1) and (2).

10           11.       No secured creditor has elected to be treated as a fully secured creditor pursuant  
11 to Section 1111(b)(2) of the Bankruptcy Code. Accordingly, 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(7)(B) is not  
12 applicable in this case.

13           12.       The Debtor has no claims specified in 11 U.S.C. § 507(a)(2) or (a)(3).  
14 Accordingly, the Plan complies with the requirements of 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(9)(A).

15           13.       The Debtor has no claims of the kind specified in 11 U.S.C. §§ 507(a)(1), (4),  
16 (5), (6), or (7). Accordingly, 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(9)(B) is not applicable in this case.

17           14.       The Debtor has no claims specified in 11 U.S.C. § 507(a)(8). Accordingly, the  
18 Plan complies with the requirements of 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(9)(C).

19           15.       The Debtor has no claims of the kind specified in Code Section 1129(a)(9)(D).  
20 Accordingly, 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(9)(D) is not applicable in this case.

21           16.       Three classes of creditors which are impaired under the Plan have accepted the  
22 Plan (determined without including any acceptance of the Plan by any insider). Accordingly,  
23 the Plan complies with the requirements of 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(10).

24           17.       Confirmation of the Plan is not likely to be followed by a liquidation or the need  
25 for further financial reorganization of the reorganized Debtor. Accordingly, the Plan complies  
26 with the requirements of 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(11).

27           18.       The Plan provides for the payment of all bankruptcy fees payable under 28  
28 U.S.C. § 1930 on the effective date of the Plan. Accordingly, the Plan complies with the

1 requirements of 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(12). The Debtor does not provide and has not provided  
2 retiree benefits as that term is defined in 11 U.S.C. § 1114. Accordingly, 11 U.S.C. §  
3 1129(a)(13) is not applicable in this case.

4 19. The Debtor is not required to pay any domestic support obligation. Accordingly,  
5 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(14) is not applicable in this case.

6 20. The Debtor is not an individual. Accordingly, 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(15) is not  
7 applicable in this case.

8 21. The Plan does not contemplate any transfer of property other than payments to  
9 creditors. Accordingly, the Plan complies with the requirements of 11 U.S.C. § 1129(a)(16).

10 22. Where exclusivity expired in this case more than one year ago, where the  
11 Property has been offered for sale throughout the course of the bankruptcy case, and where no  
12 alternative Plan has been forthcoming, the Plan meets the applicable requirements of  
13 Bankruptcy Code § 1129(b). Moreover, Ms. Miller's cash infusion satisfies the new value  
14 corollary.

15 **DATED AND SIGNED ABOVE.**

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