

**HARTFORD BUSINESS REVOLVING LOAN FUND COMMITTEE/  
HARTFORD VCDP REVOLVING LOAN FUND COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes**

**September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 8:30 a.m.**

**Hartford Town Hall, Room 312**

**171 Bridge Street, White River Junction, VT**

**And via Zoom and by Conference Call**

This meeting was conducted in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law with electronic participation. The public was able to join the meeting from a computer, tablet or smartphone.

**The HBRLF/ VDCP RLF Committee is:**

Crystal Pearson (term expires 5/18/2023)

Frank Klymn (term expires 2/10/2023)

Michael Gabriele (term expires 3/8/2024)

Ryan Scelza (term expires 1/11/2024) - Chair

Jay Zanleoni (term- expires 1/11/2024)

Members attending online/by phone: Ryan Scelza - Chair, Michael Gabriele, Frank Klymn, Crystal Pearson, and Jay Zanleoni

Others present online/by phone: Erika Hoffman-Kiess, GMEDC Executive Director, Jordan Dixon-Gross, GMEDC VISTA Outreach Coordinator, and Kim Souza, Hartford Selectboard Representative

Others present in person: Mark Condon, GMEDC Executive Assistant and Lori Hirshfield, Town of Hartford Department of Planning and Development Director.

With quorum met, Committee Chair Ryan Scelza called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Ryan asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

Mark Condon introduced Jordan Dixon-Gross to the Committee. Jordan is GMEDC's new VISTA Outreach Coordinator. For the next year, Jordan will be helping GMEDC with our website, emails blasts and other forms of outreach.

**Minutes**

Crystal Pearson made a **motion** to approve the minutes from the June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 HBRLF/VCDP Committee Meeting, Jay Zanleoni seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Executive Session: Review of the Confidential Loan Summary Report for July 2022 and Updates on any Potential Loan Applications**

Crystal Pearson made a **motion** to go into Executive Session due to the proprietary nature of the information in the July 2022 Loan Summary Report and to receive an update on any potential loan applications. Jay Zanleoni seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

The Committee went into Executive Session at 8:35 a.m.

At 8:51 a.m. the meeting came out of Executive Session. No actions were taken.

### **Support for Downtown White River Junction**

Ryan said that as he is sure the entire Committee is aware, a water main break flooded the basement of the Gates Briggs Building impacting many of the downtown businesses. He asked the Committee to consider ways they can help.

Kim Souza, whose own business was affected but to a lesser degree than others such as Tuckerbox, said all the first-floor tenants would be meeting together soon. Vitale Communities has set up a page on their fundraising site and the group will be discussing the best uses of these funds including possibly marketing the downtown to draw people back. Efficiency Vermont has a program to install energy efficient refrigerators. Kim stated that it is clear that Tuckerbox is a draw to the downtown area and their being closed hurts the other businesses in the area.

Mark Condon stated that GMEDC was working with Jackie Otkay of Tuckerbox to get in an application to a Building Better Communities Grant from the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services. Those grants can provide up to \$25,000 in 1:1 matching funds for capital projects. The deadline is on Friday with the grants awarded in October, so the timing is good.

Erika Hoffman-Kiess said the GMEDC is also talking with David Briggs to see if any of the work that might need to be done on the building such as electrical upgrades may be eligible for a BGS grant.

Jay Zanleoni asked if being a Downtown Village Tax Credit District would be of any help to these businesses. Lori Hirshfield said she was the coordinator for the Town on this and had recently spoken to the program's manager about it. There is some possible new funding coming up and she will keep the Committee and GMEDC apprised of it. She said the designation is mostly a help when applying for other types of funding as it gives you a leg-up.

### **Marketing of the HBRLF & VCDP RLF**

Ryan wondered if getting the word out as to how the HBRLF could help these affected businesses could also be used in a way of greater outreach in general. Erika thought she could talk to Vital Communities about their fundraising site and possibly attaching a list of other resources for businesses that would include the HBRLF. This should all tie into the Town's new website in some way. Lori said the Town has just hired a new IT position and one of the roles will be keeping the website up to date. It was suggested that once the new person has settled in a meeting would be set up with Lori, the IT person, Mark and Jordan to go over how the Town and GMEDC's websites should interact with each other.

### **GMEDC Contract**

Ryan noted that GMEDC's current contract with the Town to help administer the HBRLF expired June 30<sup>th</sup> and went to a month-by-month basis. There had been some back and forth on the language on the new contract, but Lori thought it had been resolved. Lori and Erika will close the loop to make sure the language review is complete, and the contract executed.

### **Other Business**

Ryan said that Frank had forwarded a couple of articles over the summer regarding newly available ARPA asking if some could be used for the RLF. Mark had researched this and found that RLFs did not qualify for these funds.

Erika said that GMEDC has found that the Rescue Plan funds can be hard to use as there have been different regulations in place on them on the different levels of Federal, State and Agency.

Erika noted that in her talks with various municipalities about RLFs, many of which need assistance running them, it has been discussed as to possibly using some ARPA funds to set up the support structure on a larger State-wide basis to run them. This concept most often runs into the issue of Towns wanting to make sure their funds remain in there and not be pooled into a larger fund.

### **Adjournment**

Crystal Pearson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Frank Klymn seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m.