

**TOWN OF YARMOUTH
MINUTES OF THE SPECIALTOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

Meeting: 6-23/24
Date: October 24, 2023
Time: 6:00 PM
Place: American Legion Cabin, 196 Main Street and Remote Video Access.

This meeting began at 6:12 PM

1st Order of Business:

Roll Call of Members P = Present A = Absent T= Tardy R =Remote

R Michelle Cromarty
P Meghan Casey
R Heather Abbott
P David Craig, Chair
P Karin Orenstein
A Randall Bates
A Zoe Wolf

2nd Order of Business: To Open the Meeting to a Public Comment period.
No public comments received.

Public comment period

Item No. 34: To consult with the Economic Development Advisory Board and to act upon adoption of a “Town of Yarmouth Business Assistance and Economic Revitalization Grant Program” and to provide TIF funding, therefore.

Members of the Economic Development Advisory Board were present in person or by remote video. Scott LaFlamme and Nat Tupper explained the need to establish a Business Assistance Program in order to provide grants for local businesses and presented a draft Yarmouth Business Assistance and Economic Revitalization Grant Program for the Council’s and Board’s consideration. It was explained that the two bodies would have an opportunity to review and revise the Program with more opportunity for deliberation and creativity but there is a hurry-up incentive with a particular project that is driving the schedule.

The Council discussed capitalizing the Grant Program fund by transfer of the remaining unused balance of Covid Business Assistance Loan Funds the Council has previously placed with GPCOG (Estimated balance of \$83,000).

Motion offered by Councilor Casey, seconded by Councilor Orenstein:

Be it Ordered that the Town of Yarmouth Business Assistance and Economic Revitalization Grant Program dated October 24, 2023 pursuant to the TIF Development Programs for the Downtown, Route 1 North, and Route 1 South Districts all as presented at this meeting is hereby adopted, with a copy of said

Business Assistance and Economic Revitalization Grant Program to be set forth in full in the minutes of this meeting.

Motion Approved 5-0 on a Roll Call Vote.

Motion offered by Councilor Craig seconded by Councilor Orenstein:

Be it Ordered that the Council hereby directs and authorizes the transfer and reauthorization of all unused funds in the Yarmouth Covid Business Assistance Program placed with GPCOG to capitalize the Yarmouth Business Assistance and Economic Revitalization Grant Program and authorize the utilization thereof pursuant to the Grant Program Guidelines.

Motion approved 5-0 on a Roll Call Vote.

Town of Yarmouth Business Assistance and Economic Revitalization Grant Program

The Business Assistance and Economic Revitalization Grant Program (the "Program") will promote economic development and stimulate business opportunities through a public-private partnership that offers grants or other economic incentives for the renovation, restoration, improvement, demolition, and preservation of commercial and mixed used properties throughout Yarmouth's commercial corridors. The goals of the Program are to:

- Increase the economic vitality and encourage private investment within Yarmouth's commercial corridors.
- Enhance the appearance of the streetscape in the downtown area and along with other important commercial nodes throughout the community.
- Eliminate blight and safeguard dangerous commercial buildings in Yarmouth's commercial corridors.
- Strengthen or restore the original character of historic buildings.
- Allow for expanded commercial opportunities within the Town of Yarmouth.
- Act as a catalyst for continued investment and upkeep in commercial and mixed used properties within the Town of Yarmouth.

Program Guidelines and Eligibility

The Town of Yarmouth, using revenue generated from the community's three (3) Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF), will make funding available annually, or as needed, to support this initiative. Annual Program funding will be subject to approval by the Town Council during the normal Development Fund budgeting process, and unused funds shall not lapse at year-end unless directed by the Town Council. Grants of up to \$100,000 may be awarded by the Director or Economic Development with the approval of the Town Manager. Eligible grant recipients shall be limited to commercial properties.

Grants will be awarded on a rolling basis and available funding. Grant award decisions shall be based on written applications and may consider the amount of match, the impact on overall economic and community development goals, and whether any affordable housing units shall be maintained, improved, or created (applicable to mixed use projects only).

Each property parcel may be awarded only one grant per calendar year. Unless waived by the Economic Development Advisory Board, grant awards must not exceed 50% of project costs. Grants in excess of \$100,000 may only be awarded by specific authorization of the Economic Development Board.

The following guidelines will apply for all projects:

- The property owner must be the grant applicant. Business owners renting or leasing space are encouraged to work with their building owner to develop an application.
- Each applicant may be awarded only one grant per parcel per calendar year but may apply for any subsequent grant round.
- Commercial and mixed-use properties are eligible for grants. If program funding is utilized, the building must remain as a commercial or mixed-use property for at least three years following completion of the project. The building may be occupied or vacant.
- The project must be located within any of Yarmouth's three (3) Tax Increment Financing Districts.
- Any structural changes proposed must be under the guidance of a qualified design or engineering professional.
- A professional sign and/or awning maker must produce any signs and awnings included in the project for façade projects.
- The applicant must obtain all necessary approvals and/or permits from the Town of Yarmouth. No program funds will be issued unless and until the proposed work has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate permitting authorities including but not limited to the Code Enforcement Officer and/or the Planning Board, and, if applicable, the Historic Preservation Committee Review.
- Grants will be distributed after the work has been completed and proof of payment to the contractor or vendor for materials has been provided to the Town. If the work is completed by the building owner, only materials are eligible for funding.
- Grants will be considered voided if the work has not been completed within one year of award.

Eligible Activities

Eligible uses of Program funds are improvements to the exterior, and limited interior improvements, of existing buildings located within eligible areas, subject to review and approval. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- The repair, cleaning and/or painting of all visible surfaces of exterior walls.
- The repair of deteriorated architectural features where possible or replacement only if necessary.
- Enhanced architectural features that are consistent with historic overlay district standards.
- Americans with Disabilities Act compliance or accessibility improvements.
- Renovation of the existing facades.
- Repair or replacement of exterior doors and windows.
- Repair or replacement of awnings.
- Repair, replacement, or removal of exterior signs.
- Interior upgrades and renovations limited to code compliance, ADA access, and fire/safety systems.
- Repair or replacement of deteriorated gutters, downspouts, and rainwater leaders.
- Demolition of unsafe and/or blighted commercial buildings.
- Replacement or installation, and/or enhancement to public utilities, if made necessary by commercial or mixed-use development/redevelopment.
- Public streetscape improvements, as specified by the town's Main Street Streetscape Master Plan or Complete Streets plans. Landscaping associated with such improvements must meet all applicable standards.
- Energy and sustainability improvements which are directly associated with reducing the business/development's carbon emissions.

Ineligible Activities

Ineligible Activities Improvements/expenses that are not eligible for funding from this grant include, but are not limited to:

- New construction
- Other Interior renovations, except for energy efficiency or conservation purposes
- Purchase of property/equipment
- Roof repairs. (unless immediately integral to the exterior façade improvement)
- Surface parking lots, except for creation or improvement of shared parking facilities available for public use but limited to \$100,000 even if there are co-applicants for a project benefitting more than a single parcel.
- Building permits and related fees

Application Process

Applications and guidelines for the Program may be obtained from the Director of Economic Development's office or on the Town of Yarmouth's website. Completed applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, as funds are available. Applications will only be considered complete if the following are included:

- Full description of the project including an explanation of the specific proposed improvements as well as a proposed commencement and completion date.
- Detailed photographs of the current condition of the structure.
- A preliminary sketch of the proposed improvements is beneficial but not required.
- A cost estimate for the project.
- Proof of ownership of the property is required by the applicant. All applications will be initially reviewed for program eligibility and funding by Town staff. Eligible applications will then be forwarded to the Economic Development Director for review. Final approvals will be made by the Town Manager, unless otherwise specified above.
- The Town of Yarmouth reserves the right to accept or reject any application.

October 24, 2023

Item No. 35: To hold an Executive Session pursuant to 1 MRS Section 405 (6) (A) regarding consideration of appointment of an interim or acting Town Manager and consideration of a contract(s) for recruitment and hiring assistance.

Motion offered by Councilor Casey seconded by Councilor Orenstein to enter into Executive Session at 6:35 PM pursuant to Title 1 MRS Section 405(6)(A) to discuss the recruitment and hiring of an interim and/or new Town Manager.

Motion to enter Executive Session adopted 5-0 on a Roll Call vote.

Out of Executive Session and Adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathaniel J. Tupper
Town Manager

Note: Item #36 was postponed by consensus to another time tbd.

***Item No. 36:** To discuss Town Council workplans and priorities for upcoming months.”*