

1. Call to Order

The Chester Economic Development Commission held its monthly meeting on Monday, February 10, 2014, at the Chester Town Hall, 203 Middlesex Avenue, Chester, Connecticut. Chairman Flett called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM.

2. Roll Call

In attendance were Steve Flett, Susan Wright and Felise Cressman. Guests included Mary Hambor (Valley Regional High School), Pat Woomer (Energy Task Force) and First Selectman Ed Meehan.

3. Audience of Citizens – none.

4. Discussion of 2014 Program Initiatives

- Mary Hambor, Valley Reg High School

Mary Hambor noted she was invited to attend in order to discuss ways in which the school could partner with the business community which she has been doing for the past eight years. There is an ongoing partnership with the 3 towns and certainly welcomes any businesses that are willing to take a student intern or job shadowing experience. Ms. Hambor noted her role is the career coordinator. She briefly reviewed student internships and job shadowing. Many of these students do this for 9 weeks or more a couple days a week learning from various professionals in the communities. Ms. Hambor noted she either contacts companies or they call her. She briefly reviewed how the program works.

Susan Wright asked if they do mentoring or encouraging students that may not be going to college to learn more information about how to get a job. Ms. Hambor noted they have not done that yet but would be open to doing that. She explained the internship program teaches students find jobs, how to manage their time, learn about colleges, how to network with businesses and given responsibilities that are different than in the school setting. Ms. Hambor noted there are a lot of students that work part time at Whelen Engineering.

Mary Hambor noted in general the communities are willing to help the students and no one has ever said no. She noted she is trying to help the student from an educational standpoint gain an understanding about a career field so they can make an educated decision about college and a career choice. Its nice also when a student can contribute to a local business as well.

Chairman Flett asked how people enroll in this type of program. Ms. Hambor explained some of the expos and how she coordinates the programs. She noted each student prepares their own resume.

There was discussion about businesses in Chester that might be interested in participating in such a program.

First Selectman Meehan suggested adding some of the trades, such as electrical, plumbing, sheet metal, HVAC to the list. These are all good paying jobs but there is a journeyman process. Ms. Hambor noted they have a high school partnership with Porter & Chester Technical Institute in Branford.

It was noted there are a lot of students that either don't want to go to college or can't afford it that would benefit from this program. Ms. Hambor noted she would love to partner with more businesses in town if possible. They reviewed a list of town businesses that might be interested. Chairman Flett noted Ms. Hambor should also cross reference the business listing on the town website. It was also suggested Ms. Hambor attend some of the local Merchants Meetings. They meet the first Wednesday of every month. The Chester Farmers Market and Chesterfield's were also suggested as a possibilities.

In summary, Chairman Flett noted the EDC could assist in identifying Chester businesses that would be relevant to the program. It was agreed Susan Wright will be the point of contact to Mary Hambor. Interview workshops were also suggested.

- C-Pace

Pat Woomer reviewed the C-Pace meeting to be held on Wednesday, February 19, 2014. He noted there would be 2 or 3 presentations that are energy related. A lot of businesses want to know what's available to them from the State and Federal governments that could help with their business. Mr. Woomer reviewed C-Pace which is one of the key programs. It was noted the town's responsibility is to only manage the program for a small stipend. Various energy programs were reviewed. The presentation of the C-Pace program was reviewed. It was noted these are all State selected contractors paid by CL&P. Much discussion ensued as to how this program works for the business owner. The list of businesses that already received the invitation to this meeting was reviewed and divided up amongst the members. Each EDC member will call a few on the list to inquire if they got the invitation, etc.

5. Approval of Minutes – December and January

Motion by Cressman, second by Wright, to approve December and January Minutes as written. Voting in favor – Cressman, Wright, Flett. Opposed – none. Motion Carried.

6. Adjournment

Motion by Cressman, second by Wright, to adjourn at 8:52 PM. Voting in favor – Cressman, Wright, Flett. Opposed – none. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Judith R. Brown, Recording Secretary