

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday March 29, 2017 09:30AM
County Hall Building
Commissioners Conference Roof
12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431

PRESENT: Commissioners Peter Graves, Joseph Cartwright, and Charles Weed

STAFF: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Grants Manager Bansley, County Attorney McLaughlin, Superintendent Van Wickler, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard.

GUESTS: Rebeckah Bullock, Southwest Regional Planning.

At 9:30AM the meeting opened and Chairman Graves read the public hearing notice and opened the first public hearing for discussion of the CDBG projects.

Rebeckah Bullock, Community Development Specialist, with SWRPC explained that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are available to municipalities for economic development, public facility and housing rehabilitation projects that primarily benefit low and moderate income persons. Cheshire County is eligible to receive up to \$500,000 a year for public facility/housing rehabilitation, up to \$500,000 a year for economic development projects, as well as up to \$500,000 a year in emergency funds. Feasibility Study funds are available for up to \$12,000. Municipalities may also apply for up to \$500,000 in Microenterprise funding for the purpose of providing training and technical assistance to microenterprises. Rebeckah Bullock provided a handout describing the NH Community Development Block Grant Program eligible activities that included the area HUD income limits.

Rebeckah Bullock provided a project handout. The proposed Micro Enterprise project is for up to \$500,000 to support three entities in southern NH: the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene (HGC), Rockingham Economic Development Center (REDC), and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) through UNH sponsored programs. The funding is used by each entity to provide training and technical assistance and, in some cases, micro loan servicing to low and moderate income micro- entrepreneurs. If the proposed applications are successful, the funds will be awarded to Cheshire County which will sub-grant the funds, less administration, to the three Sub-recipients.

Until 2015, the Microenterprise program funds were distributed through Grafton County. Initially there were two applicants, which has grown to seven applicants in recent years. The program has been very successful in serving micro-enterprises across the state, resulting in CDFA increasing the amount available statewide to \$750,000 in 2015. Since counties can only apply for up to \$500,000, a second county was needed to help distribute the funding. In 2015, Cheshire County was approached as a potential Grantee for the microenterprise funds. Cheshire County applied for and was awarded Microenterprise funding for the HGC, REDC, and SBDC in 2015 and 2016.

The HGC, REDC, and SBDC are all interested in continuing to be recipients of the Microenterprise funding in 2017. Both the REDC and SBDC would like to increase their number of beneficiaries served to 50 each. The HGC anticipates serving 55 beneficiaries. This would be a total of 155 low to moderate income micro-entrepreneur beneficiaries served. I have provided a

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handout describing the project.

Representatives from the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene, Rockingham Economic Development Center, and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) provided the following details about the project: Rich Grogan, Executive Director of the State Small Business Development Center spoke to the structure and operation of the SBDC and provided a background of the users of the program. 357 clients were brought into the program with 83 successful businesses generated. \$2.2M in capital was raised and 118 jobs were created. The companies had aggregate annual sales of almost \$5M per year. A summary of the type of individuals that qualify for the program from the Rockingham Economic Development Corporation DBA Regional Economic Development Center of Southern New Hampshire, was provided by Chris Duffy, Business Advisor. Duffy spoke of a restaurant and a brewery that were funded and that are currently operating successfully. Mary Ann Kristiansen then described the operations and services of the Hannah Grimes center in Keene and discussed the incubator program that is run at the facility. 83% of the businesses that have been assisted in the past few years are still in business. She went on to say that more than 50% of the individuals that come to the Hannah Grimes Center qualify as low to moderate income. Kristiansen spoke to the individual programs and services that are provided to incubator participants including monthly financial projections.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects. No comments were made.

Commissioner Cartwright moved to close the Public Hearing on the Projects portion of the CDBG Block Grant Hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. 3 in favor. 3 to 0. Motion passed.

Commissioner Cartwright then moved to postpone the approval of the submittal of the applications and the vote to authorize County Administrator Christopher Coates or County Commissioner Chair Peter Graves as the Authorized Designees to sign and submit the CDBG applications, and upon approval of the CDBG applications, authorize the Authorized Designee to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract until next week's Commissioners meeting when State personnel from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) will be attending to answer questions concerning direct and contingent liability issues that may result from accepting CDBG grants. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Cartwright moved to open the second public hearing regarding the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. 3 in favor. 3 to 0. Motion passed.

Rebeckah Bullock of SWRPC then explained that if any permanent displacement takes place as a result of this project, the Uniform Relocation Act must be followed, which requires that any permanently displaced household or business in a project using federal funds must be found comparable housing in a comparable neighborhood at a comparable price. Rebeckah Bullock noted that no permanent displacement is planned at this time. Under the certification section of

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the application, the County will certify that the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance (RARA) Plan is in place, and in the event that it is discovered that this specific project does permanently displace persons or households, a displacement implementation plan must be submitted to CDFA prior to obligating or expending funds.

Chair calls for public comment. No public comments were made.

Cartwright moved to close the second public hearing for discussion of the proposed RARA Plan. Seconded by Weed. 3 in favor. 3 to 0. Motion passed.

Commissioner Cartwright moved to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. 3 in favor. 3 to 0. Motion passed.

Superintendent Van Wickler was recognized and introduced DOC Facilities Director Bob Barlow who spoke of the status of the on-going HVAC Balancing Project and said that almost all of the work has been accomplished and only the synchronization of the three (3) boilers remains to be completed. A discussion of the monitoring of energy usage began and Barlow described the items that are being tracked to be able to compare previous and current environments and costs to be able to determine actual cost savings for comparable time periods.

Master Agenda Item #475: Town of Langdon MOU for Sheriff's Services. – The MOU with Langdon for Dispatch Services was then discussed by Capitan Croteau and Dispatch Director Arlene Crowell. Administrator Coates reads the MOU as presented. **Commissioner Cartwright moves to accept the MOU for Langdon as presented and is seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #476: DOC - Failure of Door Locks in Pod – DOC Major John Mousseau was recognized and said that multiple doors in the F block have failed and in total thirteen (13) doors are not operational in the facility. He said that a failure of a controller module is the most likely the problem but remains to be diagnosed at the component level. He then said that problems with the facilities monitoring cameras and video recorders have also begun to appear and need to be addressed. It was stated that much of the equipment is approaching end-of-life and will need to be replaced. Van Wickler said that a plan for creating a contingency fund needs to be implemented along with a capital reserve account.

Master Agenda Item #474: County Attorney's Semi-Annual Report – County Attorney McLaughlin then provided the following report to the Commissioners.

The Cheshire County Attorney's Office had one personnel change in this six-month period. On October 24, 2016, Kim Sevigny was hired as a full-time administrative assistant with the Regional Prosecutor Program ("RPP"). As a result, Auna Swanson, who was originally hired as a half-time administrative assistant for the RPP and then began working half-time for this office (in addition to her half-time RPP position), became a full-time administrative assistant with this office.

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During this six-month period, 219 felony case files were referred to our office, and a Victim/Witness Coordinator was assigned to all of these cases. We have indicted 147 individuals, on a total of 339 charges. There was one case that proceeded to trial. 206 cases were resolved prior to trial, by plea. Our office handled 22 Violations of Probation, and 21 Superior Court Petitions to Annul.

Lastly, the Domestic Violence Prosecutor reviewed 4 Felony Domestic Violence cases this period, and 4 Misdemeanor Domestic Violence Cases. A Victim Witness Coordinator was assigned to each of those cases.

A discussion of the current legal climate that pushes more arrests to alternative programs instead of sending people to jail during pre-trial was covered. McLaughlin said that the courts are moving strongly away from putting pre-trial defendants in jail and as a result the number of people being incarcerated is dropping quickly.

A discussion of the difference between Federal, State, and Local, law enforcement rules was had based on recent community discussions of the operation of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) operations throughout the county.

The Commissioners thanked McLaughlin for his report and took-up Master Agenda Item #477: To Vote on the Establishment and Implementation of a County Policy Manual and Master Agenda Item #478: To Vote on the Creation of an Examination and Audit of County Books and Accounts Policy.

The County Administrator spoke to the implementation of the County Policy Manual and how the policy manual is different from administrative procedures. A discussion of the documents began and it was decided to amend both documents for added clarity and to review them at next week's Commissioners meeting.

Administrator Coates then discussed the sale of the Blood Farm and said that after an extended time on the market at \$199,900.00 and a number of showings and following discussions with the listing broker, a repricing to \$169,900.00 is being suggested by the broker. Following discussion it was agreed to move forward with the broker suggestion to reprice the property at \$169,900.00,

Coates then discussed that a phone outage occurred at the nursing home this week as result of a burning tree falling on the wires on Partridge Brook road. He said that the IT Director assisted in partially restoring communication during the outage by rerouting a VoIP line from the Department of Corrections to the nursing home.

Coates then reviewed the discussions that are on-going with Eversource who is seeking to place a large transformer in the Latchis parking lot as part of the electrical grid upgrade being performed in downtown Keene. He said that as part of a cooperative agreement with Eversource the County will have security lights, barrier posts, and an industrial barrier gate installed by Eversource in the lot at no cost to the County.

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Coates then said that Carrie Thurman, an aide to Senator Shaheen is scheduled to meet with the Commissioners at the April 6th to bring the priorities and concerns of the Commissioners back to the Senator.

Coates then reminded the Commissioners that on April 14th a meeting with state and local legislators to discuss the state Managed Care Organization (MCO's) will be held at 12 Court Street.

Coates then discussed that the group Arts Alive is considering starting an Arts Alive Friends of Public Arts at the Old Courthouse to be able to produce visual and performance art programs that are appropriate for the Old Courthouse venue.

Coates the said that approximately 100 applicants have applied for the HR Generalist position that was recently advertised. He said that the candidates will be reviewed and reduced to about seven candidates so that interviews can be arranged shortly.

Coates reminded the Commissioners that the City of Keene will host their annual delegation meeting in the Delegation meeting room on April 4th at 6:00pm. Coates outlined the presentations planned and discussed the content.

Old business was then taken-up and a short review of last week's meeting was covered. A discussion of the funding of outside agencies was covered and policy questions were reviewed.

Commissioner Cartwright passed out a copy of his letter Sentinel concerning the recent statement of the Sheriff on ICE detainees.

Trombly reported that the Hemenway Trust Fund distribution for 2017 was received in the amount of \$22,840.71. The use of the funds was discussed and a review of the use of the funds on an annual basis took place.

New Business was then discussed and the annual County Tax Anticipated Note (TAN) borrowing schedule and costs for securing county operating funds was discussed and possible modifications to the process of collecting tax revenue was covered.

At 12:08AM Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) Commissioner Cartwright moved to enter non-public session to discuss the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

As a result of deliberations in non-public session a decision to transfer S. J. into the Human Resources Manager position at a rate of \$24.64 based on training, performance, and experience,

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was affirmed unanimously.

At 12:15PM the Commissioners voted unanimously to exit non-public session.

12:16PM – Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) Commissioner Cartwright moved to enter non-public session to discuss the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

A discussion of the yearly cost of living and longevity wage adjustment for an employee currently at the top of their wage scale was discussed and as a result of deliberation in non-public session a decision to continue the cost of living wage adjustment for the individual was agreed unanimously.

At 12:23 Commissioner Cartwright moved to exit non-public and Commissioner Weed seconded the motion. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The Census was reviewed.

The Weekly Manifest was then reviewed and Commissioner Cartwright moved to accept the Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of March 22, 2017 were then reviewed and Commissioner Graves moved to accept the minutes as amended and was seconded by Commissioner Cartwright. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The Commissioners calendar was reviewed.

At 12:48PM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Cartwright moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was then seconded by Commissioner Graves and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
C. Weed