

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday February 24, 2016 09:30AM
County Hall Building
Commissioners Conference Room
12 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431

PRESENT: Commissioners Charles Weed, and Peter Graves, (Stillman Rogers absent with notice)

STAFF: County Administrator Coates, Assistant Finance Director Trombly, HR Director Hurley, Grants Manager Bansley, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

GUESTS: Two members of the public.

Vice-Chairman Weed opened the meeting at 09:30AM and then read the public hearing notice and opened the first public hearing for discussion of the CDBG project at 09:32AM.

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. 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 Corporation (REDC), and the Small Business Development Corporation (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 application is 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 CDFR increasing the amount available statewide to \$750,000 in 2015. A county can only apply for up to \$500,000, so 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 Microenterprise funding in 2015 and was awarded funding for the HGC, REDC, and SBDC.

The HGC, REDC, and SBDC are all interested in continuing to be recipients of the Microenterprise funding in 2016, and have requested applications be submitted for the number of beneficiaries that were served in 2015. This would be a total of 139 low to moderate income micro-entrepreneur beneficiaries, which would be divided between the three entities. I have provided a handout describing the project.

Mary Ann Kristiansen of the Hannah Grimes Center provided the following details about the project: The Hanna Grimes Center has been involved with Micro-Enterprise funding for five (5) years through the micro-credit initiative, which is part of the NH Community Loan program. She said that the funding through the CDGB Micro-Enterprise grants has allowed Hanna Grimes to provide approximately \$125k

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in business start-up training and services to about 55 low and moderate income participants. She said that thus far nine (9) of the projects have accounted for twelve (12) full-time jobs and nine (9) part-time jobs. In response to a question Kristiansen said that since 2006 when the incubator opened, approximately 86% percent of the business that have participated are still in business today. A representative from the town of Winchester Economic Development agency who was present asked how the town could get involved with Hanna Grimes to bring training and other opportunities to the town. Kristiansen will follow-up with them and assist in helping them participate.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects.

At 09:51AM Commissioner Graves motioned to close the Public Hearing on the Project portion of the CDBG Block Grant Hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Weed, both in favor. 2 to 0. Motion passed.

Commissioner Graves motioned to approve the submittal of the application and vote to authorize County Administrator Christopher Coates and County Commissioner Chair Stillman Rogers as the Authorized Designees to sign and submit the CDBG application, and upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize the Authorized Designee to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. Both in favor. 2 to 0. Motion passed.

At 09:52AM Commissioner Graves motioned to open the second public hearing for discussion of the proposed Housing & Community Development Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Weed in favor. 2 to 0. Motion passed.

Rebeckah Bullock, SWRPC, explained that the Housing and Community Development Plan was adopted by the County Commissioners in 2014, and it is required to be reviewed and re-adopted every three years to qualify for CDBG funds.

The Cheshire County Grants Manager and the CDBG Grant Administrator have updated the Cheshire County Housing and Community Development Plan. Changes were made to streamline the document and remove unnecessary or duplicative content. No significant changes were made to the goals or objectives.

The proposed CDBG project conforms to the Cheshire County's Housing and Community Development Plan priorities to:

- Support the efforts of local and regional economic development corporations to secure assistance necessary in order to retain and grow existing businesses and attract new businesses to the region.
- Support educational and training facilities which upgrade skills of local residents.

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Chair calls for public comment.

At 09:58AM Commissioner Graves motioned to close the second public hearing for discussion of the proposed Housing & Community Development Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. Both in favor. 2 to 0. Motion passed.

Commissioner Graves motioned to adopt the Housing and Community Development Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. Both in favor. 2 to 0. Motion passed.

At 10:00AM Commissioner Graves motioned to open the third public hearing regarding the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. Both in favor. 2 to 0. Motion passed.

Rebeckah Bullock of SWRPC 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 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.

At 10:03AM Commissioner Graves motioned to close the third public hearing for discussion of the proposed RARA Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. Both in favor. 2 to 0. Motion passed.

Commissioner Graves motioned to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. Both in favor. 2 to 0. Motion passed.

Administrator Coates was then recognized and discussed the following items;

The Right-To-Know training session for elected officials and staff department heads is being rescheduled for March 21, 2016 at 6:00PM and will take place at the Department of Corrections as previously planned.

He said that the Safety Officer in conjunction with the Sheriff's office is running an Active Shooter training class today. Misty Hall who had attended gave a short synopsis of the class and said that she found it to be good training and helpful.

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Coates then discussed the proposed NH Association of Counties proxy vote procedures that are being discussed and he said that he has asked the association for a sample procedure that the County could model its policy upon.

Coates then said that he would be meeting with the newly formed Collective Bargaining Unit in the Sheriff's department on Thursday for the first meeting. He also said that the Attorney (Matthew Upton) that was retained by the County will be in attendance.

Coates then presented a letter from Granite State Automation that outlined the mechanical, electrical, and computer, issues of the work that was originally done at the jail and the work that has recently been completed to address the numerous HVAC operational issues that have lingered since the building opened. The Commissioners will review the letter for further discussion at future meeting. It was learned that \$88,220.86 has been expended to date to fix the identified issues.

Coates then discussed the tour that was completed for a new "Friends of the Old Courthouse" program that is being developed to help open the County Hall building to public events and to develop public interest in using facilities for exhibits, entertainment, social, educational, and business events. He said that the tour went very well and that much more work remains to be done to define goals and programs to build a constituency for the program.

Coates then said that questions from the Maplewood Sub-Committee members had been submitted to the architect (Patrick Mixdorf) as a follow-up to the presentation to the committee on February 5th and that he has received some answers back that will be shared with the Sub-Committee.

Coates then discussed the payment of dues to the National Association of Counties for the year and the value of belonging to the organization was discussed. It was decided to put off further conversation until all three commissioners could be present to discuss and the item will be moved to next week's Commissioners agenda.

Coates said that he has been in touch with Senator Ayotte and Shaheen's offices to invite them to discuss the addiction epidemic in New Hampshire when they are in next in the Keene area. He is awaiting contact from both offices at this time.

Commissioner Weed said that he had recently attended a meeting of the Monadnock Regional Coordinating Council for Community Transportation where Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement policies were discussed and the possible receipt of a grant from the Department of Labor to fund and expand the program was covered. A discussion of the current state of the program was reviewed and impacts on how the region will be covered in future were reviewed.

The Weekly Census was reviewed.

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

The minutes of February 17, 2016 were then reviewed and Commissioner Graves moved to accept the minutes as amended. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The Commissioners Calendar was then reviewed.

At 11:29AM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Graves moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed with unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

P. Graves, Clerk