

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

May 21, 2019

## MINUTES

**Present:** Adam Hamilton, Nate Morison, James Kelly, Jerry Galus, Chub Whitton, Corinne Chronopoulos and Karen Hatcher

**Also Present:** Peter Throop, Laura Norton and Kristin Bixby, Office of Community Development

Chair Hamilton called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. with introductions of the Board and Staff

Noting he needed to get back to his home town elections Mr. Whitton took a moment to thank Chair Hamilton. "We met at Business Support years ago" he said, "you have gone above and beyond, you are a beacon of this community and I am proud of you and glad to know you." He went on to say, "I look forward to continuing our relationship. You were instrumental in getting our young people involved and now we have Nate following in your footsteps. You are the best."

As Ms. Hatcher presented a card of thanks Mr. Galus agreed noting "Chub said in spades there is nothing else to say. This is your last meeting, it is very sad." Ms. Hatcher added "your presence, leadership and steady hand have been greatly appreciated. Thanks again on behalf of all of us."

### **Minutes:**

A motion was made/seconded (Hamilton/Whitton) to approve the Minutes of April 23, 2018 as written with all in favor.

### **Update of EDA Funds:**

Mr. Throop distributed hardcopies of the EDA Budget and the EDA Special Warrant Article Account of Expenditures and Encumbrances.

*EDA Budget:* Mr. Throop pointed out their annual \$5000.00 budget consisted of *Outside Services* \$1,000 (for web hosting, fees associated with Brochure printing and distribution); *General Supplies* \$3000.00 (for room rental fees, reimbursements, Welcome Team related expenses) and *Development* \$1000.00 (\$1200.00 encumbered for updating the Walking App).

"If all of those expenditures are realized" continued Mr. Throop "you have \$4.07 left over." Ms. Hatcher noted while budgeted, the baskets had not been reordered because of a storage issue. Mr. Throop reminded the Members Tracy Messer had been before the Board in November 2017 to inquire about funds for updating the walking app he'd developed for the town's 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration. "This Board allocated \$1200.00 but to date we have not received a proposal or contract," he said.

Mr. Throop went on to review several statistics related to the walking app that were provided by the IT Director noting the web app had 2571 views with 80% new visitors. "The IT Director suggested that these were pretty good results for this kind of app" he said, "If you want to proceed further with this project. we would need to follow up with Mr. Messer." Ms. Chronopoulos suggested with those types of statistics the page should be refreshed for repeat visitors. It was also noted the town pays the hosting fee for the application. Ms. Chronopoulos also suggested that if the EDA were to fund the update to the application that other parties be involved as well. "With its focus on history perhaps the Historical Society would be interested. Either way we need more buy in if it is to be done right," she said. "I would agree 100%," interjected Mr. Morison. Ms. Hatcher

added, “if we are going to invest, let’s *fully* invest.” She then suggested they invite Mr. Messer in to have a discussion “to at least know if he is interested in continuing and to refresh it.” “The ball is in his court” concluded Mr. Morison. Mr. Throop suggested a small group come together (Mr. Galus, Mr. Morison, Ms. Hatcher and Ms. Chronopoulos) to review any proposal Mr. Messer may submit.

*Special Warrant Article Accounting:* Mr. Throop reviewed and explained the complete accounting of funds expended and encumbered for the past two years. “With \$40895.00 spend, there is \$29105.00 remaining” he said, “it may be useful to revisit your strategic plan and develop a specific budget to assess priorities and how to reach them.”

### **Future of the EDA:**

Ms. Hatcher noted a presentation she and Ms. Bixby has created for Town Meeting (consisting of videos and slides on the results of promoting and marketing the town) “and it is not inconsequential, it is quite substantial” she said, “the investment of \$40,000 has returned a great deal to the town. We have had a good stewardship of the fund, we have done a good job and we need to keep going.” Giving a brief synopsis of Firebrand’s SWOT Analysis and Ecosystem with its Hub and Spokes (working on collaboration, interconnection and working together) Ms. Bixby noted Firebrand had been asked to submit a proposal for ongoing work but she had not heard back to date.

The Members briefly discussed EDA and Hub leadership needs, EDA membership recruitment and revisiting the EDA strategic plan. Mr. Morison noted Ms. Dennler and Chair Hamilton have retired and Ms. Dietsch’s status was unclear. Mr. Kelly noted Laura Gingras had agreed to join the Board. The Members determined Lara Shea, Jamie Connolly, and a representative from SoClean were still viable candidates. Ms. Chronopoulos interjected, “it is not just people, we should determine what skills we need and focus on and make a plan.” Mr. Morison suggested getting a small working group of EDA members together before the next meeting to review the EDA goals and the Firebrand recommendations and discuss priorities and skills. Several members indicated that they would be interested in participating.

### **Marketing Committee Updates:**

Mr. Morison encouraged a plurality consensus on marketing feedback and how to continue to work with the Hub, the Chamber of Commerce, and businesses in taking action on Firebrand’s deliverables. “I cannot stress that enough,” he said. Ms. Hatcher spoke briefly about consolidation and integration of the goals of the websites. She said, “every time someone pulls up a town page it is our public face.” Mr. Morison noted updates to the Town Website had been approved as part of the budget (just last week) and work would commence soon.

### **Opportunities with Franklin Pierce University:**

Mr. Galus distributed two handouts. The first, dated May 2, 2019 was a proposal to Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett regarding a proposal for enhanced (town) relationships with Franklin Pierce University (FPU) students and their parents as well as FPU Faculty. A second memorandum (dated May 8, 2019 and also addressed to Mr. Bartlett) listed various educational and development opportunities from first day registration and orientation and throughout the year to graduation. Mr. Galus reiterated Ms. Hatcher’s point of “our public face” and having a presence at FPU recruitment, social and athletic events.

Mr. Galus noted a huge pool of potential summer workforce opportunities as the University provides free on-campus housing to students wishing to remain in Rindge and work through the summer and scheduled breaks. “This gives them the opportunity to work local jobs without incurring housing costs” he said, “and local jobs could be posted in the campus newspaper, *The Raven*. Mr. Galus also noted the University was willing to provide advertisements and transportation for groups of students to attend activities in Peterborough (First Friday, local restaurants, Night Market, Broke, Thing in the Spring, Peek into Peterborough, the Arts Tour, museums, theater, Peterborough Players, etc.).

Mr. Galus concluded, “I think we should embrace this. I think we can find the resources that want to take advantage of this.” Ms. Hatcher agreed but suggested starting on a smaller scale. “Let’s prioritize what we can do in the short run” she said, “focusing on the low hanging fruit for now.” She also suggested that Grow, Eat, Drink Monadnock was an excellent resource to get this going. Ms. Hatcher went on to say, “I see this as a three to five-year plan with an online job bank and the food and beverage workforce starting to build this relationship by doing something smaller, doing it well and building on it.” “That is an excellent way to get started,” replied Mr. Galus, adding he and Jim Dumont were going to make a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce for some buy-in. Chair Hamilton urged the Members to take a serious look at the proposal. “We need to have a strategy and structure the conversation” said Ms. Hatcher.

Mr. Kelly asked if the (MAxT) makerspace could be tied in. Mr. Throop replied, “perhaps at some time it can, but we only have so much bandwidth right now. We need to keep it simple to begin with and build the relationship.”

In closing the meeting, Mr. Kelly asked if the current Housing Committee was still a committee of the EDA, “and if so, what is the headline on that?” Mr. Throop replied that a discussion was yet to come before the committee. “The EDA may wish to reconsider this question as it reviews its strategic plan, but for now the committee remains with the EDA and must comply with all the procedures of a subcommittee,” he said.

#### **Other Business:**

Chair Hamilton read a short statement of resignation and thanking the current and past Board members that he’s had the pleasure of working with.

**Next Meeting:** June 25, 2019 at 12:00 Noon

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton

Administrative Assistant