



The Corporation for New Milford Economic Development
Board of Directors
Regular Meeting Minutes
E. Paul Martin Room, Town Hall, New Milford, CT
Thursday, July 24, 2024

Attending:

Mir Ahmed
Geoff Ball
Pete Bass
Oley Carpp, Chair
Adele Connor
Liba Furhman
Kristin Gizzi
Ray Kostka, via Zoom
Paul Murphy
Mike Nahom
Eli Noam
Ray Oneglia
Bob Reiling

Ivan Shiffman
Tony Vengrove
Buck Whiteway

Absent:

Dean Barille
Holly Hollander
Janet Parlato

Also Attending:

Stephanie Barksdale, Executive Assistant

1. Call to Order

Chairman Oley Carpp called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes of April 25, 2024

Oley said that the minutes were not available and would be presented at the next Board of Directors' meeting.

3. Chairman's Report

June 30 is the end of fiscal year. Our Façade Account is low and hopefully the September 12, Best of the Best event will help us to raise funds. It has been a good year for programs. The Pop-Up initiative and Brownfield Assessment grant program are moving ahead and we are waiting to sign contract. ARP grants have been awarded. There are just a couple still available.

4. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Ray Kostka reported balances in the accounts as follows:

1. Cash on hand: \$29,018.13
2. Micro loan Account: \$2,591.20
3. Façade Account: \$26.52
4. Fiduciary Balances:
 - Riverfest: -\$2,682.05
 - Pop Up: \$17,561.55

Ray said they are working on cleaning up the financial statement so as to be able to share a profit and loss for FYE June 30 at the October meeting. Savings Bank of Danbury Foundation has awarded another \$2,500 grant for the Corporation. He said the Bank's Foundation has just opened a new round of funding from the Foundation and the Corporation is encouraged to apply.

Eli Noam moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. The motion was seconded by Buck Whiteway and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Mayor's Report on the Community

Mayor Bass said:

- The State Unemployment rate is 2.8%. In New Milford, it is 2.5%.
- The Economic Development Website is being finalized by Mayor Furhman.
- The Economic Development Commission is reaching out to internet banks for CRA money.
- The Town, via ARP funds, has a Community Home Improvement Program (CHIP) program, offering 0% interest loans, which makes it possible for low and moderate income home-owners to make repairs and renovations to their homes. This also helps keep up the value of properties in neighborhoods.
- NewMilfordNow.org, the town's information site for events and information for residents and tourist, is promoting an ice-cream crawl.
- The Town is working on a capital plan, which includes the two buildings given to the Town by the Board of Education – the East Street School and Pettibone School. An RFP will be put out for a consultant to advise the Town on potential uses of the buildings, market information, and costs.
 - The Mayor said one use, which he personally supports, is a cultural center. He pointed to the example of the Ridgefield Playhouse, which is an old school owned by the town, being used as a theater venue, and also rental space to businesses. It is a major economic driver for the Town.
 - The ultimate decision will be up to the taxpayers.
- The Town is photo-documenting the repairs to the High School roof.
- The recent Artisan Festival has over 90 vendors.
 - Upcoming events include Vintage Mania, Irish Road Bowling, the Lion's Carnival, Irish Fest, Apple Fest and River Fest.
- The Mayor said that the Town is looking at sites for sports field development.
- The Med-Instill property has been purchased by a hedge fund, which has hired a broker to research potential uses.

6. Plan of Action and Committee Reports

a. Best of the Best

Liba said the event is scheduled for September 12. She has met with Kerry Gold, of New Milford Hospital/Nuvance, who will be catering the event. It will be hearty hors d'oeuvres and an open bar. Adele Conner and Mike Nahom will be working to solicit sponsors and advertisers.

The website is set up, tickets will be going on sale. DECD Commissioner Dan O'Keefe will be the keynote speaker. A printed invitation will be mailed shortly. After discussion, it was decided that the general admission ticket price would be \$95.

A committee would be set up to review nominations and choose the Award winners.

b. Pop Up New Milford

Tony said the end of June marked the end of the original pop-up concept. He is working on building a mentorship program and developing a pool of ten people who can provide mentorship skills to the business community.

Tony said that many of the local retailers are concerned about sales for the year, as they had an “ugly” first quarter. He is working to find an inspirational speaker and to build a small retail business event around that, with conversation about Main Street USA business insights and best practices.

Geoff Ball said that we should clarify what Union Saving’s Bank \$10,000 donation was for. Tony said he felt it was earmarked for mentorship.

Tony is also reaching out to SCORE to ensure that we are not duplicating their work.

c. Development Committee

Oley said they are waiting for the Brownfield Assessment Grant paperwork to be countersigned by the state. It took our attorneys three weeks to review the documents.

A draft contract has been received from Fuss & O’Neil (F&O), the selected consultant. There were some pen and ink changes to the budget to reconcile it to the grant parameters. It is now in the attorney’s hands for review.

Once signed, F&O can begin their review of the properties past history and documents to complete a Phase I. Phase II is drilling test holes, which needs to happen before the first frost. The Assessment and Final Report will be completed by March of 2025. The end goal is to determine what environmental concerns exist on the properties, what type of remediation is necessary, the remediation costs, and what uses would be allowed so the Riverfront Revitalization Committee incorporate these findings into its planning process.

7. New Business

1. Oley said the Mayor mentioned the prospect of an RFP for East Street and Pettibone schools. he would like authorization from the Board to allow the Corporation to bid on the RFP, should it be put out for bid before the next Board meeting.

He said, the Corporation could provide the services to perform the activities associated with preparing for a November referendum, a needs assessment, assembling an advisory committee, soliciting proposals or LOI’s from developers and presenting a recommended option to the Town Council.

He said that as Town's designated development agency, the Corporation should be doing this pro forma. But it doesn't have the funding capacity to do the work.

Oley wants the Corporation to be prepared in anticipation of the RFP's release. Liba said she felt that there was plenty of time. Buck said there are several options for uses for the building and it would take a marketing campaign prior to a referendum to inform voters.

After discussion, the Board decided to wait and see how the process unfolds. A special Board Meeting could be called if needed.

2. Attorney's fees have been significant. The first bill is just under \$3,000. We are not getting reimbursed for that from the grant. I don't know what the second bill will be. Our consultant, Dale Kroop, is requesting that the state allow these costs to be reimbursed from the grant. We may have to put out an RFP for legal services.

Mike Nahom moved to authorize the Chairman to issue an RFP for legal services, if needed. The motion was seconded by Bob Reiling. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Adjournment

Buck moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 pm. Geoff seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liba H. Furhman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Liba H. Furhman, Secretary