ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
MINUTES – Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 7, 2022, 5:00 P.M.
City Hall Council Chambers, City Hall

ATTENDEES: Mayor Caggiano, Council Member Panioto, Commissioners Schmelder, Cyr, Goldwasser, Hick, Mills, Rasmussen-Tuller, Zammett-(online)

ABSENT: - - -

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley, Executive Director; Dawn Nielsen, Marketing and PR Specialist; Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator; David Sgro, Housing & Project Specialist; Ray Rogozinski, Public Works Director

GUESTS: Charles Talmadge, Development Planning Solutions

I. Commissioner Schmelder called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. Public Participation – There was no public participation.

III. **Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller made a motion to accept the minutes of March 3, 2022, seconded by Commissioner Mills. All commissioners present voted in favor and the minutes were accepted.**

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Commissioner Cyr made a motion to file the Communications seconded by Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

B. Commissioner Cyr made a motion to file the Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report seconded by Commissioner Mills. All present voted in favor and the motion passed.

Mayor Caggiano joined the meeting at 5:03 pm and continued as Chair.

V. New Business

A. Centre Square Update

Charles Talmadge spoke about the request for lot line revision on Parcel 9. He explained what is needed to be done. The change will not impact anything the city wants to do. They are requesting the line to be changed 30 feet. Justin said that the public works director was in favor as long as it does not impact the parking lot design and this request needs to be made in writing. Ray Rogozinski added information. This was reviewed by Desman and they came back and said that the change does not affect the plans for the garage or Eversource electrical wiring. They will come to the Public Works meeting this month.

They are looking to have this done prior to submission of site plan. The goal is for May. Ray spoke about having a construction easement of 10 feet. Justin spoke about the retaining wall project and the potential cost. More on this next month.

B. Enterprise Zone Application – Justin said this is tabled until next month.

C. Farmers Market 2022

Dawn Nielsen distributed the layout of this year's Farmers Market. We have an agreement with Bristol Health to use their parking lot. This will allow us to grow the market and have entertainment. This will be finalized tomorrow with Bristol Health. This will hopefully be for the next 2 years. Also we will be using the parking area during construction so this is a combined agreement. We have established a relationship with the Rotary Club to assist with the running of the market. This will go to Council next week.

Commissioner Hick made a motion to approve a transfer from the Economic Development Expenses account to the Farmers Market Activities account in the amount of $5,000 and to refer to the Board of Finance for action. Commissioner Schmelder seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

D. Sessions Building Update – Budget

Justin met with the State and the Land Bank yesterday. He provided an update on the tenants. Now we have to execute the tri-party agreement with Vesta Corp which will lay out each party's obligations. We can then transfer the tax liens to the Land Bank.

Justin reviewed the budget – expenses paid and due for the next several months. The request for additional funding is tabled for one month. Hopefully, the additional request would not be needed and any additional funds needed would be specified in the tri-party agreement.

E. Project Status Updates – There were no updates

F. ARPA Update – Pending Awards and New Program

Mayor Caggiano reported that we have been approved for brownfield funding so that we can work on future projects. We are at about 20 million dollars of allocated funding with one big pending which is the Workforce Development Project which will come before the next ARPA meeting on Monday. Unfortunately, many requests have had to be denied. The ARPA committee has begun to discuss a second chance funding opportunity. Many of the projects which were denied were straight capital improvement projects and were not seen to be transformational.

Justin said he and his staff were working on the structure and marketing of this new program which would be ARPA funded and would assist in helping these businesses and some non-profits complete some of these good remaining projects. We will be leaning on UHY's team to assist and are trying to set this up in a way that is not very burdensome and is fairly streamlined.

Commissioner Goldwasser expressed his approval of this new proposed program since the ARPA sub-committees tried to be as fair as they could but were not able to approve all the projects since their criteria was mainly what was transformational, what could benefit Bristol and the most people in Bristol.

Mayor Caggiano added that this program should be for a match of the organization's investment. He and Justin discussed the potential amounts and discussed the grants could go up to $60,000 which is the same as the criteria for the Downtown Grant program.

Justin reviewed some of the larger ECD projects which were approved - $250,000 for brownfields, 5.2 million for the parking structure (Hope St.), and $150,000 for Centre Square infrastructure. The dollar amount for the new program will be further discussed at the ARPA Task Force meetings. Mayor Caggiano said that the biggest outstanding project is the Workforce Development Program which ranges from 2 to 4 million dollars with the final amount still to be decided. He reviewed the remaining figures and our obligations on how those final amounts may be allocated.

The Mayor also advised that the rejection letters did advise that the additional program was being looked at. He also emphasized that compared to some other communities, Bristol did allocate funding to businesses and non-profits as well instead of just to City infrastructure.

Commissioner Schmelder said that most of the non-profit requests were to be funded and that the Non-Profit sub-committee was just waiting for additional information from one applicant. Additionally, all the ARPA meetings were done on Zoom and available to the public. They did a lot of work and it was not an easy process.

Commissioner Goldwasser said that there is one project which will be coming back to the Business sub-committee on Monday and the final allocation will be determined.

Mayor Caggiano said that the City Council will be officially making their approvals on Tuesday.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Council Member Panioto inquired to Mr. Rogozinski about the square footage on the boundary line. Ray Rogozinski answered that the access roadway into the parking lot affects 4 parking spaces so approximately 200 sq. ft. of existing parking pavement area. This would go to By Carrier. The lot lines were originally developed to support future development and it was recognized that lot lines would always be adjusted. The adjustment of the property line should be fairly straight-forward. In this case we just want to be sure that with this adjustment it still supports the city's objective of building a parking garage. The adjustment would mean that the access way to our parking lot would ultimately be an easement for the city provided by By Carrier which affects 4 spots. Since this is downtown, there are no building setback lines.

Mayor Caggiano reported that Parcel 3 will be tied up during the construction. He would like suggestions on how to move this forward, potentially with an RFP/RFQ process. Commissioner Zammett asked if the city has reached out to construction companies on site to see if they wish to develop Lot 3 and Justin replied yes, but they are aware of the potential RFP/RFQ process. Ray Rogozinski said that it is prudent to go out to RFP. The city is committed for the next year and a half to use that lot but this should not impede an RFP.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Goldwasser reported that Aroma Joe's is open and is a nice addition to that site.

Commissioner Mills asked about the Boulevard School – have they make arrangements for who will be booking the acts for the auditorium? The Mayor replied that in November our city personnel can begin to make bookings. The building will be turned over around June/July.

Commissioner Hick asked if the city has closed on Shrub Rd. The Mayor said we are very close, and the funding is there. It was delayed due to the vacation of some individuals and expects it to close within the next 2 weeks. The buildings need to be demolished. There will be access to the property through Barnes Nature Center.

VIII. Any Other Business

A. City Council Member Report

There is no City Council Member Report this month.

B. StartUP Task Force Report

Commissioner Zammett was not at the last meeting. Justin Malley reported that the StartUP Task Force approved a downtown grant for Tafika Arts who returned with additional information. They added a security piece to that property.

IX. Executive Session

Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller made a motion seconded by Commissioner Cyr to go into Executive Session at 6:12 p.m.
Council Member Panioto made a motion to come out of Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

Commissioner Hick made a motion to approve an Economic Development Grant of up to $78,068 to Wireless Shop, LLC as an incentive to purchase, renovate, and relocate the business known as Wireless Shop, LLC to 164 Central Street. A total of up to $56,068 of the award is reserved as reimbursement for the purchase, renovation, and relocation of Wireless Shop, LLC to 164 Central Street, and up to $22,000 of the award is reserved for the relocation and creation of up to 22 new full-time employment positions at 164 Central Street and to forward to the Board of Finance for information. Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

Commissioner Hick made a motion to approve an Economic Development Grant of up to $82,085 to BHF Logistics, Inc. as an incentive to build its corporate headquarters and trucking terminal on Lot #2 of the Southeast Bristol Business Park. A total of up to $70,085 of the award is reserved as reimbursement for the construction of a corporate headquarters/trucking terminal and relocation of BHF Logistics to Lot #2 Business Park Drive, and up to $12,000 of the award is reserved for the relocation and creation of up to 12 new full-time employment positions at Lot #2 Business Park Drive and to forward to the Board of Finance for information. Commissioner Rasmussen-Tuller seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.

X. Adjournment

Commissioner Schmelder made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Cyr. All present voted in favor – meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Christine Cooper,
Recording Secretary