

**MINUTES**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**REMOTE SPECIAL MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2020 – 4:30 PM**

**PRESENT:** Chair Steve Thomson, Vice Chair Randy Mitchell; Members Kim Gossage, Tim Jones, Marcie Kelso, Brett Kiker; Erin Schackman, Commissioner John Urban (appointed member), Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke; Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

**ABSENT:** Cindy Sikorski

This meeting was held remotely due to the social distancing requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Mecklenburg County Safer at Home Order. Committee members and staff participated in the meeting using the Zoom remote meeting platform, which allows participants to connect via audio and video for live, simultaneous communication and the public was able to view the meeting in real time. This special meeting was scheduled to discuss the committee's recommendations for use of \$300,000 in federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act funding as approved through Mecklenburg County.

Mr. Thomson called the meeting to order at 4:33 pm and declared a quorum.

The group continued to discuss possible uses of the funding to assist the business community. There had been some discussion at the previous meeting of requiring grant applicants to "have some skin in the game" by requiring the applicant to spend some of their own money in order to receive additional grant funding, and discussion on whether an applicant's prior receipt of PPP (federal Paycheck Protection Program) funds would impact their eligibility for town grants. Mr. Thomson was not in favor of the former, and for the latter, said applicants' PPP recipient status shouldn't matter as the PPP funds were for a different reason and had a different scope. By consensus the group agreed that applicants will not have to provide proof of money spent to be eligible to receive a town grant, and PPP status will not impact eligibility.

Mr. Mitchell discussed the innovation grants offered by the Charlotte Center City Partnership and suggested using that program as a model. The criteria involved adaptations and innovations businesses developed in response to the pandemic. Mr. Thomson noted this program isn't constrained in the use of funds the way the Town of Matthews will be due to the restrictions associated with the CARES Act. Ms. Kelso discussed the City of Charlotte's *Access to Capital* program being run by the Foundation for the Carolinas, which has simple criteria and a straightforward application.

Discussion ensued. Reimbursing businesses for qualifying expenses already incurred would be relatively fast and simple, and would help alleviate some of the previously-expressed concerns about eligibility. Applicants with plans on how to spend the funds in the future might need additional review and oversight. Nonprofit organizations have been excluded from many other programs staff has researched. Ms. Hawke hasn't seen any regulations that require that exclusion, but the question can be raised to Mecklenburg County staff so that they can define the application pool. Mr. Mitchell suggested including a requirement that recipients must be open to future interviews about how the money was used, as that indicates a level of accountability to show how it was used and the impact the funds had. The group discussed grant amounts. Mr. Mitchell recommended \$10,000, or perhaps less depending on the number of applicants. Mr. Urban recommended \$5,000 so more grants could be given. Mr. Jones acknowledged a cap might be necessary but cautioned against being too restrictive and leaving funds undistributed if there are fewer applicants than expected. Mr. Thomson suggested distribution in rounds – if funds were still available after the first round, adjustments could be made and a second round would open up.

Mr. Jones noted the previously-discussed suggestion of a town-wide marketing campaign, which could potentially be a better impact on the businesses than just grants to individual entities. Mr. Thomson said he believes the grant program will allow for that, since someone with the skills to build a marketing website of that nature could apply for a grant. Mr. Mitchell agreed and noted that the grants are better aligned with the restrictions inherent with CARES Act funding.

Mr. Thomson pointed out aspects of the applications from both the Charlotte Center City Partnership and Foundation for the Carolinas programs that could be used as a template for Matthews' program. He volunteered to take those, as well as the input from EDAC, and draft grant criteria for Matthews. It would include the following: nonprofit organizations would be eligible; entities that received PPP funds would be eligible; applicants would not have to have previously spent money on pandemic-related expenses to be eligible; and recipients would have to be open to follow up interviews/marketing. By consensus the group agreed. Mr. Thomson will send out a draft by Friday and the group will hold another special meeting on August 19 to review his draft in its entirety. The plan will need to be run by the Board of Commissioners before anything is submitted to the county.

Motion by Mr. Mitchell to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jones and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 5:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno  
Town Clerk