

FIFTEEN ROPE FERRY ROAD  
WATERFORD, CT 06385-2886



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**AGENDA**  
**LEGISLATION & ADMINISTRATION STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE RTM**  
**Special Meeting**  
**Monday, September 18, 2023**  
**6:00 P.M. - Waterford Town Hall**  
**Louise Appleby Room**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Public Comment**
- 5. To Consider and act upon the minutes of the September 7, 2022 meeting.**
- 6. Consideration of and possible action on items referred to committee:**
  - A. Review of Chapter 2.56 – Economic Development Commission, RTC 06/06/22**
  - B. Review of a “Public Comment Ordinance” RTC 02/06/23**
- 7. Adjournment**

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2022 SEP -9 AM 8:29

**LEGISLATION & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE  
MINUTES—SPECIAL MEETING WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2022**

Members present: Richard Muckle, Tom Dembek, Tim Fioravanti, Susan Driscoll  
Members absent: Dave Welch

- 1., 2., 3. With quorum established, meeting called to order by Chair Muckle at 5:30 p.m.
4. Public comment: Helen Kwasniewski of Quaker Hill reiterated committee assignment concerns cited in her May 9 letter that was discussed by the RTM on June 6. She suggested that the Committee on Committees should do better research before appointing individuals to determine whether they are qualified to make decisions in a committee's focus area; consider RTM member Radin's request for resumes with appointment recommendations; and confirm that appointed members would be serving the people of Waterford rather than a political party. She also expressed concern that there are too few volunteers to spread around and many committees struggle to make a quorum.
5. Consideration of previous minutes: Motion by Fioravanti, second by Muckle, to accept the minutes of the L&A Committee meeting of August 15, 2022, as presented. Voice vote: Unanimous.
6. Consideration of how RTM considers recommendations for committee assignments (RTC.06/06/22): Before committee deliberations began, Driscoll clarified that the RTM's Committee on Committees handles only selection of RTM members to the body's standing committees and that, while knowledge of a particular topic is considered, the ordinances specify that every member serve on at least one committee and sets the minimum number of seats. Discussion ensued concerning RTM appointments of citizens (i.e., not elected officials) to serve on various town boards, commissions, special committees and task forces. Topics included the tradition of recommendations submitted by the two major parties' town committees; previous terms when "nominees" would attend the RTM meeting when appointments were on the agenda and make themselves available for questions; the misconception that seats are "reserved" as D or R based on the previous members' affiliation; the difficulty of finding individuals willing and able to commit the time to serve—and from that pool, the challenge to find someone with a specific skill set/expertise for certain openings; and the value of bringing new people into the mix who are interested in learning about town issues and responsibilities and who may not be experts in an area but would be active, inquisitive participants. Members agreed that having a resume or background information about an individual seeking—or recommended for—appointment would enable members to make more informed decisions.  
  
Consensus to have Driscoll draft, for members' review at the next meeting, committee report language framing requirement that résumé/background information be provided with all recommendations submitted for RTM appointments of private citizens to boards, commissions, and special committees/task forces.
7. Adjournment: Brief discussion on tentatively scheduling next meeting during the last week in Sept./first week in October, pending confirmation of all members' availability.  
  
Motion by Fioravanti, second by Muckle, to adjourn at 6:05 p.m. Voice vote: Unanimous.

Submitted by  
Susan Driscoll (L&A)

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RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
TOWN CLERK  
2022 MAY -9 AM 11:13  
TOWN CLERK

9-May 2022

To: Waterford RTM Moderator, party leaders, unaffiliated representatives

Cc: Board of Selectmen

From: Waterford Economic Development Commission

Subject: Statement Concerning Economic Development Commission's Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Budget

Waterford Economic Development Commission (EDC) membership has appreciated the town's focus on economic development. Several current EDC members were appointed by First Selectman Brule in an effort to bring new voices to the Commission. A significant portion of the American Rescue Plan funds were earmarked for EDC programs. We see a developing Waterford economy: vacant storefronts filled, new housing under construction. But we regret that EDC has played no material role in Waterford's economic condition.

Upon instantiation of the current EDC membership in March 2021, members first focused on understanding the enabling legislation in order to find ways to be effective within its significant constraints. EDC is enabled by State Statute, "for the promotion and development of economic resources" to:

- Conduct research into economic conditions and trends,
- Make recommendations regarding action to improve the economic condition,
- Coordinate the activities of, and cooperate with, unofficial bodies organized to promote economic development,
- Advertise and distribute [media] which will further its purposes, and
- Annually prepare a report of activities and recommendations for improving economic conditions and development.

Upon codifying its charter around this understanding, EDC conducted research into economic development trends relative to Waterford's condition and recommended an economic gardening approach. EDC made policy recommendations regarding actions on cannabis and clean energy to improve the economic condition. EDC attempted to coordinate activities to catalyze new-business formation and to fund capital improvements to existing businesses, but those programs were canceled. Finally, EDC prepared a year-end report of activities and recommendations for improving economic conditions and development, in which the central thesis was, **"there is a lack of a cohesive economic development strategy."**

EDC members feel it is time to state that *it's not working*. Volunteering time for no results isn't worthwhile for EDC members. Investing staff resources in EDC incurs opportunity cost. And most importantly, we acknowledge that, given this context, committing increased funds to EDC might be perceived as a poor allocation of taxpayers' money.

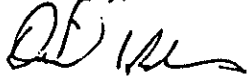
In order to forge an effective path forward, **EDC recommends that the Commission temporarily pause regular meetings**, following this week's May 2022 meeting. We make this recommendation not because we no longer believe in Waterford economic development, but rather because we believe that the current incarnation of EDC has been so wholly ineffective, for so long, that a clean slate presents an opportunity to reimagine, rather than revise.

We recommend that RTM form an **Ad Hoc Economic Strategy Task Force**, for a term of six months, consisting of three to five residents plus First Selectman Brule and Planning Director Piersall. This working group would take on a singular deliverable of co-creating—*with the public*—a Waterford economic development strategy that works for our community. All current EDC members offer to participate on this Task Force, or in other capacities advising Town leadership on economic opportunities.

At the conclusion of the strategy work, **we recommend that RTM and EDC membership craft municipal enabling legislation** to support and reconstitute Waterford EDC to achieve its defined strategic goals.

We are confident that doing this difficult but necessary work of pausing, aligning, and then rebuilding will yield far greater economic impact and vibrancy for our community.

Sincerely,



Dan Radin, chair

Waterford Economic Development Commission