

BRISTOL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MINUTES

Monday, September 23, 2019, 5:00 P.M.  
City Council Chambers, City Hall

ATTENDEES: Mayor Zoppo-Sassu, Council Member Mills, Commissioners Cyr, Goldwasser, Hick, Lafreniere, Rivers, Schmelder

ABSENT: Commissioner Passamano

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Malley, Executive Director; Dawn Nielsen, Marketing & P.R. Specialist, Dawn Leger, Grants Administrator, Calvin Brown

GUESTS: Tim Carr, Down to Earth Consulting  
Larry Covino, Bristol Adult Ed  
Kate Carbone, Board of Ed  
Capri Brighenti, Miller Foods  
Carolyn Miller-Stevens, Miller Foods

- I. Commissioner Schmelder, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- II. Public Participation – None
- III. **Council Member Mills made a motion to accept the minutes of August 26, 2019, seconded by Commissioner Hick. All present voted in favor and the minutes were accepted.**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Goldwasser, seconded by Commissioner Rivers, to go to item IV.B. Motion passed.**

IV. B. BristolWorks!

Justin introduced Larry Covino from the Bristol Adult Education Department and spoke briefly about this program. Larry has received a grant for child care for the adult training program but transportation is still an issue. Larry spoke about the program. The closest bus stop is one mile away. In speaking to the Mayor, there are underutilized vans from Youth Services, and they have also discussed Uber usage. They can provide a \$10 gift card, one week at a time, and they can also use a van to provide transportation to another manufacturing facility. He answered questions and received suggestions regarding keeping track of funds and any liability issues.

Larry described the program and said that the graduates receive a certificate from NESMA and job placement assistance. Justin said that this program may expand to other industries.

**Commissioner Rivers made a motion to approve a motion to award an Economic Development Grant of up to \$5,000 to Bristol Adult Education to provide transportation service for *BristolWorks!* students pending review of any insurance requirements that may need to be met. Commissioner Goldwasser seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.**

C. J.H. Sessions Building Update and 894 Middle St. Update

Justin reported that four proposals have been received for the RFQ for the Sessions building. The Mayor has appointed the J.H. Sessions Task Force which will be meeting on Wednesday. Bob Passamano is on the task force and Justin and Bob will be updating the board as it progresses. Other members of the task force are representatives from Board of Finance (Marie O'Brien), representative from Planning & Zoning (Mike Massarelli), a representative from the Chamber of Commerce and the business community (Bill Mascetti), and a representative from the 10-year Capital Improvement and Strategic Planning, Tom Hislop.

Tim Carr gave the background of the 894 Middle Street project.

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu joined the meeting at 5:27 p.m. and continued as Chair.

Tim Carr described where the project stands right now. Justin said that the process they are using is more cost effective than trucking the soil off site. Mr. Carr said that on-site monitoring (wells) will have to be done for a couple of years. Justin explained that they need to decide where a building would be best located depending on where the wells will be placed. They both answered questions. The soil consolidation area can be used but has to be capped. This can be used for parking, solar panels, etc. That area is about 1.3 acres.

Dawn Leger explained that if the EPA & DEEP sign off on it, we should have no problem getting a developer. The site is appropriate for industrial/commercial use.

A. Local Tax Abatement Proposal

Justin introduced Capri Brighenti and Carolyn Miller-Stevens from Miller Foods (aka Oma's Pride). They provided background of the business and discussed their project. About 20 years ago the pet food/treats part of the business was started and they want to expand. Some of the product will be manufactured in Bristol and they will be doing e-commerce. They do a lot of second chance employment and will be hiring in Bristol and this location is on the busline – something that they do not have in Avon (their main facility). Capri explained the regulation process. They will be doing freeze-dried packaging and exporting.

There will be five weeks to get up and running. She described their needs. They use container freezers. Questions were answered. They will bring over seven people to get up and running. They have just invested in new technology and the e-commerce is growing and so they will be hiring more in future. Two of the transferees are from Bristol.

**Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to approve a motion to award up to a 5-year, 80% real property tax abatement to Miller Foods, Inc., d/b/a Oma's Pride, or its assigns, as an incentive to relocate Miller Foods/Oma's Pride distribution and associated activities to approximately 12,500 square feet at 95 Valley Street, Bristol and to forward to the City Council for action. Commissioner Cyr seconded the motion. Justin answered questions. All present voted in favor and the motion was passed.**

D. Manufacturing Technical Assistance

Mike Stimson, who presented last month, contributed some comments to the guidelines for this program. We have also received some comments from the board members. Justin answered questions raised by the board. We will stipulate how often a company may apply, we will require that taxes be up to date, and we require financial records (from one to three years, depending on the situation).

Mayor Zoppo-Sassu excused herself at 5:59 p.m. Commissioner Schmelder continued as Chair.

Justin reviewed Mr. Stimson's comments and possible adjustments to the guidelines. This is still a pilot program so changes can still be made once we see how the program progresses. Another comment was to set a cap for the amount of the grant and this would be set by company versus project. With regard to the question "can a project be started but not yet completed" – Justin said that this would only be an issue if a company was not yet aware of the initiative and had already begun their project. He asked for input and Commissioner Schmelder said he would prefer the program is undertaken at the beginning of the project. Commissioner Goldwasser agreed. Regarding auditing costs – this can be addressed if and when it comes up.

**Commissioner Goldwasser made a motion to approve the revised Manufacturing Technical Assistance Grant Program Guidelines with acceptance of the comments that have been listed. Commissioner Rivers seconded the motion, all present voted in favor and the motion passed.**

E. Downtown Updates

Justin met with Pan Am. He learned that they do not do a lot of investment in their property. If any of their property is to be fixed up, the City will have to pay for it. It would be with Pan Am's permission. This is in

reference to the railway overpass on Main St. Justin asked do we want to and how do we pay? This is something to look at. We have the funds in the Economic Development fund account. The board asked to get pricing. Justin said that Ray Rogozinski has inquired and received a cost from one bid of approximately \$50,000-\$60,000. One thought was if we could get advertising dollars. This has not been discussed. Also we do not know if there is lead paint, etc.

Justin also reported that there are many projects underway which cannot yet be discussed but he will have more detail in future. Commissioner Schmelder brought up the subject of Riverside Avenue. Justin has a meeting tomorrow at 9 a.m. with the State regarding Riverside Ave.

Commissioner Rivers reported that all the shelving is gone from the grocery store on the Boulevard and that it is completely empty. Justin reported that there is some interest in the Supernatural building.

F. State Tax Abatements

Calvin Brown reported that he is working with several companies on State Tax incentives.

- Exterior Trim Specialties
- Axis Turning
- Farmington Metal
- LAB Security Systems
- Chippens Hill Creamery, who is also eligible for the Urban Jobs program

He is also working with Justin on some small business grant projects.

V. New Business by Commissioners: There was no new business by commissioners.

VI. Old Business:

A. CDBG Program and Grants Updates

Dawn Leger reported that the CAPER was submitted on Friday. We have gone out to bid for the Consolidated Plan for 2020-2025. In her written report she has listed the organizations approved by the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services for the Neighborhood Assistance Act. Two grants have come in: Assistance to Firefighters for \$134,000 (officer training) and a small grant from Thomaston Savings Bank for the police department and their youth baseball program at Cambridge Park. There are some grant applications which are still open on which she is waiting to hear.

B. Economic Development and Marketing Update

Justin spoke about the 5-year plan. We have a proposal for the outside consultant but it is rather high.

**Commissioner Cyr made a motion to request to transfer \$15,000 from the Residential Rehab Multi account to the CDBG Professional Fees account to hire an outside consultant and to forward to the Board of Finance for action.**

Commissioner Schmelder said that we want to see their plans for other towns. Justin reported that a decision has not yet been made. We went out to bid and only received one reply. Commissioner Rivers said that this will go out to the Policy Committee for review. **All present voted in favor and the motion passed.**

Justin updated the board on Amazon. They are still hiring for the Bristol location. Justin also spoke about Café Real and parking availability.

**Commissioner Rivers made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Goldwasser, to accept the CDBG Program and Grants Update report and the Economic Development and Marketing Update report. Motion passed.**

VII. Old Business by Commissioners:

Commissioner Goldwasser thanked the City of Bristol for support of the Mum Festival.

VIII. Any Other Business

A. Marketing Committee

Dawn Nielsen thanked Mickey Goldwasser and the Exchange Club.

- There was a ribbon cutting on September 18<sup>th</sup> at Bristol Place (the apartments in the old Bingham School).
- *BristolWorks!* ads – we are branding this and starting to market the program
- Dawn meets weekly with Justin to review their marketing plans
- There are magazine ads for the Southeast Bristol Business Park and 894 Middle Street will be advertised when it is ready.

IX. Adjournment

**Council Member Mills made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:35 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hick, all present voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.**

Respectfully submitted,



Christine Cooper  
Recording Secretary