

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday February 20, 2019 09:30AM
County Hall Building
Stillman Rogers Conference Room
12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431

Present: Commissioners, Charles (Chuck) Weed, John (Jack) Wozmak and Robert (Bob) Englund)

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Grants Manager Bansley, HR Director May, Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Guest(s): R. Bullock, Southwest Regional Planning Commission, Nancy DuBosque, NH Small Business Development Center, Chris Duffy, Regional Economic Development Center, Shannon Hundley, Hanna Grimes Center.

At 8:30AM The Chairman opened the first public hearing for discussion and read the public hearing notice.

Rebeckah Bullock, Community Development Specialist with Southwest Region Planning Commission explained that it is a requirement of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program to hold a public hearing while a project is underway to allow the public the opportunity to comment and ask questions about the project. She noted that this first hearing would provide an update of the 2018 Microenterprise projects.

Bullock explained that Cheshire County received \$417,365 in CDBG Microenterprise funds to support Microenterprise centers around the State in 2017. Cheshire County sub-granted the majority of the funds as follows, less administration costs:

- \$137,500 to the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene (HGC). The center will provide access for 55 microenterprises to its hands-on workshops, one-on-one coaching, retail training at the Hannah Grimes Marketplace, and in-depth programs, such as their incubator. To date, they have served 26 microenterprises.
- \$125,000 for the Regional Economic Development Center (REDC) in Raymond. Activities to be funded include one-on-one meetings with business advisors, training in reading financial statements, and assistance with brand development and marketing. REDC anticipates that 50 low-to-moderate income small business owners will use their many resources. To date, they have served 26 microenterprises.
- \$117,500 to the NH Small Business Development Center's Pathways to Work initiatives in Durham and Manchester. Some of the services they will provide to approximately 47 participants include classes on how to start a small business, e-courses on finance, and workshops on topics like marketing and accounting. To date, they have served 27 microenterprises.

The projects are scheduled to close out by June 30, 2019.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects. Public comments follow:

Shannon Hundley from the Hanna Grimes Center spoke to the program and provided details of the

Small Business Development Center then spoke and outlined the SBD program and discussed the services that they provide for the micro-enterprise program. The program is located at the Blake House on the Keene State campus. The structure and operation of the Pathway to Work program was outlined.

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The staff and Commissioners asked a number of questions and about the three (3) programs and learned that the number of individuals who are interested in the program has grown steadily over the past few years.

Chris Duffy of the Regional Economic Development Center spoke of loans that are available to clients to help them launch their businesses. He said that he is able to offer loans to individuals who otherwise would not be eligible for loans from commercial sources.

Commissioner Wozmak asked how people find the services are that offered. It was learned that a strong relationship with the local banking community is in place and that referrals are a large part of the way that services are found.

An extended discussion of the ways that the County can assist in the possible growth of small businesses in the community was covered. A number of ideas were floated and some possible ways that could be assistive to the CDBG recipients were listed.

The Chair closed the first public hearing at 9:08AM.

The Chair opened the second public hearing for discussion of the Community Development Block Grant Applications at 9:09AM.

Bullock explained that 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 for up to \$500,000.00 in the housing and public facilities category, up to \$500,000.00 in the economic development category, up to \$500,000.00 in the microenterprise category, and \$12,000.00 for feasibility studies. 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 microenterprise applications are for up to \$500,000.00 to support three entities in southern NH: the Hannah Grimes Center (HGC) in Keene, the Regional Economic Development Center (REDC), and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). 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.

Cheshire County applied for and was awarded Microenterprise funding for the HGC, REDC, and SBDC in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018. The HGC, REDC, and SBDC are all interested in continuing to be recipients of the Microenterprise funding in 2019. The HGC anticipates serving 60 beneficiaries, the REDC anticipates serving 54 beneficiaries, and the SBDC anticipates serving 47 beneficiaries. This would be a total of 161 low to moderate income microenterprise beneficiaries served.

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

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The Commissioners and staff then asked a number of questions concerning the use of the CDBG program in the County and throughout the state.

Commissioner Weed moved to close the Public Hearing on the Projects portion of the CDBG Block Grant Application Hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Englund move to approve the submittal of the applications and vote to authorize County Administrator Christopher Coates or County Commissioner Chair Charles Weed 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. Seconded by Commissioner Wozmak. **Upon vote the motioned unanimously.**

Commissioner Weed to open the third public hearing regarding the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Wozmak. **Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Rebeckah Bullock of SWRPC explained that if any permanent displacement takes places 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. No comments were received.

The Chair asked if there was a triggering event for this plan. Bullock said she would need to look

Commissioner Englund moved to close the third public hearing for discussion of the proposed RARA Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Wozmak. **Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Wozmak moved to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Master Agenda Item #687: Cheshire County Conservation District – Semi-Annual Report was then taken-up for discussion and the Manager of the Conservation District, Amanda Littleton provided the following report:

Littleton passed out the 2018 Conservation District Annual Report and discussed some new programs that will put in place in 2019. One program is for urban gardeners in the County and looks to offer a seed bank and a tool bank to encourage people to get involved with local food production.

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The Commissioners asked about the previously installed culvert programs that open up access to fish and other wildlife.

The rental program of the equipment that is owned by the Conservation District was then covered and a discussion of the storage space being used by the District was discussed. She said that two of the three old skidder bridges that the District owns have been sold and another new one has been built.

Register Tilton was then recognized and asked about a procedural matter concerning 2019 budget projects. The project costs were discussed and funding sources and amounts were discussed.

At 9:51AM Commissioner Englund moved to enter a non-meeting to discuss union matters. Commissioner Wozmak seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

At 10:19AM the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to public session.

Administrator Coates recognized and presented the Weekly Operations Report.

Coates said that he attended the New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC) Steering Committee last week and it was determined that Belknap will host the annual conference this year. He also said that Merrimack County is offering office space for the NHAC offices which must move from their present space at Primex Insurance in Concord shortly, at the old Nursing Home. The space will be renovated and the rent will be the same as what Primex was charging, \$300.00 a month. The furniture from the Primex site will also be moved to Merrimack offices. He then said that the NHAC dues were discussed and a return to the previous level of funding is being put in place for coming budget years.

A discussion of the effectiveness of the Dupont Group in taking over the daily operations of the NHAC was then covered. The consensus is that they are doing a good job and could be a viable alternative to hiring future staff.

Coates explained that he and the County Attorney are meeting with the Restorative Justice program of Monadnock next week it was tentatively agreed that the program will be able to utilize space in the County Hall building sometime in the coming months.

Coates said that the Integrated Delivery Network (IDN) monies that have been received from the State are being held by the County. He said that a letter was received from the State asking that 30% of the monies be returned specifically to fund IDN programming. Coates said that the original percentage that was anticipated to be returned was 50% so the County is able to retain an additional \$234,000.00 of the initial payment based on the return rate of 30%.

He said that a Legislative breakfast will be held on March 4th at Keene State College. 7:30am – 9:30am. He said that the Commissioners are welcome to attend and that the session last year was very informative.

He then informed the Commissioners that on March 7th a planning needs meeting for local area transportation will be held at Cheshire Medical Center from 3:00-4:30pm. He is planning on attending.

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The meeting with Senator Shaheen on the inclusion of the County in the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) has been cancelled and will be rescheduled in near future. The Northern Boarder Regional Commission staff will host a meeting at 12 Court sometime in March. The date will be announced publicly when it is scheduled.

Coates, the City of Keene, and the Chamber of Commerce will meet to discuss Collaboration of Renewal Energy Planning.

Coates discussed the Southwest Regional Planning Commissions Winter Quarterly Meeting that was held at Delegation Hall yesterday evening. A discussion of the report that was given by the state on the status of the 2019 DOT projects was reviewed.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

The Weekly Census was then reviewed.

The Weekly Manifest was then reviewed, and **Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept the Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Englund, upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The minutes of February 13, 2018 were then reviewed Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept the minutes as amended and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The calendar was then reviewed.

General Discussion: None

At 11:23AM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Englund, Clerk