ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 5:00pm

Meeting Room 3-1, City Hall, 111 N. Main Street & on Zoom

Present: Mayor Zoppo-Sassu, Chair; Howard Schmelder; Vice Chair, Council Member Susan Tyler, and Commissioners David Mills, Marvin (Mickey) Goldwasser, Tom Hick, Louise Provenzano, LaQuita Kearney-Gonzalez, and Jason Paul Sirko

Absent: None

ECD Staff: Justin Malley - Executive Director, and Dr. Dawn Leger - Grants Administrator

Guests: Charlie Talmadge, President of Development Planning Solutions
Gino Carrier, President of Carrier Construction, Inc.

I. Call to Order

The mayor called the meeting to order at 5:02pm and led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Public Participation

The mayor recognized Charlie Talmadge to speak for Public Participation. Mr. Talmadge outlined the following updates for the various Carrier Construction projects in the city:

<u>894 Middle Street</u> – The site plan approval was received and the logistics for the closing are being finalized. Carrier has a goal to close on, or before, March 11, 2026. Mr. Talmadge thanked Mayor Zoppo-Sassu and ECD Director, Justin Malley for their impressive support on this project, most recently regarding the site plan approval. Construction on Phase I is weather dependent.

<u>Phase II of Centre Square</u> – The building was released to the realtor on March 1, 2026, and eight leases have since been secured. The temporary Certificate of Occupancy (COI) is expected March 15th, with an anticipated move in date of April 1st for the first round of tenants. The next COI will come the end of April, beginning of May, for the residential portion of the project to be completed. The ice cream parlor and barbershop expect to open in June, with the pizza restaurant and hair salon in July, and that will complete Centre Square Village. There is a total of 104 residential units, 52 in each building.

Funck Building – Weather conditions have delayed some of the project work but exterior construction is expected to resume this week. Permits are expected in the next 30 days with a planned completion by the end of 2026. For the last two years, the first floor has been listed for retail lease space with no interest shown. Carrier is moving forward developing their own retail mail center as a complementary use of the space.

The Eagle Federal Building – The schematic design for a 25-bed elderly care facility is in progress with exterior improvements starting in the next several months. The level of elderly care was defined as a little higher than assisted living but not a full level nursing home. This project will be staggered with the completion of the other properties.

233 Main Street -- There are some state regulations to work through while ramping up the 24 residential units in this space across from the Funck and Eagle building.

380 Main Street – This lot is currently zoned as a single-family lot. A zone change is being requested to allow for a multi-family, six-unit development. A previous request for this zone change was made in 2017/2018, but was not awarded.

The property at the bottom of Haviland Street will be moving forward with 11 townhomes. In reply to the mayor's question raised on behalf of some residents, the intention regarding the fall is that it would be salvaged or repurposed.

The demolition permit for the Chic Miller property has been issued. The current delay is the snow. Temporary fencing is expected to go up soon, and all the hazardous material abatement is completed. An additional update will be provided at the April ECD Board Meeting.

Discussion followed, including appreciation from the developers for the city's support, and the mayor's offer for additional support as needed.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of the February 6, 2026 Regular Meeting

The mayor called for a motion approving the Minutes of the February 6, 2026 meeting. The motion to approve was made by Vice Chair Schmelder and seconded by Commissioner Mills. The mayor noted the need for a correction to the spelling of her name on page five. There were no additional changes or edits noted. All voted in favor of accepting the Minutes with the one correction, and the Minutes were accepted into the record.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser and was seconded by Vice Chair Schmelder. All were in favor and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

V. New Business

A. Downtown Update

Justin Malley reviewed a potential change to the N. Main Street streetscape to provide more parking which is needed now, and for the new retail businesses set to lease space in the second Centre Square building. This plan will add nineteen new parking spaces, and the existing materials will be repurposed within the city. The paving will be moved to the fall 2026 schedule.

Visitors to Downtown are encouraged to use the Hope Street parking garage and the Wheeler Health lot after business hours. Discussion followed, including the postal worker's concerns with their current parking options and issues they experienced after the new garage was opened. The mayor is working closely with the postmaster to address their concerns and needs which include accommodating a new fleet of larger postal vehicles.

The mayor also shared with the Board about working across city departments to permit overnight parking arrangements for the tenants and businesses at the new lot on South Street. Additionally, revitalization is coming to that area via Hearthstone Holdings run by property owner, Hilary Stoudt.

The mayor reported being in conversation with the owner of the former West End Athletic Club building. The roof has been repaired but tarps are still present. A report confirming the presence, or not, of mold, or the type of mold present from water intrusion is pending from the State Health District.

Justin Malley reported that two proposals were received for the 1.35-acre Centre Square lot. Those will be provided to the Downtown Committee for review, and a meeting will be scheduled for that discussion and developer interviews. The

Sessions Building proposals are also in process with the Downtown Committee and the city's consultants for the project.

Also noted was that the grant for the Centre Square Pocket Park was pulled for this current cycle. That area is needed for construction staging as the parcel next door is being developed. Additionally, the grant program is competitive with other projects that are shovel ready which Bristol is not. The State understood the city's decision, and the ECD will reuse and resubmit the application when appropriate.

Commissioner Mills joined the meeting at 5:32pm.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu provided the Board with issues facing the tenants in the plaza that includes 45, 59 and 81 N. Main Street. The mayor is planning to host a tenant meeting to further discuss and address their concerns. Discussion followed.

An update was provided for the fuel cell and data center set for 234 Riverside Avenue. The fuel cell project was approved by the state, and the design site needs to approved locally. The project goes before the Wetlands Commission and the site plan would follow. Discussion followed including the environmental impact on the area.

The Vice Chair asked to confirm if any grant funding was provided to Bikers Edge which has closed. Justin Malley confirmed that only state funding, not city funding, was provided to the owner for façade work on the building.

B. Incentive Budgets & Program Update

Justin Malley provided an update on the Incentives Budget balances for the Board to review. Based on the suggestion made in last month's board meeting, he has made an appeal to the Comptroller, the Board of Finance Chair, and others for an increase to the ECD Incentives Budget if, and when, there is availability in the city's budget. Discussion followed.

C. Police/Fire Training Facility

The mayor provided an update on the new Police and Fire Training Facility coming to the city, including the $3.15 million grant that Congressman Larson had submitted. Chief Hart and Officer Iurato have also been working to bring this regional training facility with potential rental and revenue opportunities to the city. Discussion followed.

D. Non-Profit Assistance and CDBG

In researching the opportunities for the ECD Board to extend funding to the city's non-profits and community agencies, Justin Malley reported that the city's charter clearly limits the ECD Board to economic development. The community development side is limited to the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program which is federally funded. With that in mind, the ECD Department doesn't have the authority to step outside of the CDBG aspect for non-profit items. Discussion followed.

E. BOF Transfer Request

The mayor called for the following motion regarding the request for a Board of Finance (BOF) Transfer Request:

Motion to transfer $7,500 from ECD "Advertising" to ECD "Professional Fees" to fund Goman & York assistance with Requests for Proposals for redevelopment of the "Sessions" building and development of the final Centre Square development parcel, and to forward this request to the Board of Finance for action.

The motion was read by Vice Chair Schmelder and was seconded by Commissioner Mills. There was no additional discussion. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

F. NAA Allocation Extension

The mayor requested Vice Chair Schmelder read the motion for this item. For the record, the mayor abstained from the vote as she is a volunteer at the Historical Society which this item is in reference to.

The Vice Chair read the motion as follows:

Motion to approve extension of the project period for the Neighborhood Assistance Act allocation for the Bristol Historical Society, from September 30, 2024 to September 30, 2025, with an audit due to the City by March 30, 2026, and to forward this request to the City Council for action.

Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. All were in favor and the motion was accepted into the record.

G. Conflict of Interest Declaration

Dr. Dawn Leger confirmed that all the Commissioners have submitted the required Conflict of Interest form. She then read the following required Conflict of Interest Declaration for the record:

Conflict of Interest Declaration for CDBG Year 52 *March 5, 2026*

In accordance with HUD regulations concerning Conflicts of Interest, there is one individual who has submitted a statement concerning a Conflict of Interest with an applicant for CDBG funding.

Councilwoman Susan Tyler presently serves on the Board of Directors of St. Vincent De Paul Mission, and she has been advised to recuse herself from any votes that directly involve the approval of funding to that agency by the Economic and Community Development Board, for which she is the City Council liaison, and votes by the City Council itself. She does not receive any remuneration for her service on the St. Vincent DePaul Board of Directors.

With this public notice of a Conflict of Interest, the ECD has satisfied the requirements of HUD Regulations 24 CFR Ch. V, 570.611.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

There was no New Business by Commissioners.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

There as no Old Business by Commissioners.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Downtown Committee Report

Commissioner Goldwasser reported to the Board regarding the Sessions Building developer interviews held February 26, 2026. The Committee met with four developers and are moving forward with their choices into the next stage of the process.

B. Policy Committee Report

Vice Chair Schmelder reported to the Board regarding the first CDBG Public Hearing held for the new grant year. He noted that two applicants weren’t present at the hearing, but one did email the following day explaining their absence. The Policy Committee will have recommendations to present to the full ECD Board after their next policy meeting.

C. City Council Member Report

City Council Member Tyler brought the following items to the Board based on conversations she's had with area businesses. Discussion on each of these items followed.

- Communication about road closures and/or parade routes for the annual Mum Festival

  The mayor recommended the ECD Director and the head of other affected departments attend the Event Coordination Meetings for the large-scale events. This would be a way to identify, and address, more nuanced impacts of these events on the community.

  The mayor also suggested the use of Hope Street as a smaller event venue, especially for weekend use, with the Wheeler Health's after-hours parking and the Hope Street parking garage available. This could assist with limiting street closures.

- The Giamatti Center Little League needs the city's assistance with notifying and promoting the community and visitors to their event and scheduling. Signage is of particular concern.

  The Board discussed city provided signage that would welcome event visitors as well as direct them to various and participating business. The mayor will reach out the Chamber of Commerce for involvement as well, and asked the ECD Board for marketing and Welcome to Bristol ideas in support.

-A New Business Checklist was suggested as a way to more efficiently and effectively direct new business owners setting up in Bristol. Currently, the initial conversations can, and do start in any one of the city's offices.

  Justin Malley reported that the ECD Department offers a checklist as part of its brochures, but noted that the business type and location is what dictates the flow of a given checklist. For example, one business may need to consider zoning while another doesn't. The idea of a concierge was noted whereby each city department that is contacted would refer the business to the designated contact. At this time, Justin Malley recommended businesses contact him at the ECD Department to start.

IX. Adjournment

The mayor called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Commissioner Hick and seconded by City Council Member Tyler. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:23pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary