

**CHESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2012 AT 7:30 A.M.
CHESHIRE TOWN HALL – 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET
ROOMS 207 / 209**

Commissioners Present:

Chairman David Pelletier, Robert Formica, Brian Miller and Robert Sepp

Commissioner Absent:

David Orsini and William Stanley

Staff Present:

Jerry Sitko, Economic Development Coordinator

Others Present:

Arthur Hostage, former Economic Development Commissioner; Professor Cynthia Booth Lord, Director of Quinnipiac University's Physician Assistant Program (departed at 8:15 a.m.)

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pelletier called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called.

III. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

It was determined that a quorum was present.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 19, 2012

MOTION by Mr. Miller that the minutes from the June 19, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Economic Development Commission be accepted as submitted. **SECONDED** by Mr. Formica.

VOTE: In Favor –Formica, Miller, Pelletier and Sepp
Opposed – None

The motion passed 4 – 0.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to the Economic Development Commission this month.

VII. BUSINESS

- A) Discussion with Professor Cynthia Booth Lord, Director of Quinnipiac University's Physician Assistant Program

Chairman Pelletier and Commissioners welcomed Professor Cynthia Booth Lord, Director of Quinnipiac University's Physician Assistant Program to the Economic Development Commission meeting.

Dr. Lord mentioned that many faculty and advisors from Quinnipiac University live in Cheshire, including the school's president as well as many graduate students. She also noted that a number of Cheshire High School graduates attend Quinnipiac University. Dr. Lord explained the development of Quinnipiac College into Quinnipiac University in 2000 and its classes over the last 60 years. Quinnipiac currently has a School of Health Sciences, School of Nursing, School of Medicine, School of Business, School of Communication, and School of Law. Quinnipiac University has a total of 3 campuses currently, two in Hamden and one at the former Anthem BC/BS property in North Haven.

The Physicians Assistant program started at Quinnipiac in 1993 with 3 staff members and 19 students. This past year there were 54 graduates from the program and physician assistants are predicted to have a 39% increase growth in jobs in the near future. Students come from all over the United States to attend Quinnipiac University's Physician Assistant program. This is a 27-month graduate program with only a few breaks. There is class time and clinical time throughout the 2 years of the program. Typically 85% of the graduating class will have jobs within 18 weeks of completing the program. After graduating, the Physician Assistants must also pass a national board exam to become certified and then in order to keep up their certification they must have 100 hours of continuing medical education every 2 years as well as re-take the national board test every 6 years. The average starting salary for the 2012 graduating class is around \$90,000; last year's 50 graduates are all employed and started at an average of \$86,000 per year.

Quinnipiac University is ranked number 11 in the country for their Physician Assistant program, out of 164 programs nationwide.

Quinnipiac University is very committed to its community and gives back throughout the year in all the surrounding towns / cities. Some examples are reading to youth,

promoting oral health, kidney disease screenings, migrant farmer worker health program with the University of Connecticut, Transition kids from Cheshire 18 – 21 years old,

When asked how many students are in the Health Sciences programs, Dr. Lord replied there are about 200 faculty members and well over 400 to 500 students. The School of Medicine will be opening next year with full laboratory facilities starting off with 60 students; it is expected to grow to over 150 students.

Mr. Hostage asked if Quinnipiac engages in any basic research? Dr. Lord replied there has been some very basic research done, but it will never be a research institution like Yale.

Chairman Pelletier asked what the average student comes out of the Physicians Assistant program with for financial aid debt? Dr. Lord replied that the average student comes in with \$20,000 in debt from their undergraduate studies and leave with an additional \$100,000; Medical School is about \$250,000 in debt.

Mr. Sitko asked about the direction of health care in the United States, especially on the federal level. Dr. Lord replied that unfortunately health care costs are really hurting people, it is important to get controllable diseases under control such as obesity and oral health care. Reimbursements will likely shift and go up; medications in the generic form are becoming more important to help in controlling costs.

Members thanked Dr. Lord for coming to speak to the Economic Development Commission this morning.

B) Speakers for Future Meetings

Mr. Sitko and Commissioners talked about options for companies to invite to a future Economic Development Commission meeting. It was suggested that a representative of Jake's Wayback Burgers, whose headquarters is in Cheshire, be invited to a future meeting. Mr. Sitko also suggested that Mr. Voelker, the Town Planner and Ms. Burkey, Director of the Cheshire Public Library be invited to an upcoming Economic Development Commission meeting.

C) West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Improvement Project

Chairman Pelletier reported that the West Main Street Commercial Area Streetscape Committee met last week to review the final "punch" list of items for the project. The project is almost complete, with the finish work being done by the new Stop & Shop gas station at the former Boemmels location.

D) Main Street Investment Fund Grant Program

Mr. Sitko stated that he is preparing a grant application for \$500,000 from the State of Connecticut's Main Street Investment Fund. If the funds are received, it would be used to improve the sidewalks from Grove Street on West Main Street up to Waverly Street, on the north side of West Main Street.

E) Capital Budget

Chairman Pelletier suggested an article or letter to the Editor of the Cheshire Herald regarding support for the Water Pollution Control Authority's proposed Plant expansion; the draft letter will be distributed to the members for their review and comment. The Capital Budget includes the proposed \$32,150,000 Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade, which will be on the referendum in November.

MOTION by Mr. Miller that the Economic Development Commission supports the Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrade and authorizes the drafting of a letter on behalf of the Economic Development Commission expressing it supports by Chairman Pelletier for submission to the Cheshire Herald and Cheshire Citizen newspapers. **SECONDED** by Mr. Sepp.

VOTE: In Favor –Formica, Miller, Pelletier and Sepp
Opposed – None

The motion passed 4 – 0.

F) Public Libraries and Economic Development

Mr. Sitko stated that Ms. Burkey, the Director of the Cheshire Public Library, provided the Commission with an article that discusses the impact public libraries have on small businesses. She would also be interested in talking to the Commission about the recent changes to the Cheshire Public Library and ways to connect Cheshire businesses to the Library.

G) Fitch & Moody's Credit Ratings

Mr. Sitko reported that earlier this Summer, Moody's & Fitch maintained Cheshire's excellent credit rating and noted that the reports from the rating agencies were included in this meeting's packet.

H) Plan of Conservation & Development

Mr. Sitko stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission will be working on revising the Plan of Conservation and Development for Cheshire. As such the Town Planner,

Mr. Voelker, would like to come to a future Economic Development Commission meeting to discuss the plan and gain some input on moving forward with the Plan.

I) Liaison Reports

There were no liaisons present at this meeting.

J) Coordinator's Report

Mr. Sitko reported that W/S Development was given a 1-year extension on their Planning and Zoning approvals.

Mr. Sitko reported that Alexion will be building a new facility in New Haven under Governor Malloy's First Five program. Alexion's Cheshire property has been sold back to a previous owner, Winstanley Enterprises for \$32 million.

The Ball & Socket property and potential Arts development is still being discussed and looked into by interested parties.

Jake's Wayback Burgers, headquartered in Cheshire, continues to grow and is expected to open 5 new locations in Connecticut, but still none in Cheshire.

In late June, Goodrich Corp. announced they would be laying off 62 employees in Cheshire, primarily due to the shrinking defense budget. The employees include both salaried and hourly employees, both union and non-union workers.

EDAC Technologies has purchased the former Pratt & Whitney facility on Knotter Drive for \$8.175 million, moving its 394 employees to Cheshire. They expect to add another 50 to 100 jobs in the next three years. EDAC expects to be fully operational in Cheshire in about 1 year.

Trailblazer, an outdoor sporting store, will be opening up its fourth Connecticut location in Maplecroft Plaza this Fall, in the former Rite Aid location.

Darter Specialty received some financial assistance through the State's Small Business Express program for the development, construction and launch online of a fully interactive e-commerce website and to purchase a new embroidery machine.

K) Other

The Cheshire Town Council approved in July \$112,000 of additional funding for the Linear Trail project, in addition to the \$200,000 appropriation in the 2010 Capital Budget. The Town is expecting to be reimbursed \$250,000 through a Department of Energy and Environmental Protection grant, which would mean only a \$62,100 net effect to the taxpayers. The money will be used to pay for the planning work on a portion of the Linear Trail from West Main Street to Jarvis Street, which Cheshire is

responsible for. The State will be responsible for the Cornwall Avenue to West Main Street and Jarvis Street to the Southington town line sections.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Sepp to adjourned the September 18th meeting of the Economic Development Commission at 8:55 a.m.; **SECONDED** by Mr. Miller.

VOTE: In Favor – Miller, Orsini, Pelletier and Sepp
Opposed – None

The motion passed 4 - 0.

Respectfully submitted:

Tracey M. Kozlowski
Recording Secretary