

Town of Barkhamsted
Economic Development Commission
Meeting Minutes
Highway Garage
December 16, 2021

Meeting called to order at 7:05 PM

Attending members: Bob Pulford, Brian Johnson, Kathy Williams, Mark Mahoney, Tim Deschenes-Desmond, Kevin Noblet, and Linda Ganem. Also present was Don Stein, First Selectman.

Review of minutes: On a motion by Tim Deschenes-Desmond, seconded by Kevin Noblet, and passed unanimously, the minutes of the October 21, 2021, Special Meeting were approved.

Motion: Tim Deschenes-Desmond was elected chairman of the EDC on a motion by Kevin Noblet, seconded by Kathy Williams and passed unanimously.

Motion: The meeting dates for 2022, which will be the 3rd Thursday of each month, were approved unanimously on a motion made by Tim Deschenes-Desmond, and seconded by Kevin Noblet.

Discussion: The rest of the meeting was dedicated to discussion items, as summarized below:

- Don Stein presented a spreadsheet of the ideas and expenditures to-date from the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, from which the town will receive \$1.066 million spread over two years. The committee reviewing these grants is composed of members of the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Finance, the Board of Education, the school superintendent and the Town Treasurer. The Board of Finance and the Board of Selectmen make the final approvals, and there has been outreach to many organizations in town. Most of the initial donations were to non-profits or to improve public health and safety.
 - Since ARPA funds can be used for broadband, the broadband committee (Don, Bob Pulford, Kevin and Brian) will start to look at the best uses of the funds and how to publicize the need with the residents

- Kevin was going to reach out to Evan Dobos who is the Town's website provider to determine where he stood on the interactive tourist map and also to figure out how to better promote the town's businesses through Discover Litchfield Hills.

- Other items that were discussed included:
 - Setting up a business forum to gain ideas for EDC initiatives , maybe including the NWCC Entrepreneurial Center and the Chamber of Commerce
 - Promoting Riverton shops and looking at it as a crafts center
 - Consider a start-up capital fund or providing assistance to those facing foreclosures or for those who have a disposable income problem. It could also be a way for people to find business services.

- Consider setting up a business hub similar to Norfolk. It could be coop business offices, allowing co-working and business services, or a Wi-Fi hub in Riverton or at the shopping center.
- Consider business or town announcements on a digital sign like many town halls do today

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Stein