

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 1, 2025 at 5:00pm

City Council Chambers, City Hall, 111 N. Main Street and on Zoom

ATTENDEES: Mayor Caggiano, Commissioner Schmelder, Council Member Dickau (Zoom),
Commissioner Goldwasser, Hick, Mills, Provenzano, Cowdell, and Kearney-Gonzales
(Zoom)

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley - Executive Director, Dr. Dawn Leger - Grants Administrator, and Dawn Nielsen
- Marketing & Public Relations Specialist

GUESTS: Arianna Therriault –Bristol Arts & Culture Supervisor

I. Call to Order

Mayor Caggiano called the meeting to order at 5pm, and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. Introductions of the ECD Staff and Board Members followed.

II. Public Participation

Arianna Therriault, Bristol Arts & Culture Supervisor, provided a brief overview of her role within the city which encompasses arts and culture under Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services. She provided an update on Downtown Live events and planning, marketing and sponsorship opportunities, as well as upcoming shows for the current and fall season. She noted that individual donations to the theater are also welcome and can be made at the DowntownLiveCT.com site.

Ms. Therriault used the success of the 2025 Soul Session as an example of how the various events and performances encourage other art collaborations in Bristol. After attending the Soul Session, Tom Lagasse, a Bristol resident, saw the need for more art related community support. He petitioned the Arts & Culture Commission to be named the city's first Poet Laureate. Mr. Lagasse was awarded the role, and started up a monthly open mic night hosted by Creative Jam Art Co. on Riverside Avenue the last Wednesday of the month. These are well attended with a variety of musical and spoken word talent being presented.

Discussion followed including the Rockwell Park Summer Concert Series. The city is hosting a Cultural District Walk on May 13th with guests from other arts and culture districts in the state attending. Dawn Nielsen added that Bristol is one of eight Arts and Culture Districts in Connecticut, and Bristol's district was recently extended due to efforts made by Ms. Therriault.

Mayor Caggiano encouraged everyone to follow and share the Downtown Live social media posts and events. He added that the sponsorship and partnership options should also be shared along with the DowntownLiveCT.com site where people can sign up for the monthly newsletter.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of the April 3, 2025 Regular Meeting

The mayor called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 3, 2025. The motion to approve was made by Commissioner Schmelder, and was seconded by Commissioner Hick. The motion passed with three abstentions, but a quorum was still present, and the Minutes were

accepted into the record. The mayor noted for future reference that Commissioners can vote to accept the minutes of meetings they weren't present for.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Communications

B. Economic Development/Grants/Marketing Report

The mayor called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for May 1, 2025. The motion to approve was made by Commissioner Goldwasser, and was seconded by Commissioner Schmelder. The motion was approved by all, and the Consent Agenda was accepted into the record.

V. New Business

A. Marketing Update

Dawn Nielsen presented the Board with a marketing update that included the ARPA Marketing video series, the America 250 Committee as part of the national celebration of America's 250th birthday, and the well-attended Two Lights for Tomorrow commemoration of Paul Revere's ride on April 18, 2025. Information about the America 250 project can be found at BristolAllHeart.com/America250. Monthly planning meetings are held at 6:30pm the last Thursday of the month at the Bristol Historical Society. Upcoming business anniversary invitations went out to the Board.

An update on the marketing research project was also provided to the Board, along with new data from the latest census. Phase Two of this project addresses the marketing survey findings and focuses on All Heart sub-branding and a strategic marketing plan, both focused on the younger demographic. Commissioner Goldwasser emphasized that the sub-branding will not replace the existing branding, but rather complement it. The gear icon in the All Heart "B" logo is meant to be customizable. Different icons can be used in place of the gear to represent various aspects of the city, such as sports and entertainment.

B. Board of Finance Transfer Request

Mayor Caggiano entertained the following motion:

To transfer \$2,500 from ECD Conferences and Memberships to ECD Professional Fees and to transfer \$750.23 from Development Grants Centre Square to Economic Development Expenses.

Discussion followed, including encouragement to attend more conferences outside of the Bristol area in the future for networking purposes. Commissioner Goldwasser made the motion to approve, and Commissioner Schmelder seconded the motion. All were in favor and the Motion was accepted into the record.

C. Incentives Update

Justin Malley provided an update that included the Community Investment Corporation quarterly report on loans requested, granted and closed, and a chart of the city's grant fund balances.

D. Downtown Update

Justin Malley spoke about the Hope Street Municipal Parking Garage which is set to open May 20, 2025. An elevator for the garage is coming in a couple of months. Signage directs parking times and availability. The garage will be useful for evenings and weekend downtown use.

Justin Malley reported a recent discussion with the site developer for the former Dodge Village location, and the state will be removing the rock piles. The former Kenmore Cleaners location has some interest in it, but more details cannot be provided at this time.

Mayor Caggiano spoke to a couple of developments planned for the West End, including the site of the former West End Athletic Club which will be coming down in the next few months. The former Chic

Miller site at 40 West Street is waiting on one more document before the building can be knocked down. Discussion followed.

Justin Malley advised that modifications in zoning language to allow for a Downtown Forestville development have been in discussion. He then shared the slides from State Project No. 0017-0196 Route 72 Improvements Public Information Meeting. Bristol applied for, and received, a Community Investment Fund Grant for \$6.85M for the streetscape on Riverside Avenue. The Connecticut DOT is providing an additional \$12M for the project. All the property owners in the project area were sent notification of the public hearing. Additional notes on the project were provided to the Board. Construction on the Park Street side is expected at the end of the year.

E. Neighborhood Assistance Act

Commissioner Schmelder advised that the Neighborhood Assistance Act Public Hearing was held before the ECD Board Meeting and the motion that was prepared is as follows:

To approve the organizations that applied for the 2025 Neighborhood Assistance Program and refer to the City Council for approval at its May 13, 2025 meeting.

The NAA Applicants are:

- a. Bristol Boys & Girls Club*
- b. Bristol Historical Society*
- c. Family Center, D.B.A. Imagine Nation, A Museum Early Learning Center*
- d. Greater Bristol Homes Co.*
- e. Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc.*
- f. New England Carousel Museum*
- g. Nutmeg Symphony Orchestra*
- h. Prudence Crandall Center Inc. (2)*
- i. Shepard Meadows Therapeutic Riding Center*
- j. Special Olympics of Connecticut*
- k. United Way of West Central Connecticut*
- l. Veterans Strong Community Center*

Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion. Discussion followed. It was noted that Veteran Strong is partnering with an entity out of North Carolina for a sleep study program, but the organizations will remain separate entities. Special Olympics of Connecticut is moving their Corporate Headquarters to the ESPN area of Bristol.

Discussion ended and a vote was taken. All were in favor, and the Motion was accepted into the record.

VI. New Business by Commissioners

Commissioner Goldwasser asked about the outcome of the proposed ECD Budget, and was advised that the budget as submitted to the Board was approved. The mayor noted that the ECD Budget came in lean and remained that way. The budget adoption will take place on May 19, 2025.

Commissioner Mills requested mention of the Bristol Sports Hall of Fame on May 13, 2025 with sports and business icons from Bristol, including Donovan Clingan. The event will be held at the Bristol Doubletree Hotel at 7pm.

VII. Old Business by Commissioners

Council Member Dickau asked about the bakery coming to Forestville. Justin Malley advised that project is still moving forward. Signage for it is at the former San Gennaro location. Justin Malley also mentioned that an offer is expected for the former Nuchie's location also in Forestville. Mayor Caggiano added that a new bakery/American bistro is slated for the former Bristol Press location near Fork + Band.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. City Council Member Report

There was no City Council Member Report.

IX. Adjournment

Mayor Caggiano called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Schmelder made the motion to adjourn, and it was seconded by Commissioner Hick. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:15pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon Arsego
Recording Secretary