

Berlin Economic Development Committee
Minutes of Meeting held July 9, 2014
5:30 Berlin Municipal Offices

Members: Roberta Haskin, Jeremy Hanson, Keith Robinson, Paul Irons, Wanda Baril, Dan Cambra, Carole Lacasse and Pat McDonald, Chair. For the Town, Jeff Schulz; for CVEDC, Sam Andersen

In Attendance: Jeremy Hanson, Paul Irons, Keith Robinson, Wanda Baril and Pat McDonald, Sam Andersen, and Dan Cambra; Guest: Tess Gauthier, Snelling Center Project Manager; Wayne Lamberton, Corinne Stridsberg, Jeff Schulz, Diane Isabelle and Karla Nuissl

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 by the Chair, Pat McDonald

E-Vermont Community Broadband Project: Tess Gauthier, Snelling Center for Government, presented to the committee the details of a grant that the Snelling Center has received from the Vt. Council on Rural Development to help Towns redevelop their municipal websites. Berlin qualifies for the grant because it was impacted by Tropical Storm Irene and there was funding made available to help Towns improve their websites so they could disseminate public safety information in a more effective manner in emergency situation. The Snelling Center has a template that they have provided to the participating municipalities. They also have a survey that we can provide to residents through Front Port Forum to solicit their input on what information they would like to see on the Town's website. Tess asked that the Town put together a small committee to work on the content, color, font, etc. with her. Members thought that the best approach would be to reach out to each of the Town's committees to ask for a representatives from each to sit on the website committee. Diane Isabelle has volunteer to be the primary on the website and Tess will also train Corinne as a backup. The grant is available through October for the Snelling Center to draw down its funds so time is of the essence. Pat will write a letter to the Selectboard requesting their support and concurrence with the Town's participating in this project and to get direction on who should take the lead on this project. Diane will submit the form to the Snelling Center which provides information on the current website, etc. Pat will reach out to each of the Town's committees to ask for a representatives to be on the website committee. BEDC will also use this opportunity to start the conversation about getting together each committee to discuss each committee's priorities for the year and to see how we could work together and to reach out to businesses in Town to see how we could better serve them. Here is the survey link: [Berlin Website Redevelopment Survey](#) and here is an interactive map where you can see the towns who have used the Snelling template: <http://snellingcenter.org/uncategorized/new-website-15-vermont-towns/>.

The Committee then reviewed the documentation provided by the Chair to include Bulletin TB-37 issued 3/16/07 from the Vermont Tax Department on Local Option Taxes, the memo that the Chair sent to committee members as a follow up to its March 5th meeting to include a matrix of implementation strategies that were identified by committee members, and information published by the League of Cities and Towns regarding the new Open Meeting Laws. Pat agreed to talk to Shirley Fortier to see if she is interested in working with the committee on the Local Options Tax and Pat will meet with Ken Simon from the Mall to discuss M&E tax vs. the Local Options Tax and other issues and to have discussions with Barre City and Montpelier to see if they were interested in recommending Local Options Tax to the voters so that all three communities would be pursuing a Local Options Tax at the same time rather than one municipality going it “solo”. Pat also needs to arrange for a conference call with Rutland Town Manager on their experience with Local Options Tax implementation and impact on tax revenue.

Overview of Tourist Center/General Store Proposal: Jeff Schulz had agreed to make a presentation to the committee about the Tourist Center/General Store Proposal submitted to the Town by Wayne Lamberton. Wayne, knowing the topic was going to be discussed at the meeting, decided to attend and was gracious enough to make the presentation himself. Wayne was very clear that this is not a truck stop – it is considered by the State as a Tourist Center. Wayne has purchase two houses in the area to include the trailer on Paine Turnpike to minimize the impact on the neighborhood. Several public hearings are scheduled and the project will go before the DRB. Wayne’s staff will double at the location.

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Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Pat McDonald, Chair