



# TOWN OF MIDDLEBURY

## Economic Development Commission

**Regular Meeting Minutes, Monday, August 22, 2022 6:30 p.m.**  
**Shepardson Community Center, Room 26**  
**(approved)**

**Present:** Chairman Terrence McAuliffe  
Commissioner David Cappelletti  
Commissioner Nicole Griffin  
Commissioner Frank Mirovsky  
Commissioner Mark Petrucci

**Also Present:**

**Absent:** Commissioner Armando Paolino

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at about 6:32 pm with roll call and pledge of allegiance.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mark Petrucci MOTIONED to approve the May 23, 2022 Regular meeting minutes and the July 11, 2022 Special meeting minutes, SECOND by David Cappelletti and unanimously voted.

### OLD BUSINESS

#### 2022 Business Survey

Chairman McAuliffe reminded commissioners that the 2022 survey was a follow-up to the similar survey conducted in 2017, with the objective of preparing a report for presentation to the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Planning and Zoning Commission, and other relevant boards as was done in 2017.

The 2017 survey was conducted by postal mail to 300 businesses selected from the list of 635 businesses provided by the Town Assessor. The 2022 survey uses both E-Mail and postal mail, with 267 surveys going out via the Survey Monkey program, and 223 surveys going out via postal mail from a list of 705 businesses.

McAuliffe said the 267 E-Mail surveys went out August 1 with a follow-up reminder August 8. On August 18 a postal mailing was done for the 197 businesses not responding to Survey Monkey.

The 223 Postal Mail surveys went out July 29, with 7 coming back as undeliverable.

In total, as of August 22, 37 total surveys were received out of the 487 sent out. McAuliffe showed an initial draft of the results thus far.

In discussion on how to improve the number of responses, commissioners agreed to each select a dozen or so important “brick and mortar” businesses they were familiar with from the list of non-respondents, and personally deliver the survey by hand. The same thing was done in 2017, with in-person follow-ups to restaurants and customer serving businesses along Middlebury Road and Straits Turnpike.

In discussion on tallying results from postal mailing, Chairman McAuliffe told David Cappelletti he'd rather not make use of his interns to transcribe the data, so that confidentially would be kept to the commission. Nicole Griffin agreed to transcribe the fifteen selection button results and the six open-ended question text to an electronic form compatible with the E-Mail survey.

### **Research on surrounding towns EDCs**

David Cappelletti said he would have the information this week and send it along. The towns wanted for the list are those surrounding Middlebury, plus Cheshire and Newtown. David Cappelletti suggested adding in some smaller towns with populations comparable to Middlebury, like Litchfield.

### **Reports**

Frank Mirovsky distributed three reports from the Yankee Institute, “Warning Signs: 2021 Update”, “What can Connecticut Learn from its Neighbors about Property Tax Limitations”, and “Connecticut's Local Government Website Report Card”.

In discussion, Nicole Griffin pointed out that the reports were also available online. Frank Mirovsky commented on each report, especially on the property tax limits of Connecticut versus New York and Massachusetts, saying the predictability of property tax increases was affecting homeowner affordability, especially of seniors. He also discussed the drastically different unfunded liabilities of Connecticut towns, with some risky investments and long-term debt, and unfunded pension liabilities.

### **Promotional Video**

Chairman McAuliffe reminded commissioners he had spent \$250 on consulting and had reserved \$500 for a deposit on videography out of the \$2,000 appropriated in the 2021-2022 EDC budget. He said he had hoped to use as much as \$1,000 from the 2022-2023 budget but worries that the fixed costs from AdvanceCT and the 2022 survey would eat into that number and leave much less. He said there might be enough funding for a video focused strictly on orientation, demographics, town attributes, and similar data.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

David Cappelletti MOTIONED to adjourn, SECOND by Nicole Griffin, and unanimously voted 7:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrence McAuliffe

Chairman—Economic Development Commission

cc. Town Clerk, Commission Members