



FINANCE AND GROWTH SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING By Teleconference

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2021
4:30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: Chair Toni Moran, Mario Conjura, Steve Ferrigno, Shamim Patwa, Paul Shapiro, and Mike Switchenko

Guests: Partnership Board members Diana Pelletier and Ryan Aylesworth

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

1. Call to Order

Chair Toni Moran called the meeting to order at 4:34 pm.

2. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

3. Approval of Finance and Growth Committee Minutes from November 19, 2020

Shamim Patwa made a motion to approve the November 19, 2020 minutes. Paul Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

4. Approval of 2021 Meeting Dates

Mike Switchenko made a motion to approve the 2021 meeting dates. Mr. Shapiro seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

5. Review of DRAFT FY21-22 Budget

Cynthia van Zelm reviewed a proposed draft FY21-22 budget. She noted several items including a proposed decrease in Partnership memberships based on the past few years income; the increase in the cost of services the Town provides to the Partnership; proposed discontinuation of the Partnership's American Planning Association membership; a proposed 1.5 percent salary increase for staff; the additional costs over the last year to promote safety during COVID-19 (signage in Downtown Storrs); and a decrease in contingency to balance the budget.

The Committee discussed the issue of the decline in memberships and the idea of hiring a consultant to help with identifying sources of revenue. How does the Partnership grow its base of support outside of the Town and UConn support?



Steve Ferrigno noted focusing on the unique benefit of a town having an organization such as the Partnership to assist businesses. He suggested promoting even more the help that the Partnership provides for all businesses, not just the Downtown. Ryan Aylesworth agreed with this perspective.

Ms. Patwa reiterated interest in an event that could serve as a fundraiser.

Mr. Ferrigno also noted that members need to believe there is a value to what they receive. What are they getting that others do not have access to?

The Committee discussed the timing of hiring a consultant vis a vis the strategic planning the Partnership is planning to do related to Downtown Storrs. The consensus was that it was okay to pursue along parallel tracks.

After discussion, Ms. Patwa made a motion to authorize Ms. van Zelm to send out a Request for Qualifications/Proposals to retain a consultant to advise the Finance and Growth Committee and the Board of Directors on additional sources of revenue. Mr. Ferrigno seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Mr. Shapiro made a motion to recommend the FY21-22 budget to the Board of Directors. Mr. Switchenko seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

6. Partnership Fundraising

Partnership fundraising was addressed under the previous agenda item.

7. Update on Downtown Storrs

Ms. van Zelm said Husky Pizza, 7-11, and Webster Bank will be closing.

She said the Executive Committee will be meeting this week with the new commercial property owners on Wilbur Cross Way and Bolton Road Ext.

Ms. van Zelm said Partnership staff continues to reach out to businesses about federal and state financial resources.

She said the Partnership is looking at a new promotional campaign for the next month and beyond.

Ms. van Zelm said the staff team is also looking at how and what events can take place in 2021.

Mr. Ferrigno suggested again looking at an easy way for customers to get takeout in Downtown Storrs. The road structure can make it more difficult to pull up and do quick take out.

8. Adjourn

Mr. Shapiro made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Switchenko seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 5:56 pm.

Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.