



Rochester City Council

Community Development Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Chuck Creteau, Chair
Matthew Richardson, Vice Chair
David Herman
Patricia Turner
Vacant Position

Meeting Date:	Monday, January 29, 2024	
Members Present:	Chuck Creteau Matthew Richardson David Herman Patricia Turner	Members Absent: Vacant Position
Staff Members Present	Kiersten Wright , Community Development Coordinator Todd Marsh , City of Rochester Welfare Director Skip Smith - Share Fund Jaymie Chagnon -Strafford Nutrition Meals on Wheels Jeff Donald - Alliance for Community Transportation Tarah Bergeron - Court Appointed Special Advocates of NH Elizabeth Fourar-Laidi - Community Partners Kathy Beebe -Haven Mandy Lancaster - Waypoint NH	

The Committee arrive back from the Tour of 135 North Main St-79E Applicant
 Call to order for regular meeting by Councilor Creteau at 6:02pm
 Roll Call: See Attached roll call list
 Kiersten Wright attended virtually per COVID policy.

PUBLIC INPUT	No Public Input
Approval of Minutes- October 16, 2023	Councilor Turner moved to approve minutes from October 16, 2023. Seconded by Councilor Herman and approved by all.
Introduction of New Committee Members to Welfare Director Todd Marsh	Todd Marsh the Welfare Director for the City of Rochester introduced himself again to the committee and stated he was there to assist in hear from the applicants for FY25 CDBG Funding.
Information on CDBG (Community)	Kiersten Wright, the Community Development Coordinator for the City of Rochester gave an overview of the Community Development Block Grant

<p>Development Block Grant) Program</p>	<p>(CDBG) Program. Wright explained the requirements for CDBG funding, and the breakdown of how funds can be allocated:</p> <p>15% Public Service Agencies 20% Administration 65% Public Facilities/Infrastructure or Housing Rehabilitation.</p> <p>Wright also informed the Committee that there is currently \$26,005 in unallocated funds from FY24's CDBG grant that can be used towards next year's projects. More information can be found at the bottom of the meeting minutes.</p>
<p>Discuss Future Meeting Dates and Time</p>	<p>A discussion was had to move the committee meetings from the 3rd Monday of the month to the 2nd Thursday of the month to avoid conflicts with other committee meetings that members are a part of.</p>
<p>Meet with Applicants for CDBG FY25 Funding</p>	<p>Sharefund- Skip Smith- \$16,000 Skip Smith from the Sharefund introduced himself to the committee and discussed the various ways that Sharefund has helped the community. The Sharefund has been around for over 30 years originally starting under Holy Rosary Church and becoming its own entity, while also taking on Gerry's Food Bank. They are the only diaper bank in the area and provide food and clothing to those in need as well as rental assistance. In 2023 alone they helped 105 families with rental assistance, amounting to over \$56,000. Already in the first month of 2024 they have spent \$2800 in rental assistance. Councilor Creteau requested from the city's Welfare Director to know more about the relationship between Welfare and the Sharefund. Mr. Marsh stated that Welfare and Sharefund have a good relationship, and that Sharefund has provided a lot of services to those in need within the city. Mr. Smith stated that they do not just help in providing financial assistance, they'll also try to help those coming to them with their budgets and to connect them to other groups that may assist them in other ways. Councilor Turner asked if there is a higher rate of repeat residents. Mr. Smith explained that residents are allowed financial assistance once in a 12 month period. It was also noted that Sharefund has a good relationship with Amazon Campground and that they are not limited by the same governmental regulations that the Welfare Department might be.</p> <p>Strafford Nutrition Meals on Wheels- Jaymie Chagnon- \$5,000 Jaymie Chagnon from Strafford Nutrition Meals on Wheels introduced herself to the committee and gave an overview of the services that Strafford Nutrition Meals on Wheels offers. In 2023 the Meals on Wheels program assisted roughly 500 Rochester residents. For every meal, the organization needs to raise 25-30% of the funds. They focus on elderly care and low- moderate income residents, but do help other residents that may be in need of assistance, like a child who recently had surgery and is in need of multiple meals a week. One of the goals of their organization to help keep people out of institutions as long as possible (nursing homes, or other facilities). While the drivers do delivery meals, they also are making welfare checks while they are there. If they notice something is off or if a resident seems to be in a different state then</p>

normal, or they aren't answering, they reach out to the person emergency contacts to see if they are ok. The drivers provide companionship to these residents, and in some instances the seniors trust these drivers more than others, and on occasion they have been asked to come in to help when communicating with the fire department. Mr. Marsh from Welfare stated that this group keeps an eye out on the city's most vulnerable group of people. Councilor Creteau inquired as to what percentage of recipients are Rochester residents. Ms Chagnon stated that they assist roughly 1500 people a year with about 500 of them being from Rochester, making Rochester roughly 1/3 the amount of people they assist on a yearly basis. They work hard with grant writers and getting funding through grants and cities. Patricia Turner asked how many people work for them, 27 mostly drivers, mostly part timers.

Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT)- Jeff Donald- \$6,000

Jeff Donald introduced himself to the committee and gave an overview of the program. The funding from the CDBG program that they are requesting would go towards operating community rides, staffing for the Regional Coordination Council and operational costs for regional transportation call center. Coast is the lead agency that provides overview for the program. Community Rides offers to help plug some gaps that some other transportation groups miss, allowing for those outside the normal area for assistance to receive it. So far this year, the common app, which takes all the local transportation services and puts them into one application to request, has received 107 Rochester Resident requests. Todd Marsh noted that the Common App is a great tool that allows residents one place to go to rather than numerous applications. Kiersten Wright also noted that so far in FY24 ACT has done a good job with reporting requirements and that they have been very responsive when requests have been made. Jeff also wanted to note that they have started to update their system to ask for more information to assist in further reporting.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)- Tarah Bergeron- \$5000

Tarah Bergeron from CASA introduced herself to the committee and gave an overview of what Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) does. CASA of New Hampshire is different from other state CASAs as they cover the whole state of New Hampshire where as other CASAs are regional. They currently have about 600+ volunteers to help across the state with about 1500 children in need each year. Volunteers are trained to help represent the victimized children; they are the voice for the children in cases of abuse or neglect. CASA Volunteers are unpaid Guardian ad Litem. At this time there are not a lot of volunteers in Rochester, however there are about 100 children from 68 cases since July of 2023 that are from Rochester. The CDBG Funding that CASA is requesting would go towards training costs to train more volunteers from Rochester. The Community Development Committee members thanked Ms. Bergeron for all that they do within the community and the children they have helped.

Community Partners- Elizabeth Fourar-Laidi- \$5000

Elizabeth Fourar-Laidi introduced herself to the committee and gave an overview of Community Partners and the program they will be requesting

funding for. Community Partners helps to provide development and mental health services to meet the needs of families and individuals within Strafford County. The Rental Assistance program is what they are requesting funding for, which is currently funded by grants. Case Managers are assigned to the family or individual to help them stabilize their situations. Councilor Creteau asked if this is specifically for rental in order to help them not lose their housing and how to they help with stabilizing. Ms. Fourar-Laidi stated that the case managers are trained individuals who help using numerous systems. They offer courses as well has have experienced trainers in their system to help train case managers. Councilor Creteau inquired how long the program has been in place, and it was stated over 8 years. Councilor Turner asked about how many people are assisted per year; roughly 20 to 25 residents. Councilor Herman inquired how much assistance was provided. Ms Fourar- Laidi stated that it varies depending on the residents situation. Todd Marsh from Welfare stated that rental assistance doesn't take long to be used up due to the rising costs of rent. He also inquired how they handle duplication of benefits to prevent residents from taking advantage of multiple programs. Currently Case Managers review their information to ensure that duplication of benefits does not happen. Councilor Richardson inquired why they hadn't received prior year funding, was it due to not being awarded or not applying. Prior to FY24 they had not received funding in a few years, and in FY24 they had not applied for funds due to having COVID funds.

Haven- Kathy Beebe- \$5,000

Kathy from Haven introduced herself to the committee and explained that they are looking for CDBG funding to help with the 6 unit emergency shelter they are currently leasing. There is a plan for Haven to build their own shelter, but they are working on finding the proper location and funds prior to building. For that happens they still need to have a shelter for those seeking safety from domestic abuse situations. For a while they had COVID Funding that helped subsize the rental costs, but unfortunately that funding is not available. The 6 unit shelter is used in various ways, including overnight shelter while those awaiting transportation to other accommodations, a few week stay, a few month stay or in one case several years. Haven does have case managers to help get people into permanent housing and help get them back to some normalcy. Haven is a low barrier shelter but safety is their number one priority for those in need. Haven does also try to work with local Housing authorities to get housing from those fleeing domestic violence situations. This funding would be used specially for the 6 unit lease.

Waypoint- Mandy Lancaster- \$10,000

Mandy Lancaster from Waypoint introduced herself to the committee, giving a brief overview of their facility. Waypoint is a drop in engagement center. They provide showers, laundry, food, clothing, etc for unhoused residents between the age of 12 to 25. This is the younger demographic that might not be able to enter a shelter like Willand Pond(18+). They do have a transitional living center in Dover, but the Rochester location is a drop in center at this time. Waypoint works with the youths to help get them into programs, get schooling, housing or other needs while also trying to get them to connect with their community. There are case managers who help the residents with various different needs, including

resume building, how to have meals and even conflict resolution. Councilor Richardson inquired as to how many youths do they typically see. Currently there have been 70 unduplicated youths in the drop in center this year (July to January). Councilor Creteau inquired as to what kind of staff works at the facility. Ms. Lancaster explained that they have staff with various types of degrees from social workers, psychiatrists and many more. They also work on getting staff training as well as work with people that have lived experiences and can give better insight to the situations that the residents have been through. Todd Marsh from Welfare stated that their department is in contact with Waypoint frequently throughout the month and that they will send a representative with the youths to welfare to help support them. Councilor Creteau inquired if they have a connection with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). Ms. Lancaster explained that they do not work with children who are already in the system, but they will help reconnect them to the system if they need assistance.

Other Business

The Committee discussed the 79E tour they had prior to the start of the meeting. Councilor Richardson made a motion to recommend the 79E application for 135 North Main St for 7 Years. Councilors Herman and Turner seconded, all were in favor. Wright noted she would inform Jenn Marsh from Economic Development of this approval from the Community Development Committee.

Councilor Creteau brought up the Rule of Order for City Council and section 4.19 Functions of The Community Development Committee. Currently the functions include the following items: Economic Development, Industrial Development, Land Use Policy, Technology Issues, Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Main Street, Arts and Cultural, Recreation, Parks, Adult & Youth Services, Promotion Activities and Festivals, Public Relations, COAST, CDBG, and Human Services.

The Committee discussed how this could be broken up into different umbrella categories, with Social Services as one, having organizations or projects like CDBG, Human Services and COAST under one section and on Community Development having groups like Chamber of Commerce, Rochester Main Street or projects like the 79E applications under it.

The Committee agreed that they should have a purpose statement for the Community Development Committee on the city website so that residents know what the committee does and how they can get involved. Councilor Herman stated he would like there to be more education for the public on how to get involved and what we do as a committee. Councilor Creteau invited Todd Marsh from Welfare to join the meetings going forward when he can as he thinks he maybe a valuable resource of knowledge. Todd Marsh

	stated he would try to make the meetings he can, however he does have other committees and boards he is a part of that may prevent him from attending.
--	--

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Councilor Turner. Approved by all, meeting adjourned at 9:05pm

Next Meeting – Monday, February 8th, at 6:00 p.m., Cocheco Conference Room, City Hall Annex, 33 Wakefield St.

Topics: Meet with other CDBG and Municipal applicants, further discussion on the committee's goals.

Respectfully Submitted by

Kiersten "Kay" Wright, Community Development Coordinator.

<u>ATTENDANCE SHEET</u>			
<u>Date: 1/29/2024</u>			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	Present	Excused
Councilor Creteau	<i>Chair</i>	x	
Councilor Richardson	<i>Vice Chair</i>	x	
Councilor Turner	<i>Member</i>	x	
Councilor Herman	<i>Member</i>	x	
Vacant Position	<i>Member</i>		
<u>Others Present</u>			
Kiersten Wright *	Community Development Coordinator	x	
	<u>*attending virtually per COVID policy</u>		
Todd Marsh	Welfare Director	x	

Points to note for CDBG applications:

Eligible Agencies:

Agencies must have a 501(c)3 tax exemption status with the IRS and provide proof of this when applying for funding. At least 51% of their clients must earn very low, low or moderate incomes. Income rates can be provided by the Community Development Coordinator for the City or can be found [here](#). Agencies must have a place of business in Rochester, or provide services to very low, low and moderate income Rochester residents.

Eligible Expenses:

The cost of labor, supplies, and/or materials required for the service agency to function are eligible expenses. Grant funds **cannot** be used for political activities or for government owned buildings (ie. City hall, the community center, police station), unless used to remove a barrier for ADA Accessibility.

Project Beneficiaries:

At least 51% of the individuals and/or families assisted by the program must earn very low, low or moderate incomes. Beneficiaries must also be Rochester residents. Agencies can provide services to other cities, however of their Rochester residents, they must be 51% very low, low or moderate income. Since several homeless shelters take residents from Rochester, funding can be used for groups outside of Rochester so long as they can show they have assisted residents (ie. My Friend's Place or Cross Roads House who accepts Rochester residents at the request of Welfare).

Available Funding:

Under the Community Development Block Grant **15%** of the awarded funding can be allocated to **Public Service Agencies, 20% to administration** and the remaining **65% can be used for housing rehabilitation or public facilities/infrastructure**. The lowest amount to award a group is \$1000 under Public Service Agencies.

Examples of Public Service Agencies (day to day running of agencies, not updates to buildings)

- Waypoint
- CASA
- Strafford Nutrition Meals on Wheels
- Share Fund
- Haven
- Dover Adult Learning Center

- Cross Roads
- Alliance for Community Transportation

Examples of Housing Rehabilitation:

- Community Action Partnership of Strafford County- Weatherization Program

Examples of Public Facilities

- Waypoint- Youth Drop in Center – Funded with Public Facilities funds
- Hanson Pines- Kayak Launch
- Rochester Child Care Center- Fire Doors
- Rochester Child Care Center- Blinds replacement
- East Rochester Public Library- Replacement of faulty lights and broken water heater
- Haven- New Shelter Land Acquisition
- Homeless Center for Strafford County- New Kitchen
- Homeless Center for Strafford County- Ductwork Project

Emergency Use:

Funding from CDBG funds can be allocated for emergency use in the event of natural disasters, however due to the low dollar amount the city receives, it would be best to look under alternative options prior to looking into the use of CDBG funding.