



Watertown City Council

Mayor Steve Washburn
Deborah Everson
Lindsay Guetzkow
Adam Pawelk
Michael Walters

1/7/2021 - Minutes

1. Call To Order And Roll Call

The joint Economic Development Authority and City Council meeting was called to order by Mayor Steve Washburn at 3:05 p.m. on Thursday, January 7, 2021 via Zoom.

EDA members present: Roxanne Wilmes, Ken Grotbo, Lindsay Guetzkow, Deborah Everson, and Cory Mitteness

Council Members present: Mayor Washburn, Michael Walters, Lindsay Guetzkow, and Deborah Everson

Staff Present: City Administrator Shane Fineran and Administrative Services Director Lynn Tschudi

Guests: Kyle Jarvis, Watertown Chamber of Commerce President

2. Adopt Agenda

WALTERS MOVED, GUETZKOW SECONDED A MOTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED. ALL PRESENT VOTED AYE. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

3. New/Old Business

3.A. Chamber Checks V2 Program

City Administrator Shane Fineran said at the December 23, 2020 meeting, Council and EDA approved a Coronavirus Relief Program for restaurants, bars, and fitness facilities who were affected by the most recent Executive Order shutdown. After that meeting, 7 businesses have received \$7,500 from the EDA relief program. At the December meeting, both Council and the EDA showed interest in another Chamber Checks program like the one that was done in May 2020. Fineran reminded Council that the program sent \$60 to every household in Watertown in order to infuse cash into local Watertown businesses. There has been an 84% redemption rate of these Chamber Checks to date.

Staff is proposing a \$45 Chamber Check program to "Save our Restaurants" that would consist of three \$15 checks being mailed to all Watertown households. Fineran said the checks will be able to be used at any Chamber business, however a letter will be included to encourage residents to use the checks at the local restaurants which have been impacted the most. The program would be paid for equally by the General Fund, Water Fund, Sewer Fund, and EDA Fund.

Council Member Walters is in favor of the Chamber Checks program and thinks all residents and businesses could benefit from it. Council Member Guetzkow asked about the expiration date of the checks being six months. Fineran said the change from 12 months is to urge people to use the checks sooner. Guetzkow asked about the reasoning for splitting the cost with the Enterprise Funds when there is a large waste water treatment facility expansion project in the future. Fineran said there was not much thought other than to share the cost and all four funds had excess fund balance at the end of 2020.

EDA Chair Ken Grotbo also questioned the use of the water/sewer funds to pay for the Chamber Checks. EDA Member Roxanne Wilmes would like to see if tracking can be used so the Council and EDA know which businesses are benefiting from the checks. Kyle Jarvis explained that over 5,000 checks are being issued with a lot of them not being endorsed on the back so there is no way to see who received them. This would be a very manual and time-consuming process. Council Member Guetzkow asked if the EDA could volunteer to sort the checks. Jarvis said he is unable to access each check without downloading each one individually. EDA Member Mitteness suggested the EDA taking more of a burden to pay for the Chamber Checks rather than having the water/sewer pay for them.

Council and EDA discussed the Chamber Members and which businesses can accept the Chamber Checks. Jarvis explained that although the intent is for residents to use the checks at Chamber businesses, he can not control where people use them since they are a real check.

Mayor Washburn confirmed the 2020 year-end EDA cash balance of \$380,633. He asked about using the EDA funds to pay for a majority of the Chamber Checks which would equate to around the amount levied for 2021.

Grotbo asked what will happen to the unused Chamber Checks from 2020. Fineran said the amounts will be returned to the City and deposited back to the Enterprise Funds, where the checks were paid from.

Washburn spoke about the smaller businesses in Watertown who also need the cash infusion and asked if there is a way to try to get the support to them. Jarvis suggested adding the Chamber members to the letter being mailed to residents along with the Chamber Checks. Jarvis said he can get the Chamber Checks printed in 2-3 weeks. Mayor Washburn thanked the EDA and Council for working together to serve the residents and businesses in Watertown.

GUETZKOW MOVED, WALTERS SECONDED A MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2021-01 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF WATERTOWN TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO RESIDENTS THROUGH CHAMBER CHECKS, WITH \$60,000 BEING PAID FROM THE EDA AND \$22,575 FROM THE GENERAL FUND. MOTION CARRIED 3-0, EVERSON ABSENT.

Grotbo asked about being able to proof the letter prior to it being sent to residents.

WILMES MOVED, MITTENESS SECONDED A MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2021-01EDA, A RESOLUTION APPROVING EDA FUNDS TO SUPPORT CHAMBER CHECKS PROGRAM. MOTION CARRIED 4-0.

4. Adjournment

GUETZKOW MOVED, WALTERS SECONDED A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE JOINT COUNCIL/EDA MEETING AT 4:01 P.M. MOTION CARRIED 3-0.