

Daniel A. Micari, Commissioner, Chairperson
Tracy Beland, Commissioner
Barbara Bajurny, Commissioner
Andrew Collins, Commissioner
Gloria Ewings, Commissioner
Ruth Ann Graime, Commissioner, Secretary
Joseph Krolikowski, Commissioner
Jacqueline Olsen, City Council Liaison



**Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Bristol, CT 06010**

**Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2023**

7:00 PM – Bristol Public Library, Community Room 2 and Virtual Format

Our Mission

To promote inclusion and improve the quality of life for people in Bristol with a disability, by providing a network of partnerships with local resources that foster self-sufficiency, dignity, and respect

Reasonable Accommodation Statement

The Bristol Commission for Persons with Disabilities is committed to equal access to, and participation in, all meetings and Commission-sponsored programs and events. Individuals who require an accommodation in order to fully participate, including physical access, communication assistance, or other special need, should contact Daniel A. Micari at damicari@yahoo.com, at least seven business days prior to the scheduled meeting, program, or event.

Present: Micari, Beland, Bajurny, Collins, Ewings, Krolikowski, Olsen

Absent: Graime

Call to order: 7:05 PM, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: Ewings/Krolikowski, passed

Presentation: Cheryl Thibeault, Councilwoman and Deputy Mayor

Topic: Update on City Projects

Councilwoman Thibeault spoke in place of Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano who could not be present due to a scheduling conflict. Councilwoman Thibeault presented the latest information regarding renovations on City Hall and downtown development. Regarding City Hall, she noted that the project has been overseen by the Department of Public Works and is proceeding on time and under budget. Employees will begin the process of moving in over the next few months with the goal of having the October City Council meeting in the renovated City Hall. The City Hall will be ADA compliant including handicapped parking, ramps, and

elevator access. Furthermore, service windows will be accessible from hallways and low enough to accommodate all persons.

Councilwoman Thibeault also described the latest information regarding downtown development. The mixed-use project, which will have apartments and businesses on the first floor, continues along with construction on the new Wheeler Health building. There are new projects on Riverside Avenue including renovation to the former Kenmore Cleaners and the former Tracy Driscoll building.

Construction in the West End of Bristol is continuing.

Councilwoman Thibeault concluded her remarks by fielding questions from commissioners and the audience including regarding parking issues, Memorial Boulevard bike lanes, business issues, and other concerns.

Dr. Dawn Leger, Bristol Grants Administrator

Topic: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Dr. Leger spoke about the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program which are funds provided by the federal government. She stated that every five years the city is required to report to the Department of Housing and Urban Development on goals and progress towards those goals. She noted that affordable housing has been the goal for the previous five years with approximately \$400,000 spent last year. Some of the new goals set for CDBGs for the upcoming years include increasing housing affordability for young people, grants to non-profits to benefit the community including the youth, elderly, and persons with special needs, capital projects for public facilities, and economic and workforce development. One recent project that benefited from these funds is BristolWORKS!

Dr. Leger also spoke about a survey to solicit information from the public which can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MLYN2W7>. Alternatively, there will be opportunities for the public to make suggestions at the Bristol Public Library on October 6 and 7 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

Funds are only distributed to those who apply. Dr. Leger noted that applications are available online.

Dr. Leger concluded her remarks by fielding questions from commissioners and the audience. One audience participant asked about the former car dealership near South Street Extension. Dr. Leger noted that because it is privately owned, the city is unable to work with it.

New/Current Business

*Chairman Micari updated the Commission on the Route 502/229 Corridor project. The route has been added and will include transportation to the Adult Education Center, though it is not known when it will start.

*Chairman Micari noted that the Commission's presence at the Farmers Market on June 24, August 4, and September 9 along with the presence at the Rockwell Park Summer Festival on August 19 were successful. More than a dozen people stopped to ask questions and find out more information. Chairman Micari also announced that the Commission will be present at the health fair at the senior center on September 21.

*Chairman Micari announced that we are still waiting on information on the purchase of smoke detectors. We need to find out how many are needed. Funds are available.

*Commissioner Bajurny updated the Commission on the September 9 workshop titled Self-Advocacy for Effective Communication in Medical Settings held at the Bristol Public Library. She stated that turnout was good with around eighteen people and that the discussion was good. Participants learned about reasonable accommodations and how to have discussions with doctors. Participants had the opportunity to speak with hospital representatives. Other guests also approved of the workshop.

*Jon Sahlin, American Sign Language interpreter, announced that his band, Blast Time, will be performing at an upcoming show called ASL-Palooza! at Bleachers on Middle Street on November 11. The ticket price will be \$10. The performance will feature deaf performers and ASL interpreters with the goal of having an inclusive environment. Collections from ticket sales will go to help the deaf community. Commissioner Bajurny noted that such shows in the past have been very successful.

*Commissioner Collins announced that the non-profit OpportunAbility will be having an art show at St. Andrew's Church on October 15 from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The show will exhibit artwork created by those with mental and physical disabilities.

Old Business

None

Correspondence

Chairman Micari: At Executive Director Mary Etter's request, a Letter of Endorsement to the Connecticut Community Investment Fund on behalf of the

Bristol Adult Resource Center (BARC). Chairman Micari announced that this letter was sent and that there are plans for a new building on Lake Avenue.

Public Participation

Paul Norton, a Terryville resident who owns a business in Bristol and a disabled veteran, updated the Commission on his conflicts with his landlord for his business. He stated that his landlord's attempt to evict him was not successful and that the case is in court. The judge is currently sitting on a decision. Mr. Norton expressed frustration with city officials regarding his problems. He stated that this conflict with his landlord has made it difficult to access his storefront among other issues.

Motion to adjourn: Beland/Ewings/passed **Meeting adjourned:** 8:45 PM

Next meeting: October 11, 2023 at 7:00 PM, Bristol Public Library

Presentation: Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano
Topic: Update on City Projects

Registrars of Voters
Topic: Ballot Review and Demonstration of Adaptive Voting System

**Submitted by,
Andrew Collins, Acting Secretary**