

Watertown Local Development Corporation

May 20, 2021

Meeting Minutes

The Watertown Local Development Corporation Board of Directors monthly meeting was held on Thursday, May 20, 2021 via ZOOM

Present – President Jeff Smith, Michael Lumbis, Steve Hunt, Charles Capone, Michael Pierce, Dave Zembiec, Melinda Gault

Staff – Donald Rutherford, CEO; Kylee McGrath, Executive Assistant

Other- Geoff Urda, City of Watertown, Planner; Lawrence Sorel, Zoo York, Executive Director; Joseph Russell, Legal Counsel; Craig Fox, Watertown Daily Times

Call to Order – Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 9:17 a.m.

Minutes – Minutes of the April 22, 2021 meeting were presented. Motion made by Ms. Gault to accept the minutes, seconded by Mr. Pierce. All in favor. Carried.

Financial Report – Mr. Capone presented the April financial statement.

Mr. Rutherford reviewed the customer loan report. Mr. Rutherford stated that the past due report is in good shape. Mr. Rutherford has reached out to Denise McLane, her loan is currently 90 days past due, she has yet to respond. The one loan is significantly past due, Fun Xcape is currently 250 days past due, the file is with the WLDC's lawyers.

Mr. Pierce made a motion to approve the April financial statements, seconded by Mr. Zembiec. All in favor. Carried.

New Business

City of Watertown Small Business Emergency Relief Program:

Mr. Rutherford reviewed the outline of the program. Mayor Smith stated that city council will vote on the Small Business Emergency Relief Program on June 21st with an estimated date to accept applications as June 25th. Mr. Hunt, Mr. Pierce, Ms. Gault and Mr. Lumbis all volunteered to be a part of the committee to review applications. Applications will be on a first come first serve basis. Once applications are reviewed by the committee they will be sent to the city of Watertown. The comptroller will then issue the checks to those that will receive the grant. It was suggested Mr. Rutherford have an email address created to receive the applications.

Riverwalk Art Project

Mr. Rutherford received a grant request for murals down at the river walk from Mr. Wessner. The Watertown DBA has formed the Downtown Art Committee to work on a project to bring art downtown. Their goal is to make downtown Watertown the cultural center of the North Country. The Riverwalk Art Project will be a mixture of professional, student and community murals in a gallery. They are looking to

raise \$100,000. Mr. Pierce made a motion to approve a \$5,000 donation for the Riverwalk Art Project contingent on the proof the remaining funds have been raised, 2nd by Mr. Lumbis.

Old Business

Thompson Park Zoo:

Mr. Sorel reviewed the uses for the working capital grant that is being requested. Since the beginning of the pandemic usage of the park has increased. The \$80,000 grant (\$40,000 for year 1 and \$40,000 for year 2) will be used to measure visitor parameters, assist with all city sponsored events and research and find other support and grant opportunities to support Thompson Park. During year 2 the visitor parameters will be measured against year 1, continue assisting with all city sponsored events, apply for grant and support sponsorships discovered in year 1 and lastly research and find other potentially multi-year support and grant opportunities to justify continuing the Thompson Park Marketing Program.

Mr. Pierce made a motion to approve a 2-year grant for Zoo New York in the amount of \$80,000, \$40,000 will be disbursed for year 1 and the remaining \$40,000 will be disbursed in year 2. 2nd by Mr. Lumbis, all in favor. Carried.

CCIP:

Mr. Rutherford had a meeting with Mr. Weir and Mr. Zembiec to discuss the usage of the rail spur at the CCIP. It was discussed the possibility of opening access to the rail spur to other entities. A common drawback for most companies is the initial investment to develop rail access. Mr. Rutherford has contacted Mr. Kris Frego to discuss the possibility. He felt that this would greatly reduce upfront cost for businesses if they were to utilize the CCIP rail spur for a fee versus developing their own rail access.

Next Meeting – The next meeting will be held on June 17, 2021 in person at the WLDC.

Adjournment – Motion was made by Mr. Pierce to adjourn the meeting at 10:23 a.m., seconded by Mr. Capone. All in favor. Carried.