

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

July 25, 2016

## MINUTES

**Present:** George Sterling, Jason Garland, Jerry Galus, Martha Schaefer, Barbara Miller, Adam Hamilton, Cy Gregg, and Dave Smith

**Also Present:** Peter Throop, Director and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development.

Chair Sterling called the meeting to order at 7:34 and began with introductions.

**Minutes:** A motion was made/seconded (Hamilton/Gregg) to approve the Minutes of June 27, 2107 and June 29, 2017 as written with all in favor.

**Hydro-Electric Power Project Update:** Lori Barg of Contoocook Hydro, LLC was present and began by thanking the members for writing their letter of support for the River Street Hydro-Electric Dam project. (This project includes refurbishing the dam with minimal impact on the river, fish and wildlife while providing a source of local, sustainable and renewable power for the town). She noted the former Bell Factory powered the second cotton mill in New England and the first in New Hampshire, was built on River Street in 1806. She noted they were planning to be producing power (up to 700,000 kilowatts a year) by the end of the year. "I have had submitted my patents to the Patent Office and all 37 claims were accepted" she said with a smile adding "and we have received a \$173,000 grant from the New Hampshire Renewable Energy Fund for the rebuild. Ms. Barg went on to say "it will be a 100 kilowatt system and we will be putting a (electric) pole in the town right-of-way because we are not allowed to run wire up the PSNH pole." Ms. Barg went on to explain how wind power changed 40 years ago with variable wind blades so the machine would not blow apart. "I have incorporated variable speed for the hydro plant using good old-fashioned generator motors which costs less and does not involves rare earth elements" she said."

Ms. Barg reviewed the general demolition and rebuild plan for the dam. She also told the members they were working on coordinating the arrival of a crane and equipment as River Street is a narrow, one-way street. "We have signed leases fork Ellie (King) and Brenda (Berry), this will be perpetual license so we are good to go" she said.

Ms. Dietsch suggested contacting the local newspaper about the project and putting information about the project on both the EDA's and Town's websites. Chair Sterling interjected "this is a great idea and will create a real green energy scale for the rest of New Hampshire which in turn will generate a green energy scale for New England and then the rest of the country." He went on to asked "with 7200 to 8000 unused dams do you have any idea of how much energy we are flushing down the drain?" Ms. Barg replied "I don't have a specific number, but a lot." Ms. Miller asked about the obstacles in reviving these old Dams. "Lack of design, reliability and the Public Utility Regulatory Commission is the short answer. Whether you are powering a light bulb or the Hoover Dam – it takes the same amount of regulatory paperwork" she said adding "I developed my company out of that question." Ms. Miller asked "is there something the town can do to help you?" Ms. Barg replied that coordinating with the arrival of the crane and equipment with the closing of River Street would be appreciated. Mr. Throop suggested that once a deliver

schedule was in place, the next step would be to meet with the Police Chief and Public Works to coordinate the road closure.

**Work Force Development RFQ:** Mr. Throop reviewed the request for qualifications for professional services to attract work force candidates while retaining the skilled workforce that currently exists as well as develop and connect emerging young adult in the region to meaningful career opportunities. “Workforce is a big challenge, this is critical to retaining and growing our local economic base and maintaining our long-term economic vitality” he said. He also noted linking businesses with skills needs, preparing schools to create a system so students appreciate and consider local opportunities, and managing internal and external communication was critical. He noted the EDA’s data collection efforts with business meeting over the past months and keeping in step with building those relationships.

When asked about the next step Mr. Throop told the members to review the RFQ for any refinements or changes “and then we’ll get it out with a date for response.” He told the members he thought a small work group may be created to review the responses. When Mr. Galus asked about the time frame Mr. Throop replied “this should be posted within two to three weeks, then we can evaluate.” Mr. Galus then asked “is this full time or part time?” Mr. Throop replied “it is project based so we’ll be provided a list of qualifications and proposals on how to accomplish action items as well as a quote for their time and rate.” Ms. Schaefer interjected that the right candidate should be familiar and have contacts with the state and its resources. Mr. Smith added “a good example would be *New Hampshire Works*.”

Mr. Throop continued with the project goals of reducing the number of unfilled positions at local businesses, boosting the region’s image by communicating about the diversity of businesses offering a broad range of meaningful career opportunities with excellent educational and training, and attracting new venture businesses looking for a place to settle into and grow. He also reviewed specific project components and minimum qualification for the position.

Mr. Galus then asked Mr. Gregg if he was satisfied with the RFQ specifics with Mr. Gregg replying he was. “This helps, it is a lot clearer picture than we had at the last meeting” he said. Ms. Dietsch reminded the members the position was for two years, allotting \$35,000 per year. Mr. Gregg acknowledged the desired timeframe cap on resources noting “we have talked about a cap but we also need to consider what it takes to get the job done.”

A motion was made/seconded (Galus/Smith) to approve the RFQ from firms interested in providing the professional services mentioned therein with all in favor.

**EDA Employer’s Forum Update:** Mr. Galus began by noting this would be the second forum, the first of which was hosted by New Hampshire Ball Bearing. “We had about 20 people at that one” adding “and we expect between 31-35 participants at this one which will be hosted at Rivermead.” He told the members the participants represented manufacturing, education, retirement, local government, healthcare and charitable facilities and organizations. He continued by saying “we have four action items to address (soft skills issues in the workplace, retention, an education section and its relationship with employees and affordable housing). “It is slated for four hours and while at first I thought we may have a hard time filling those hours I think we now have two days’ worth of material but we will get there.” He briefly highlighted the program adding “the important thing is that we wrap it up and come away with action items. If we have nothing to do when we are done there was no reason to meet” he said. When asked what he thought attributed to the great deal of interest Mr. Galus replied “that is an excellent question, it appears as though the rise in interest is the ability to get something done. You may have heard

the phrase *let's not make it another Deja vu* where people have met, exchanged business cards and nothing happened. These people *want* to make something happen. They want to get together and work together.”

Ms. Miller interjected “I would just like to take a minute to applaud you, this has taken a lot of time and effort.”

**Proposed South Peterborough TIF District:** Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett was present and gave a brief background of the TIF Districts in town. “We have been watching South Peterborough” he said “adding the administrative staff sees an opportunity similar to what happened in West Peterborough.” Citing Union Mill renovation and Robbe Farm Road as examples he noted creation of the TIF District resulted in 2.6 million dollars in road work and traffic calming, upgrades to Teixeira Park, and installed on of sidewalks and light fixtures.

Mr. Bartlett noted Rivermead’s plans to expand their campus as well as expansion potential along Old Sharon Road, Powersbridge Road, Morison Road and Grove Street Extension and said “we would like to have a TIF put in place prior to this upcoming development.” He told the members both the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen supported the action.

A graphic was projected and Mr. Bartlett pointed out the preliminary outline of the TIF (in purple) and conservation land in green. He noted some regulation limitations with RSA 162-K “so we are in the process of tweaking the map but it is easy to identify infrastructures (bridges, roadways, passive recreation and pedestrian access for a more formal interaction with common pathways) in that area.” He noted a constraint included a limitation of percentage of assessed value for TIFs was capped at 16% “We are at 15.98%” he said with a smile adding “so we meet the requirement.” He also noted they were in the process of starting the public process with a formal direction and a formal development plan. He noted he had consulted the Town Attorney for a time frame for what needs to be done in order for the Board of Selectmen to call a Special Town Meeting to establish the TIF District. “That will be in October” he said.

When a member of the audience asked about how a TIF District works Mr. Bartlett briefly explained how additional tax dollars are captured. Chair Sterling thanked Mr. Bartlett or his explanation noting “TIFs are highly confusing and misunderstood by the general public.”

**Affordable Housing Partnership Pilot Program:** Mr. Bartlett began by saying “the need for affordable housing and workforce housing is the same thing, we need to generate an affordable workforce housing project.” He told the members he had met with Jack Dugan of Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), a company for enhancement of regional industry and business base to increase the quality of life and economic vitality of communities. He told the members “he is very proficient at finding someone else’s dollars to do projects.” He also noted involving employers, researching grant opportunities establishing special construction opportunities and land grants.

Ms. Miller asked “can you give us a definition of affordable?” Mr. Bartlett replied “I cannot give you a definition but noted a formula of pay scales and positons needed to be filled. He noted figuring in a rent or mortgage, utilities and taxes, “The number used to be 30% of the gross housing cost” he said. When asked if the project would be subsidized Mr. Bartlett replied “perhaps with grant dollars.” He went on to explain they still had to work through the cost of construction as well as who is going to manage them. “It is all part of the equation” he said.

From the audience Dennis Calcutt cautioned that subsidizing could excluded certain types of housing.

**Announcements:** Ms. Dietsch announced a Broadband meeting August 16<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 at the Waterhouse Restaurant. She also mentioned how Peterborough may interact with *EcoVision Hub*, a tristate group (New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts) with vision for sustainable economic growth and community-scale resilience to climate change. “Lastly” she said “there are two Community Conversations coming up that support economic efforts and we should be able to get some action items out of them.” She noted those dates were September 12, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. and November 14, 2017, also at 7:00 p.m. at Bass Hall.

Ms. Schaefer noted a forum organized by the Chamber of Commerce Director Sean Ryan being held August 7<sup>th</sup>. “It is a business forum to how to promote the Downtown during the construction of the Main Street Bridge” she said.

**Other Business:** Mr. Bartlett gave a brief review of the progress status of the public parking lot and walking bridge connecting Depot Square. “The drawings and landscaping are done” he said adding “and we are finalizing the selection of bridge over the Nubanusit River.” He went on to explain a unique design of post tension granite slabs for the bridge. “It is a company out of Germany and matches the price of a wooden bridge. On the technical side, it all makes sense. It will be a very unique aesthetic, far superior what was planned before” he said.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

**Next Meeting:** August 22, 2017 at 7:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant