

Downtown Business District
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2026
363 Main Street, Suite 404 Middletown, CT 06457

Commissioners:

Matt Lefevbre (Chair)
Diane Gervais (Commissioner)
Laurie Salafia (Commissioner)
Chris Conley (Commissioner)
Tom Ford (Commissioner)

Sandra Russo-Driska (DBD Coordinator)

Guests:

Mary Ellen Shuckerow
Chief Erik Costa
Kevin Elak (Health Director)
Brian Gartner(ECD)
Rani Arbo (WESU)
Ken Ahnell
Eva Beshey (GM, Inn @ Mtwm)
Cathy Duncan (Chamber)
Deputy Chief Rich Davis

CALL TO ORDER- The chair called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

CITY PARTNERS:

Mayor-

- Sandra reported that the Mayor could not make the meeting but to send any issue, questions or requests to him if necessary.

Police-

- Chief Costa thanked the community for their overwhelming support on the officer that passed away.
- Snow storms have been keeping everyone busy but all agencies are working well together.
- 2 new captain and 2 new lieutenants and sergeants will be appointed opening new positions in the Dept.
- The Department is purchasing a drone to assist with calls. Chief discussed at length the positive uses for the equipment. ½ PD funded ½ FD funded.
- Traffic cameras have done their job in slowing people down. Infractions have dropped drastically and crashes are also way down.
- Sandra inquired on the recent defecation issues. Chief said they have a company on call to remove feces. Each call if \$500. Contact dispatch and they will send out the company.
- Chief noted is expecting crime stats to go down and keep trending downward.

Public Works-

- Brian Gartner spoke as Acting Dep Director of the department.
- Working nonstop to clear all the snow from the storms. Lots will be getting done today.
- Issues with meters not being cleared away for customers to reach them so they are giving a grace period for that.

Economic Development/Parking

- Brian reported the environmental clean ups will begin on all of the river front properties.
- Diane mentioned that businesses should be clearing metered areas into the road.
- Sandra suggested they visit the businesses with Rick Romano of the process.
- Sandra introduced Eva Bushey the new GM of the Inn.
- Eva inquired with Brian about parking and possibly setting up an arrangement with the meters on Main Street.
- Brian will reach out to set up a discussion.

Health-

- Kevin reported that they believe the peak for flu season has been reached, numbers are decreasing.
- 38 days have been activated for cold weather protocol for the warming center.
- All partners have been great to work with at the center.
- There is an emergency shelter plan for overflow, but it has not been needed.
- The City will run internal exercises with all departments to run the plan in the event it is needed.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS**St. Vincent's-**

- Mary Ellen thanked all that came out for the groundbreaking. Scheduled to be finished Feb 2027.
- Warming center has been busy with 28 people on average.
- Thank the Middletown Inn for housing staff.
- She is aware of defecation issue and is working with PD on addressing.
- Amazing Grace had 136 people last Friday. Contact Brenda if there is anyone in need.

Chamber-

- Cathy reported on the various events and dates upcoming at the Chamber.
- Taste of Middlesex is back from 2/23-3/1.
- Trip to Greece in October for anyone interested.
- Professional Dev. Training open to all for career coaching run by Lorenzo.
- Next CBB at City Hall with Portland and East Hampton.

Wesleyan-

- Rani had nothing specific to report but noted her gratitude for all we do to keep our city safe.

Minutes-

- Motion made by Commissioner Nelson-Hughes to approve November minutes
- Second by Commissioner Ford
- All in favor. Motion passes.

Treasurer's Report-

Commissioner Conley was absent. Sandra gave quick overview of the reports.

- Motion by Commissioner Gervais to approve December financial reports
- 2nd by Commissioner Ford
- All in Favor. Motion passes.

NEW BUSINESS:**Budget Sub-Committee-**

The Chair requested members volunteer for the Budget Sub-Committee to propose a budget at the February meeting for the commission to consider for the Annual Meeting.

Sandra noted Commissioner Alexander requested to sit on the committee. Chair Lefevbre will sit on the committee, Commissioner Gervais volunteered, and Sandra noted Commissioner Conley will sit on the committee as Treasurer.

Sandra will send out a notice for a Budget Sub-Committee meeting in the next few weeks.

(New Business Continued)

Endecom Contract Request-

Sandra submitted a request to contract with Endecom for our technical services at \$1,500 for one year. She then ran down all services provided to the commission.

- Motion made by Commissioner Gervais
- Second made by Commissioner Hughes-Nelson
- All in favor. Motion carried.

250th Poster Project Request-

Sandra reported that at the Staff Committee meeting a project to replace the individual focus posters on our wayfinding posts be replaced with posters celebrating old photos of Main Street from the Historical Society.

Sandra priced out the graphic design, printing and installation costs. The project would cost \$5,000.

- Motion made by Commissioner Gervais
- Second made by Commissioner Ford
- All in favor. Motion carried.

DBD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Advertising/Promotion –

- Sandra reported she is working with Sadler LLC for Spring social media campaign.

Gift Cards-

- Sandra reported the kiosk was successful. Over 200 gift cards and nearly \$10,000 in funds were purchased between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The kiosk continues to produce 3-5 cards per week.
- The program did the same number of gift cards as last holiday season, but collected \$2,000 more.

Beatufication & Maintenance- No report

Special Projects-

- Sandra reported on the Mardi Gra event planned for Feb. 17th. Giant puppets, jazz band, parade on the sidewalk from Holy Trinity to First Church food from Esca and Perk on Main.

925 Report-

Commissioner Hughes-Nelson noted that her Pedals store will be opening in Clock Tower soon.

Commissioner Ford stated he worked out an agreement for 48 parking spaces for the new developer purchasing the Bob's Building and that he has a handshake agreement for an art café in the old architectural space on College St.

Adjournment-

- Motion to adjourn at 9:37 am made by Commissioner Gervais
- 2nd by Commissioner Ford
- All in favor. Meeting adjourned