

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2020
County Hall Building
Stillman Rogers Conference Room
12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431

Present: Commissioners: Charles Weed, Jack Wozmak and Robert Englund

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Director of Finance Trombly, Grants Manager Bansley, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

Guests: Randy Filiault

At 8:30AM Commissioner Weed opened the meeting and the read public hearing notice for the discussion of the CDBG Microenterprise projects mid-grant reviews.

James Weatherly, Planning Technician 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. He noted that this first hearing would provide an update of the 2019 Microenterprise projects.

Weatherly explained that Cheshire County received \$439,865 in CDBG Microenterprise funds to support Microenterprise centers around the State in 2019. Cheshire County sub-granted the majority of the funds as follows, less administration costs:

- \$150,000 to the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene. The center will provide access for 60 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 43 microenterprises.

- \$135,000 for the Regional Economic Development Center (REDC) in Raymond, NH. 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 54 low-to-moderate income small business owners will use their many resources. To date, they have served 24 microenterprises.

- \$117,500 to the NH Small Business Development Center's Pathways to Work initiatives in Durham and Manchester, NH. 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 29 microenterprises.

The projects are scheduled to close-out by June 30, 2020.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects. Public comments included an update on a Kombucha business that is starting in NH and an update on the success of the bringing low income business entrepreneurs at the Hanna Grimes center in Keene. In 2018 the major growth in businesses has been in the one to nine employees owned.

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NH Small Business Center – Pathway to Work program – unemployed individuals are supported in starting their own businesses. They have served a total of 616 clients and 115 new businesses have been created and have generated \$6.5M in sales and have created 110 new jobs.

The Chair closed the first public hearing at 8:48AM.

The Chair opened the second public hearing for discussion of the second CDBG project at 8:49AM

James Weatherly, Planning Technician 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. He noted that this second hearing would provide an update of the Central Square Terrace Rehabilitation project.

Weatherly explained that Cheshire County received \$500,000 in CDBG Housing and Public Facility funds in 2018 to support the Central Square Terrace Rehabilitation project. Cheshire County sub-granted the majority of the funds, less administration costs, to CST Housing Associates LP. CDBG funds, in combination with Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) funds, are being used for the rehabilitation of 90 apartments at Central Square Terrace, located at 5 Central Square in Keene. All of Central Square Terrace's apartments are occupied by low- and moderate-income elderly and disabled residents.

The project is scheduled to close-out by June 30, 2020.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects recognized Linda Mangoes of Keene Housing who provided the following information.

Keene Housing is happy to report that the rehabilitation of Central Square Terrace is currently "on time and on budget". The entire project included the acquisition of the property and a major rehabilitation of 90 apartments with a total budget of \$15 million. Of that amount, \$13.5 million has been spent or billed, and the project is about 90% complete. The project has been assisted with a CDBG grant of \$500,000 which was obtained through Cheshire County. Since construction began in the spring of 2019, the following has been accomplished: rehabilitation and re-occupancy of the 70 apartments on the Roxbury Street side of the property, and a thorough refurbishing of the Central Square front façade. The major and most complex part of the job is a complete replacement of the heating and ventilation systems. Keene Housing expects to see substantial energy savings from the new systems along with new insulation. The following work remains to be completed: rehabilitation of the 20 apartments in the historic building facing Central Square and renovation of the common space and Roxbury Street entrance. This work is expected to be accomplished by late summer, well ahead of the December 31, 2020 CDBG grant deadline.

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The most visible part of this project is the improvements to the building which occupies a critical Central Square location. But even more important to the Keene community is the impact of the change in ownership. From its 1982 start to 2019, Central Square Terrace was owned by a large group of individual investors located all over the country whose primary interest in the property was its tax benefits. The change in ownership to a limited partnership associated with Keene Housing means that there is now permanent community control over the 90 apartments which are designated entirely for low-income elderly and disabled persons. A long-term contract to provide rental subsidies makes these apartments affordable for its residents. On behalf of Keene Housing and the current and future residents of Central Square Terrace, we want to express our appreciation to the County for its assistance in making this project possible.

A discussion about possibly holding an open house to showcase some of the work that has been completed is under consideration.

The Chair closed the second public hearing at 8:58AM

The Chair opened the third public hearing for discussion of the third CDBG project at 8:59AM.

James Weatherly, Planning Technician 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. He noted that this third hearing would provide an update of the Tanglewood Park Cooperative project.

Weatherly explained that Cheshire County received \$500,000 in CDBG Housing and Public Facility funds in 2019 to support the Tanglewood Park Cooperative project. Cheshire County sub-granted the majority of the funds, less administration costs, to the Tanglewood Park Cooperative. CDBG funds, in combination with additional funds from the assumption of the existing mortgage and investments of the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, were used towards the acquisition of Tanglewood Manufactured Housing Park, located at 17 Sparrow Street, Keene, NH by the Cooperative. An estimated 79% of Tanglewood's 294 households are estimated to be low and moderate income

The project is scheduled to close out by June 30, 2020.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects. The Community Loan Fund representative said that the loans have been completed and it was stated that the majority of the residents are low-to-moderate income individuals and the park is running smoothly and is now owner protected. It was learned that there are 289 members out of 300 residents who have joined the cooperative and that there are 28 lots that are currently empty and nine homes that were either empty or new that were owned by the previous park owners that have now been sold.

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The Chair closed the second public hearing at 9:10AM.

The Chair opened the fourth public hearing for discussion of the Community Development Block Grant Applications at 9:11AM.

James Weatherly 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 in the housing and public facilities category, up to \$500,000 in the economic development category, up to \$500,000 in the microenterprise category, and \$25,000 for feasibility studies. Weatherly provided a handout describing the NH Community Development Block Grant Program eligible activities that included the area HUD income limits.

Weatherly provided a project handout. The proposed microenterprise applications are for up to \$500,000 to support three entities in southern NH: the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene (HGC), 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 has applied for and was awarded Microenterprise funding for the HGC, REDC, and SBDC each year since 2015. The HGC, REDC, and SBDC are all interested in continuing to be recipients of the Microenterprise funding in 2020. The HGC anticipates serving 65 low- to moderate-income beneficiaries, the REDC anticipates serving 55 beneficiaries, and the SBDC anticipates serving 47 beneficiaries. This would be a total of 167 low- to moderate-income microenterprise beneficiaries served.

At 9:14AM The Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects and asked about the REDC project in Raymond NH. It was discussed that the number of agencies throughout the state work together and it is a mutual benefit to all counties.

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

Commissioner Englund moved 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 Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

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

James Weatherly 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. James Weatherly 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 called for public comment and no comments were forthcoming.

At 9:22AM Commissioner Wozmak joined the meeting.

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

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

Grants Manager Bansley was then recognized and discussed Master Agenda Item #754: DOT POS 5310 FTA Certifications & Assurances.

Bansley said that the Commissioners are required to sign a form agreeing to comply with applicable provisions of Categories 01-20 of the FFY 2020 Certifications and Assurances from the Federal Transit Administration as part of grant monies received. **Following a lengthy discussion, Commissioner Weed moved to ask Ellen Avery of the CVTC and the MRCC to provide a full report on the Mobility Management portion of the DOT grant that is administered by the County Commissioners. Commissioner Wozmak seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Weed signed the required document.**

Administrator Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations report.

Coates reminded the Commissioners that the 2020 Budget Delegation Meeting will be held on March 23, 2020 here at 12 Court Street in the Delegation meeting room.

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At 10:02AM HR Director May joined the meeting.

Coates then handed out a letter that outlines the actions that the County is taking concerning the COVID-19 virus concerns throughout the country and county. The letter follows:

From the Office of the County Commissioners:

COUNTY OF CHESHIRE – CORONAVIRUS / COVID19 - BULLETIN #2:

On March 2, 2020 the State of New Hampshire's first positive test for the Coronavirus occurred in Grafton County and since then we have witnessed three (3) more individuals diagnosed with COVID-19. As the entire world is responding to the evolving health crisis, I wanted to ensure that you are provided with updated and accurate information.

Some of the immediate measures that have been taken:

- Cheshire County is actively engaged in discussions with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the lead COVID-19 resource in the state.
- On Monday, March 16, I will be joining Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager of the City of Keene, and other community leaders to begin what will become a weekly update on COVID-19 with DHHS.
- Multiple meetings have occurred, and will continue, with Department of Corrections (DOC) Superintendent Rick Van Wickler, Nursing Home Administrator Kathryn Kindopp, Sheriff Eli Rivera, Human Resource Director Kim May, County Safety Officer Julie Kroupa, IT Director Rob Hummel, Director of Finance Sheryl Trombly and Asst. County Administrator Rod Bouchard, as we continue to monitor and respond to the quickly changing nature of this situation.
- Policies, procedures and response processes have been reviewed to ensure "Best Practices" are in place as we confront the unknown of the COVID-19 virus.
- The Department of Corrections has begun, and will continue, the precautionary practice of disinfecting all doorway handles, toilets and other common areas throughout the facility to ensure the safety of inmates, visitors, and staff.
- The DOC will utilize the in-house segregation unit to quarantine any inmate that may be infected with COVID-19 to avoid the spread of infection within the facility.
- Maplewood has highly trained staff and well-established precautionary procedures and appropriate cleaning techniques to minimize the risk of infectious diseases including

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influenza and COVID-19. These procedures meet and exceed the established the Federal Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

- Signs have been posted at entry areas in all County campuses with CDC informational awareness posters pertaining to travel, recent illnesses, and cough or fever alerts.
- Sabrina Priest, RN, with the oversight of the Nursing Home Administrator Kathryn Kindopp, has been leading the Maplewood team in the formulation of Disaster Plan Preparations utilizing NH DHHS and CDC COVID-19 recommendations.
- Messaging has been on going at all campuses promoting CDC common sense practices such as handwashing, staying home if ill until free of fever, nausea, vomiting, coughing and other signs of illness or distress.
- Beginning this week, we will be requiring all DEW Construction employees and sub-contractors to have their temperatures taken when entering the Nursing Home facility. A presentation on hand washing and preventive hygiene will be scheduled for all personnel.
- A video of the CDC's "Best Practices" around COVID-19 containment and response recommendations that was posted as a YouTube video by the CDC, is now running in the reception area of the nursing home.
- Families are being made aware of the processes and procedures that are being putting in place for the protection of the residents, families and staff. Further information and materials that are received from the State of NH and the CDC that pertain to COVID-19 will be made available as they are received.
- An inventory of health care disaster supplies has been completed and there are currently sufficient quantities of medical face masks and other needed supplies.
- The Counties IT staff has been asked to look at providing the Administrative staff within the county, such as the Finance and Social Service Departments at the nursing home, with the ability to work from home if quarantine of staff members becomes necessary.
- IT will also be looking at how we can facilitate communication between residents and their families if a quarantine is required at the nursing home.
- The Sheriff has been notified that if a quarantine at the nursing home is required that limits family's access to loved ones, some additional support to ensure the safety of residents, family, and staff may be needed.

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- The Keene Campus has CDC information in all buildings promoting healthy hygiene and an overview of COVID-19.
- Keene Campus Maintenance Staff has increased there disinfecting of doors, bathrooms and all common areas.
- CDC COVID-19 Education Posters and links are available on our website <https://www.co.cheshire.nh.us> under the heading of News and Alerts.

Information about COVID-19 is evolving quickly and recommendations from public health officials may change as new information becomes available.

Cheshire County leadership will continue to monitor this rapidly changing situation and will endeavor to provide all pertinent information so that important updates can be immediately distributed.

These are the links for the CDC and NH Public Health Services websites.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/summary.html>

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/2019-ncov.html>

A discussion concerning employees that may be exposed to the virus at work began it was stated that each situation will be assessed on a case-by-case for compensation issues that go beyond accumulated individual sick leave time, vacation time.

Coates said that a second meeting with the Trafficking Task force will take place tomorrow. A public event is being tentatively scheduled that will take place on April 16th from 5:00 – 8:30 details will follow.

Coates reviewed the mutual aid meeting that he discussed last week and said that the County-wide meeting will be held on either the 29th or 30th of April to discuss the opportunities and struggles that the Fire Departments face currently and issues that may arise in the future.

Coates said that Eversource has been told by the NH Public Utilities Commission (PUC) that the proposed battery storage project will need to be reconsidered due to its inability to service the entire feeder line from the Hinsdale switch.

Coates then said that due to COVID-19 virus concerns the Integrated Delivery Network meeting that was scheduled for this month is now cancelled.

Coates then said that the Opiate Planning grant implementation meeting in that he Attended in Washington DC last week was very instructive and he heard of the good work being done by

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UVM that could possibly be utilized in the County. He said that the main takeaway from the meeting is that the County's programs are in a leading position compared to what is happening in many other states and counties. He said that 89 grant implementation awards will be given out this year by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). A further discussion concerning community needs, especially housing for children and women, was covered in-depth.

Coates said that he met with the Department of Corrections (DOC) last week and the DOC Case Manager to review a possible restructuring of the medical department due to the retirement of the current incumbent mental health clinical director.

Old Business: Commissioner Weed said that the Cost Shifting letter will be heard at the New Hampshire Association of Counties Commissioner Meeting on Friday morning and encouraged the Commissioners to attend.

New Business: Coates said that tomorrow in Winchester a meeting will be held to discuss the opiate implementation grant from 3:00pm – 5pm at the Center Church.

The Consent Agenda Items which include the Weekly Manifests and the minutes of February 26, 2020 were then taken-up. Commissioner Wozmak to accept the Consent Agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

At 11:35AM there being no further public business to discuss, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Wozmak and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:
R. Englund, Clerk