

Connecticut Municipal Development Authority (CMDA)

Board of Directors Special Meeting

Thursday, September 25, 2025; 12:30 pm

Virtual

Board Members Present: Chairperson Felix Reyes; Vice Chairperson Seila Mosquera-Bruno; Sara Amato; Laura Francis; Kiley Gosselin; Paul Hinsch; Laoise King; Brendan Mahoney; Lisa Morrissey; Matt Pugliese* and Jessica Vonashek**

Board Members Absent: Jack Benjamin; Emma Cimino; Alexandra Daum; Karen Dubois-Walton

* Matt Pugliese left the meeting before the vote on item 11

**Jessica Vonashek entered the meeting after the vote on item 2.

CMDA Staff Present: David Kooris; Emily Hultquist

1. Meeting Call to Order and Roll Call

Board Chair Reyes called the meeting to order at 12:32 PM and confirmed quorum.

2. Approval of Minutes from July 17, 2025 Meeting

The motion to approve the minutes was made by Laura Francis and seconded by Matt Pugliese. The motion was approved with one abstention by Seila Mosquera-Bruno.

3. Public Comment

The public comment period was opened to members of the public; no members of the public offered comment.

4. Executive Director Report

David Kooris began his report by congratulating Jack Benjamin on his new job at the City of Hartford as Director of Development Services. He also congratulated Alexandra Daum on the new addition to her family and highlighted that Karen Dubois Walton presided over the Yimbytown Conference as honorary “Co-Mayor” in New Haven last week.

Operations Update:

Mr. Kooris welcomed Emily Hultquist as CMDA’s newest employee, joining the team on September 5th as a Program Manager. Emily Hultquist introduced herself and stated that she is looking forward to working with David and the board to further CMDA’s mission.

Mr. Kooris updated the Board that the second-round of interviews for the full-time position are underway with a decision expected shortly and a target start in mid-October. There were 60+ applications for this position and the top five are now receiving second interviews.

The FY25 audit is drafted; a special one-hour meeting is targeted for Oct. 1 at 2:00 PM to receive the auditors' presentation (with a one-page lay summary requested). The October regular Board meeting will shift to a 1:00 PM start. Accounting transition is underway with external accountants standing up QuickBooks and standardized reporting; beginning soon, the Board should expect a professionalized operating report, a balance sheet, and bond-fund accounting.

Municipal Engagement Update:

Since the July board meeting, six additional municipalities opted into CMDA—Fairfield, Town of Groton, Windham (Willimantic), Plainville, Clinton, and Wallingford—bringing membership to 26. Statutory changes effective October 1 will allow town-meeting municipalities to opt in via Board of Selectmen action and expand geographic eligibility to West Hartford, Wethersfield, Newington, Bloomfield, Windsor, and South Windsor.

Board discussion addressed public understanding and misconceptions. Mr. Kooris reported steady improvement thanks to positive and factual media coverage and clear one-pagers and marketing materials, while noting engagement still varies town-by-town. Some municipalities require multiple public meetings; others proceed after a single briefing. For example, Windham prepared their own FAQ distinguishing CMDA from prior local redevelopment entities to clarify CMDA's role and garner support.

5. Budget Report

CMDA received its first-quarter DECD payment; operating expenses are tracking as expected early in the fiscal year. Personnel lines currently reflect one employee; next month will incorporate Ms. Hultquist and potentially an additional hire, allowing tighter projections. Legal, communications, IT, insurance, and audit lines are progressing as planned; accounting charges will appear beginning with September activity. Mr. Kooris reported the operating surplus carried from FY25 and the bank balance as of Aug. 30; incremental travel and routine expenses will accrue through the year.

DECD Agreement & Invoicing: The annual MOU with DECD governs quarterly invoicing; Matt Pugliese serves as primary contact, with DECD's COO and accounting staff supporting process logistics.

Board Question: Chair Reyes asked whether the format of this report will be the same in future months. Mr. Kooris stated that future reports will include balance sheet and bond fund accounting once the new accounting system is launched by CMDA's outside accountants.

6. Action to Approve Amended Bylaws

The motion to approve the amended Bylaws was combined with the approval of the amended Operating Procedures and the amended Ethics Policy. The motion to approve these three items was made by Felix Reyes and seconded by Laura Fancis. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Action to Approve Amended Operating Procedures

See Item 6 above.

8. Action to Approve Amended Ethics Policy

See Item 6 above.

9. Action to Approve MOU with CRDA

To maintain Human Resources integration with the state CORE system while CMDA staffs up, the Board discussed an MOU extension with CRDA for FY26 at a cost of \$10,000. The tasks performed by CRDA will include payroll processing, onboarding, and related HR processes (noting last year's partial-year cost was the same: \$10,000 for 12 months of services for this coming fiscal year vs \$10,000 for 6 months of last fiscal year).

The motion to approve the MOU with CRDA was made by Felix Reyes and seconded by Laoise King. The motion passed with three abstentions by Matt Pugliese, Paul Hinsch and Seila Mosquera-Bruno.

10. Action to Approve a Memorandum of Agreement with the Borough of Naugatuck

Background: Mr. Kooris presented CMDA's zoning certification framework and its application in Naugatuck, where the Borough has aligned planning, infrastructure investment, and site control around its historic downtown and the Waterbury Branch rail station relocation. Complete streets work along Church Street and connecting corridors is funded via Community Challenge funds, TIF, and local dollars. The new high-level platform station will sit amid underutilized parcels, linked to the core of downtown with a new street grid and pedestrian links; Penrose is advancing a multi-phase mixed-income project with remediation underway.

District Determination Process: David Kooris stated that the process to determine district boundaries in each municipality will originate similarly with a conversation between CMDA and town leadership. After engaging in conversation, drawing a statutorily defined ½ mile radius around a municipal downtown or transit station is the beginning of CMDA's review and analysis. In Naugatuck, there is complete overlap between the ½ mile radius around the planned station and the Borough's downtown. The review began with the statutory two-pronged test in 8-169tt(c)2 and found no zones meeting the strict 'missing middle as-of-right + expedited multifamily hearings' tests. The more comprehensive rubric developed by CMDA was then used to assess development feasibility and walkability factors for each zone. Using the rubric, Naugatuck's SDD-1 was certified as a Housing Growth Zone; other nearby zones require targeted code changes before certification. Mr. Kooris showed the mapping and supporting zoning analysis documentation completed by CMDA which is transmitted to the municipality in a memo documenting the process. In the case of Naugatuck, the Borough welcomed CMDA's feedback and intends to seek a future district expansion following zoning amendments.

Board Question: Laura Francis asked how the Borough reacted to not being able to include all of area that they were hoping to include in their district.

David Kooris stated that while Naugatuck may not be representative of every municipality that goes through this process, they were very happy to be able to get started where they have the most near-term development activity and interest. Further, they welcome the pending recommendations from CMDA for updating other zones to perform better in future development.

Board Question: Laura Francis asked if CMDA used consultant assistance to do these analyses because staff capacity is tight and using the consultants could help free up time for more engagement.

David Kooris stated that consultants had not been tapped into for this task and that they would be working very shortly on district level buildout tasks across many of the CMDA municipalities.

Board Question: Brandon Mahoney asked how CMDA is defining auto-oriented uses.

David Kooris stated that in this analysis process, auto-oriented explicitly refers to gas stations, auto body shops, service stations, car dealerships and drive-thrus.

The motion to approve the memorandum of agreement with the Borough of Naugatuck establishing a Development District coterminous with the Housing Growth Zone(s) within the ½-mile walkshed of the station area was made by Felix Reyes and seconded by Sara Amato. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Action to Approve a Memorandum of Agreement with the City of Derby

David Kooris provided a summary of the City of Derby's district determination process. Derby's proposed district is at the confluence of the Naugatuck and Housatonic Rivers along the Waterbury Branch rail line. The CT Department of Transportation's recent Route 34 reconstruction added traffic capacity in the area, while at the same time improving pedestrian connectivity and safety (refuges, bump-outs, inset parking). The City has consolidated several south-of-Route-34 properties to create a two-sided downtown, significantly expanding redevelopment opportunities.

CMDA's zoning review resulted in the approval of the CDD (downtown district) and the CR (Center Residence) zones as Housing Growth Zones. This area covers all of the downtown's historic core within walking distance to the train station and encompasses a very significant, now publicly owned redevelopment site that the city aims to put out to RFP.

Board Question: Board Chair Reyes asked whether the Board will receive the same length of summary for future municipality's development districts?

David Kooris stated that unless the board would like to hear a more detailed version of the process, that the more abbreviated version would likely be most efficient.

Board Question: Board Chair Reyes asked where is this information being housed and if it will be publicly accessible?

The town memos with district determination process summary will be posted on the CMDA website under meeting materials for the corresponding board meetings at which they are presented. The map of municipal membership and project status on the CMDA website will be interactive in that users will eventually be able to click on a municipality and be directed to a page with all of the district certification information and progress updates regarding CMDA's work with that municipality in its development district(s).

The motion to approve the memorandum of agreement with the City of Derby was made by Felix Reyes and seconded by Paul Hinsch. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Question: Brednan Mahoney asked if there is a risk of receiving pushback from a homeowner whose property might fall within a district who could sue or derail a development project.

David Kooris stated that CMDA and the town could always elect to carve out certain properties from the official boundaries of the development district; given that the establishment of the district is only used for future funding availability, there is seemingly no action for which a lawsuit would pause or prevent.

12. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn was made by Laura Francis and seconded by Kiley Gosselin. The Board adjourned at 1:46 PM.