

# ECONOMIC CORPORATION OF NEWPORT

Zoom

## Minutes of May 12, 2020 – Full Board

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Hunter F. Rieseberg, President; Mark A. Pitkin, Vice President; Terry Dorr, Treasurer; Richard Bates, Secretary; Donna Mahair, Paul J. Brown, Ella Casey

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Robert Collins, John Hooper, Bruce Jasper

**STAFF PRESENT:** Cody Morrison, Economic Development Coordinator

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Rieseberg called the meeting to order at 8:11 a.m.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES: December 17, 2019 -** *Motion to accept minutes from the December 17, 2019 meeting made by Mr. Brown, second by Secretary Dorr. The motion passed 7-0-1 to approve the minutes (Ms. Casey abstained).*

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** After review and discussion, *Ms. Casey moved to accept, second by Ms. Mahair. The motion passed unanimously.* Paul let everyone know that the tax returns have been completed

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR UPDATE:** The Board had a general discussion about business issues including the Town's COVID-19 response, outdoor dining, two local businesses closing, and concerns raised over Newport Gym's lack of COVID-19 safety guidelines. President Rieseberg said that he discuss this with the Town's Health Officer.

### **FUTURE INITIATIVES/PROJECTS/REPORTS:**

#### **A) INITIATIVES**

- **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN:** The Board discussed two proposals for economic development strategic planning services from Arnett Development Group and RKG Associates. Vice President Pitkin said an implementation strategy has been lacking and would be necessary in a future plan. Secretary Dorr said the ones he's seen provide a comprehensive economic analysis but lack the particular steps to carry out a plan. "You definitely want something that's actionable." Mr. Morrison pointed out that the proposal from RKG Associates had a stronger emphasis on implementation. He added that their work with the City of Rochester, New Hampshire as a good model for what Newport is looking for. *Motion by Ms. Casey to enter into a contract with Arnett Development Group, second by Ms. Mahair. The motion passed unanimously.*

- **MARKETING:** Mr. Morrison stated that the ECON Executive Committee voted to wait on marketing until the strategic plan is finished. He said we do not need to take action on this today and that the proposals were left on the board document website for quick reference. Vice President Pitkin said it did not make sense to begin a marketing campaign until we have a marketing plan through a strategic plan.
  
- **MURAL UPDATE:** Mrs. Casey says that the murals are peeling going to her office at 15 Main Street and that they've been doing a lot. President Rieseberg said that he sent an acknowledgement document to the property owner stating that they own it and ECON is ending its connection with the murals. Brian Coronis stepped up and signed the letter. The North's have been unresponsive. Nick Scalera has been refurbishing the panels. President Rieseberg has informed Nick Scalera and Brian Coronis that ECON will reimburse them for \$5,000 for rehabilitation. He added that he has spoken to 2 or 3 attorneys and ECON relinquished ownership once purchased since it was attached to the building. He sent them a letter indicating as such and that ECON would assist with renovation through reimbursement. Secretary Bates asked if our letter was enough to relinquish ownership, given the attorney's opinion. President Rieseberg said that the attorney's opinion was almost overkill as the real estate/murals became their property once the building was purchased.
  
- **MEMBER INITIATIVES:** Ms. Mahair asked if we are expanding the board. President Rieseberg said that Brendan Minnihan agreed to come on board to fill the school part. We can invite him to the next meeting. Ms. Mahair asked if we need to expand the board to get a little more diversity. Vice President Pitkin said we should have a nominating committee. Ms. Casey said we discussed Randy Wheeler at the last meeting. Mr. Morrison read the bylaws regarding total numbers of members. Secretary Bates said we should take into account the areas that we need. Ms. Mahair said that the Chamber has a nominating committee and that ECON needs to diversify. She added that the Chamber has a 75% attendance requirement. Secretary Bates said that the value of the input from the member should be taken into account when considering removing a member. Ms. Mahair said for future reference we need to approach members who have been absent in efforts to reaffirm their interest. President Rieseberg said we will follow up with that one member in question. Ms. Mahair asked if want to create a nominating committee – "Donna and Ella volunteered for that. Bruce and Cody will also be on it." President Rieseberg asked if anyone objected to a nominating committee of Bruce, Donna, Ella with Cody assisting. Donna said she will send the Chamber's form to Cody for modification. The Board supported the creation of a nominating committee. President Rieseberg brought up the information booth on the Town Common. There has been discussion about whether to repair or replace it. After some discussion, the board supported soliciting cost estimates and designs to discuss at the next meeting in support of the new information booth.

## **PROPERTIES:**

**ASH LANDFILL – TOWN OF NEWPORT LEASE:** – Mr. Morrison mentioned that Secretary Bates wanted his home address taken off of formal notification. Secretary Bates said the more pressing issue is about the insurance clause and the limits and what it described. He said the language is archaic. President Rieseberg asked what limits he would like to see. Secretary Bates spelled out the limits outlined in a previous email on the topic. President Rieseberg said if everyone agreed with the proposed limits then we will redo the lease and discuss it at the last meeting. Vice President Pitkin said we purposely said we did not put in a rent number and was confirmed by Mr. Brown. President Rieseberg said that revenue is there and the Town could pay ECON today for the lease so that revenue stream is there and reliable.

## **DISCUSSION:**

**GRANT OPPORTUNITY:** Mr. Morrison explained the park & ride project. President Rieseberg said the Town is unable to have two active NBRC grants at this time because of the Gilman Pond project. He said that we are proposing ECON be the applicant so to not miss out on a grant opportunity. He said he would like to discuss with NBRC an automatic succession plan so it returns to the Town after a set number of years. He mentioned the design is across the street from the school, therefore providing additional and safer parking for school events. Mr. Morrison gave match funding requirements. President Rieseberg said if we threw in \$5,000 - \$10,000 in match funding then that would increase the likelihood of it getting funding. He concluded by adding that the Town would manage the project. *Ms. Casey made a motion to approve up to \$10,000 of match funding for this grant, second by Vice President Pitkin. Motion passed unanimously.*

**BYLAWS:** *Secretary Bates proposed amending the bylaws to include the language proposed retroactive to the beginning of the meeting. Vice President Pitkin seconded the motion to adopt bylaws amendments as outlined by Cody effective at the onset of this meeting. Approved unanimously.*

**OTHER:** President Rieseberg asked if anyone had any other topics that they like to discuss. Secretary Bates said the only other thing that needs to be addressed is the ongoing issue of separating the two organizations. President Rieseberg said that the actual initiation has not been put on the agenda but does any member want to take action today. Vice President Pitkin said that we know we need to do it. President Rieseberg said that he would like to have a formal initiative to start taking steps. Mr. Brown asked if we want the new strategic plan to be with the new group. President Rieseberg said we shouldn't wait to develop a new corporation. He concluded by saying he wanted to pursue this with Wadleigh Starr & Peters PLLC, the same law firm we worked with last

year. *Motion to explore and engage an attorney to move to create an ECON II, if you will, by Mark. Second by Donna.*

**ADJOURN:** *The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 am.*