



**The Corporation for New Milford Economic Development
Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes, October 22, 2020
Via gotomeeting.com**

Attending:

Oley Carpp
Mir Ahmed
Pete Bass
Adele Conner
Denise DelMastro
Liba Furhman
Kristen Gizzi
Patricia Hembrook
Raymond Kostka
Paul Murphy
Michael Nahom
Eli Noam

Ray Oneglia
Ivan Shiffman
Daniel Stra
Buck Whiteway

Absent:

Dean Barile
Christy Martin
Kerry Parker
Regal Patel
Adam Richichi
William Taylor

Tony Vengrove
Frank Wargo

Also Attending:

Karen Pollard,
*Economic Development
Director*

1. Call to Order

Chairman Oley Carpp called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes of July 23, 2020

Denise DelMastro moved to approve the minutes of July 23, 2020. The motion was seconded by Eli Noam and were unanimously approved.

3. Chairman's Report

Oley reported that the Sneezeguard program was very successful. It cost less than anticipated and brought good will and good public relations with the small businesses in our community.

The Development Committee has been formalized with thanks to Ray Oneglia and Kristin Gizzi. Oley is still waiting to hear from another Board member and has asked Ivan Shiffman to be the executive liaison for that committee.

Paul Murphy and Mir Ahmed have volunteered for the Sewer Incentive Committee. The program has yet to be formalized.

The Indeed employment event was successful and there has been great work done to date on the Economic Development website

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ray Kostka reported that balances in the accounts are as follows:

- i) Cash - \$21,605.13
- ii) Loan Account – \$28,906.80
- iii) Façade Account – 6,079.31

5. Economic Development Director Report

Karen Pollard reported that the past three months have probably been the busiest for economic development ever.

The Indeed hiring event included 14 business. Approximately 200 area residents participated. New Milford's unemployment rate continues to go down. There are concerns about the upcoming winter months. Funding programs have been expended and there have not been major new programs. This week the state did announce a small \$5,000 grant program for small businesses, non-profits and home-based businesses.

Phase 3 allows for continuing outdoor dining and display. The Mayor issued executive orders allowing for those to be handled with administrative approval.

Karen said she wrote the introduction to the latest issue of "New Milford Living" with an appeal to spend a portion of holiday dollars in New Milford.

The Small Business Development Center and the Connecticut Main Street Center have continuously been offering online webinars for free. Karen's office has also offered several programs, to help businesses pivot their focus to new customers and to offer their existing businesses, or business services, and products in new ways, including online presence.

There is a lot of economic activity and numerous business which have opened or will be opening. There are lots of applications and the Town's development team has begun meeting in person.

Karen attended a virtual conference with site selectors and met one-on-one with 10 international selectors. New Milford's information was well received. Karen felt that some will be visiting in the coming months. They have active projects with large Fortune 500 companies looking to either distribute their manufacturing or office capabilities, or to expand certain product lines in the United States, and, in particular the northeast.

Most of them are looking for less than 100,000 square feet, but in a community of our size, that is a substantial amount of space for new construction during this environment.

Most pre-Covid projects have come back online.

The Bank Street group funded an outdoor dining competition and several suggestions were received, however none were allowed by state or resolved the problem of encouraging people to eat outdoors.

It was thought that restaurants could put heaters inside tents. As of late last week the state fire marshal no longer allows heaters in tents. This adds to the challenge.

Karen said that she has put out word that she is available to help business and has been taken up on her offer. She has developed a fairly regular e-mail blast system and shares information on Facebook and other social media.

6. Old Business

a. Century Brass

Oley said he had spoken in past meetings about having an industrial park at Century Brass. There were a number of ideas discussed, including the moving of the Public Works Department to that location. Karen did a pro forma for the property and it became evident that it would not be in the Corporation's best interest to pursue a project there, as there will not be enough land left for a viable industrial park.

Oley said he is talking with Karen as where next to set focus. He said she has some ideas and will meet with development committee.

b. Administrative Assistant

There have been five replies to the job posting. Adele Conner, Denise and Karen are the interview committee and will be meeting with candidates.

7. Mayor's Update

Mayor Pete Bass said that the Town is seeing minimal numbers regarding Covid cases, especially compared with other municipalities like Danbury and Torrington. The Health Department continues to do contact tracing.

Town Hall is open by appointment only.

The infrastructure program is winding down for the winter. The goal is to touch every road between every six to eight years.

Library construction continues. They are working on the foundation in the middle, where a second floor will be added and also in the elevator area. They are also working on the HVAC system.

Century Brass is still in litigation. The courts are backlogged due to Covid. The town is working on removing the steel off the site and developing plans to move the Department of Public Works to the site, as well as a solar farm to pay off the anticipated bonding for the project. This will open up the riverfront for economic development.

The Mayor said that the Town is mandated by the state to create a Covid Recovery Committee. Dr. Jeremy Levin, a New Milford resident and chairman of Ovid Pharmaceuticals will be chairing the group.

The goal is to develop a long-term strategy, for success, not only for economic development, but also assistance for those in need. This is going to be a six-to-nine-month process.

8. New Business

a. FY 20-21 Budget

There was a brief review of the proposed budget for the coming year. Ray Kostka said the main task was to separate operational line items from the program line items to present an accurate picture.

b. Changes to Loan & Grant Programs

Oley said that the corporation has been doing quite a few facade grants and this is where the Corporation is making the most impact. It is being proposed to reposition our loan funds to the facade grant program, to expand the geographic geography of the program to the entire town, and to restrict it only to businesses.

After discussion, Liba Furhman moved to amend the Facade and Loan Program to incorporate the entire town in the program, to restrict the program to businesses, and to transfer \$10,000 from the loan program to the facade program. The motion was seconded by Buck Whiteway and passed unanimously.

c. CRA Outreach

Ray Kostka reported that he and Karen are working on an outreach program to area banks asking them to invest in the Corporation with CRA funds.

d. Awards Program

There was a discussion about holding the “Best of the Best” Awards program again in January. Nominations would come from the business community. Details will be finalized.

9. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Paul Murphy. The motion was seconded by Buck and was carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Liba Furhman
Secretary