

ENFIELD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Special Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 18, 2022 – 5:30 PM
Enfield Room, Enfield Town Hall 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT

Call to Order

Chairman Turner called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Roll Call

Chairman Turner took the roll and present were Commissioners Gretchen Pfeifer-Hall, Mary Ann Turner, Marilyn Cressotti, Virginia Higley, Richard Stroiney and Philip Kober. Absent were Commissioners John Santanella, Kelly Davis and Steven Ragnauth.

Also present were Nelson Tereso, Director of Economic & Community Development, Kristine Koistinen, Community Development Specialist and Ellen Zoppo-Sassu, Town Manager.

Motion to table Agenda Items C, D, E, F, G, and H made by Commissioner Kober; seconded by Commissioner Higley and approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

Approval of Minutes

None

Discussion Items

a. Enfield ARPA Business Assistance Initiative

The commissioners reviewed the Small Business Grant Program Guidelines. There was discussion regarding the use of appropriate language to describe the funding. Commissioner Stroiney recommended using the term “pandemic” as opposed to “COVID-19” in order to broaden the scope for applicants. The commissioners agreed to cap the range of the funds available at \$50,000.00 per applicant in order to remain consistent with federal guidance. Mr. Tereso explained that the email submission link is not live yet and that the moving target for application submission is October 1, 2022.

The commissioners discussed the best method for application submission. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall requested bullet points be used throughout the guidelines as to keep the flow of information consistent. Commissioner Turner noted that she wants the Town staff to work with businesses on the application process as to encourage them to apply. There was lengthy discussion regarding the timeline of application process. Ms. Zoppo-Sassu noted that this will be widely publicized during September in a hope to drum up applicants. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall proposed that the application process be extended through the second week of November, leaving the window open for 45-60 days. Other commissioners were in agreement.

Eligibility requirements were reviewed. Commissioner Turner expressed concerns regarding the use of the funds for future expenditures. Commissioner Pfeifer-Hall opined that funds should not be used to reimburse past projects. Ms. Zoppo-Sassu notified commissioners that federal guidance does allow for projects to be funded so long as work occurred after March

3, 2020. Commissioner Turner noted this may be something the Town Council will debate further. Commissioner Kober opined that the Commission wants this funding to cover future expenditures not repaying debts.

The commission also discussed the eligibility requirements. Commissioner Turner requested that the word “COVID-19” be removed throughout the application. There was discussion as to what is appropriate to request for documentation. Commissioner Turner opined that full quotes not be necessary and estimates would be appropriate. The commissioners agreed to narrow the scope of community to the Enfield area only. Commissioner Turner recommended that the reporting section be revised to exclude certain follow-up requirements.

Ms. Zappu-Sasso left the meeting at 6:28pm.

Commissioners provided feedback on the latest version of the application. Commissioner Turner requested that the next draft have the complete dropdown menus for a more final review. The commissioners discussed the idea of doing a blind review of the applications in order to keep decision making fair. Commissioner Turner asked Town staff if the veteran status information is required. Ms. Koistinen made a note to review this requirement further. The commissioners reviewed the application certification and decided to remove the portion requiring applicants to provide the Town of Enfield with a full accounting of grant expenditures.

Mr. Tereso and Ms. Koistinen noted that the Grant Agreement was a newer addition to the packet and that was drafted based on language used by surrounding communities. Commissioner Turner requested several language revisions to the portion surrounding reporting and press releases. Other minor revisions were requested. Mr. Tereso noted that the contract agreement would have a full legal review before moving through the next appropriate channels.

Commissioner Turner requested that Ms. Koistinen work on final revisions as soon as possible in order to get a final draft in for Town Council approval. The Commissioners agreed to meet again within the next two weeks to review the final draft and vote on approval.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Kober; seconded by Commissioner Pfifer-Hall and approved by a vote of 6-0-0.