



Rochester City Council

Community Development Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Laura Hainey, Chair
Harlan “Skip” Gilman
Tim Fontneau
Amy Malone
John Larochelle

Meeting Date:	Monday, January 30, 2023	
Members Present:	Laura Hainey Harlan “Skip” Gilman Amy Malone	Members Absent: John Larochelle Tim Fontneau
Guests/Staff:	Kiersten Wright, Community Development Coordinator; Todd Marsh, Welfare Director for the City of Rochester	

Councilor Hainey called the meeting to order at 5:54 p.m. Motion was made by Councilor Malone to approve the December 19, 2022 meeting minutes and was seconded by Councilor Gilman. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT	There was no public input.
Introduce Todd Marsh from Welfare to the Committee	Ms. Wright introduced Mr. Marsh from the Welfare department to the Committee. Mr. Marsh was invited to the meeting to provide insight on some of the applicants that have applied for both CDBG and Municipal funding as his department has worked closely with several of the applicants. He can provide information on how much they have assisted Rochester in the past and how beneficial they are to the community.
Potential New Program-Orton Foundation Heart and Soul	<p>Ms Wright was approached by the Planning Director, Ms Saunders, for the City of Rochester with a potential opportunity to work with the Orton Foundation Heart and Soul. Ms Saunders had previously worked with his group during her time in Laconia and found it to be extremely beneficial to both the community and the leadership of Laconia.</p> <p>The goal of the program is to come into the community and teach leadership how to listen, conduct public meetings and how to get out to the communities more to speak to their constituents. The group also helps take controversial ideas and brings them to the community and teaches the leaders how to listen and take the information from the people and utilize it better in their decision making process.</p>

	<p>The hope is to start this program with the Community Development Committee and proceed from there throughout different Committees in the City and with City Council. Ms Saunders would like to come to the February meeting along with a member from the Orton Foundation to discuss this program further.</p> <p>The Committee unanimously agreed this sounds like a good program and requested that Ms Wright reach out to Ms Saunders and set up a time for them to come during the February Community Development Committee Meeting.</p>
Community Development Program Updates	<p>Ms Wright informed the Committee that no changes have occurred since the last meeting and her focus has been getting applicants in for the meeting to present information on their respective programs and CDBG funding as well as municipal funding.</p>
OTHER BUSINESS	<p>Ms Wright provided updates on the Rec Departments FY23 CDBG Application for the Hanson Pines Improvement Project. Per HUD the nature of the project should be separated into two different projects as the Pickleballs Courts will take longer than the Camera installation and Teen Seating area.</p> <p>The Rec Department was able to update the applications and separate the projects into two. The Committee would need to move to bring this to City Council for the council to approve of the change to the project. Councilor Hainey moved have the Community Development Committee bring this to City Council. Council Gilman seconded, and motion was unanimously approved.</p> <p>Ms Wright was approached by the Rochester Public Library with a request to apply for up to \$150,000 in grant funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities Council. The Grant is the Cultural and Community Resilience. The goal is to identify and capture culture and historical resources, including through digital means, in communities potentially endangered by climate events such as wildfires, droughts, hurricanes or rising sea levels.</p> <p>The City's involvement with this grant would be as the fiscal sponsor and no match is required for the library to accept the funds if granted. Councilor Hainey moved to bring this to City Council for approval. Councilor Gilman seconded and motion was unanimously approved. This will be brought to the City Council meeting February 7, 2023 for the city to approve or deny the Rochester Public Library's request for a Fiscal Sponsor.</p>
CDBG And Municipal Fund Applicants' Presentations	<p>Ms. Wright had previously provided a brief overview of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which are federal funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and</p>

Urban Development for activities and projects benefitting low to moderate income residents. The grant caps awards for operating expenses (as opposed to bricks-and-mortar projects) at 15% of the overall annual grant award.

Some organizations presented in-person before the committee in the Cocheco Conference Room, and some organizations presented via Microsoft Teams Video conferencing. Councilors Hainey, Malone and Gilman were present. Councilors Fontneau and LaRoche were not in attendance.

Dover Adult Learning Center (DALC)- Deanna Strand (In person)

Ms. Strand stated that DALC is asking for \$5000 in CDBG funds for its HiSET (high school-equivalency) testing preparation program. Ms. Strand provided an update from the meeting last year. Thanks to the assistance of the previous Community Development Coordinator and the meeting to discuss CDBG Funding, DALC and the high school were able to work together to help with some of the funding. While the school wasn't able to provide any funds, they were able to give them space, which allowed DALC to move out of their previous location and move into the Foley Community Center in August 2022. Since then, DALC has absorbed the adult diploma program. They have been able to provide more options to earn credit towards a diploma, rather than a GED. Moving into the Foley Community Center has allowed funds that would normally go towards rent towards other programs within DALC. Ms. Strand gave an update on one student that had come to the program in support of a friend and had loved the atmosphere there he decided to join. He graduated from the program in June 2022, and since then had started working for Easter Seals, received 2 promotions, and decided to enroll in an IT program to help better elevate his career.

The Councilors thanked Ms. Strand for everything her and her program offer the residents of Rochester. This program has helped many residents throughout its time and is a valuable program for the city and its residents.

Alliance for Community Transportation (ACT) Jeff Donald (in person)

Mr. Donald stated that ACT is looking for \$6,000 in CDBG Funds. COAST Is the lead agency currently working with ACT, along with Rockingham Nutrition Meals on Wheels, Community Action Partnership, and Ready Rides. The main program that they are looking for funding for is their Community Rides program. This program serves the elderly and disabled for non-emergency medical transportation. Working with the groups mentioned above, ACT assists in facilitating the pickups. The program is limited to 10 one-way trips per month per client, but the rides assist those who currently are unable to get rides with current programs available. The group receives federal funds; however, they do require local match to help round out the budget. Last year Rochester Residents made up 358 trips. So far in the FY23 year there have been 214. Rochester makes up about half the rides since 2020.

Haven- Julie Wiggin (In Person)

Ms. Wiggin stated that Haven is requesting \$5,000 in CDBG Funds. Currently Haven assists in housing domestic violence survivors. Since the shelter was moved to Somersworth, a 5-unit apartment with 1 for emergency housing has been made available. These apartments allow residents to have their own area to live, which has opened up this service to all genders. Prior to this Haven was only able to offer to women and children. The expansion of the shelter will allow for the assistance to more residents.

East Rochester Library- John McLain (In Person)

Mr. McLain stated the East Rochester Library is requesting \$11,000 from municipal funds for operating budget which is up \$1,000 from last year due to utilities and heating. \$1,000 is also for lighting upgrade which is currently needing a significant upgrade. The funding would also help to add hours to the library, which is currently open only 2 days a week, 4 hours per day. They would also like start Author Nights again, inviting local authors to come and speak about their books. Mr. McLain state that East Rochester Library is also looking for CDBG funding in the amount of \$8350. This funding would go towards the installation of a hot water tank to providing hot water to the building. They currently have running water and sinks, but not hot water anywhere in the building. They would

also like to use the funding to update the lighting system due to the age and deterioration of the lighting. During the summer months it isn't a problem, but during winter they have very little/poor lighting in the building which makes it difficult to conduct business and offer the space for use. Part of the CDBG funding would also allow the library to purchase some tablets or iPad that would work with augmented headphones to help those who are hearing or visually impaired. Additionally, the purchase of children's tablets that would allow access to different reading, math and games for children, as well as some displays and laptops to help with presentations that maybe done within the building.

After Mr. McLain left Councilor Hainey inquired if they would be eligible for public facilities and infrastructure funding through CDBG for the water heater and lighting. Ms. Wright stated that it would be eligible but would verify before the next meeting. The committee agreed that it maybe a better avenue for the library as they would be able to fund the pressing issues with the library which are the water heater and lighting.

My Friend's Place- Susan Ford (Virtual)

Ms. Ford stated that My Friend's Place is requesting \$30,000 in funding to assist in running the shelter in Dover. As of last year, there were 7705 bed nights, with every person being 1 night. Of those 7705 bed nights, 3398 were Rochester residents. That amounted to 108 weeks. During the FY22 year, a week's stay in a motel would be \$300 per week. That is unfortunately unheard of at this time with the rates increasing by at least \$150 per week. Last year alone, housing those Rochester residents, meant the shelter was able to save the city of Rochester roughly \$32,314 per Ms. Ford's calculations. The goals for My Friend's Place are to hire a case manager to help the single men, women and families who come into the shelter.

Mr. Marsh elaborated on the close relationship that My Friend's Place has with the City of Rochester and how they have worked together for years to assist those in need of transitional housing. My Friend's Place contacts Rochester on a regular basis when there is housing open for families to ensure that those in need get the help they deserve. My

Friend's Place consistently provides support to the City's Welfare department.

Historic Society- Bob Griffin (In person)

Bob Griffin stated that they are looking for \$5,000 in municipal funding to help defray the cost of archival storage. Mr. Griffin stated that he had gone through some storage at the Historic Society and found items in cardboard boxes that should be in better storage containers to ensure their preservation. Most of the items were clothing items, vintage letterman jackets from the high school and dresses from the early 1900's. Some items date all the way back to the 1800's. There are over 100 boxes that need to be preserved.

Ms. Wright inquired if there were any documents that would be included in that group. She mentioned that the library is currently waiting on approval to apply for grant funding that would allow them to archive some of their old documents and microfilms and that the Historic Society may want to reach out to see if they can work together.

CASA- Jennie Sheehan (In person)

Jennie Sheehan stated that CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is looking for \$5,000 in funding this year for their program. CASA Handles all cases of child abuse and neglect out of Rochester Court. They assist Dover residents but primarily Rochester. New Hampshire Law states that a child facing abuse must be appointed a CASA Attorney to be an advocate for the child. This is court mandated; however, the state only contributes some funding; not enough to fund the entire program. All advocates are volunteers and are not paid for their services. The funding for this program would help to pay the general funds to help increase the number of volunteers by offering more trainings.

SOS Recovery- John Burns (in person)

John Burns stated that SOS Recovery is looking for the same municipal funding as last year in the amount of \$40,000. Funding focuses mainly on staffing wages for those who have experienced caring for those experiencing homelessness. There has been increased engagement this year, but unfortunately there is not enough funding. SOS Recovery works with the warming centers which have already been

activated several times this year due to the cold temperatures. As of February 1st, they will be at 40 nights, but only budgeted for 99 nights. They are seeing other funding for more flexibility of use. The city of Rochester along with Somersworth and Dover work together to help these warming centers that have been crucial to the homeless populations in the three towns.

Cornerstone- Jen Guillison (virtual)

Jen Gullison stated that Cornerstone is looking for municipal funding in the amount of \$28,826, which is unchanged from last year. Cornerstone VNA offers homecare, hospice care, end of life care, palliative care, homecare education and a number of other programs. They are working to offer more clinics in towns, but they require funding to help with those programs. Already one of their programs that they offer at the senior centers assists to train the elderly to be free from falls. Cornerstone also is offering specialty programs like certified wound care, and programs to help those with uncontrollable swelling. These programs help teach people how to care for wounds and also helps get these people out of the house. Over 1800 people have been assisted in the last year in Rochester. Rochester is such a big recipient of care from Cornerstone that they have a dedicated team just for Rochester residents.

Guyer Travel- Dillion Guyer (in person)

Dillion Guyer stated that Guyer Travel's ELAINE Program is requesting \$25,000 in CDBG Funding to assist with their program. Mr. Guyer provided a PowerPoint with detailed information on his program. ELAINE or Elevated Learning and Advocacy in New England provides a lot of support for the Rochester school system. They offer over 500 backpacks every year to Rochester children filled with supplies for school. This alone is \$10,000 in funds. ELAINE has worked with dozens of community programs, the Rochester PD Juvenile Diversion Program, Waypoint and many others to help put on events through the community. ELAINE has unanimous support from the school board and they are a well-known group within the city of Rochester.

ELAINE's goals it to try to target everyone and not just kids. They have numerous resources and are able to help children and families to those resource that they might not be familiar with. They are also working on investing in school scholarship programs for both primary and post-secondary educational needs.

Councilor Hainey stated that many children she works with in the school system have expressed excitement when they hear that Mr. Guyer is in the school. The children are given opportunities for hands on learning experiences that they might not have otherwise.

Strafford CAP Weatherization- Bob Arnold (in person)

Bob Arnold from Strafford Community Action Partnership's Weatherization program is requesting CDBG funds in the amount of \$65,000. CAP's Weatherization program's objective is to reduce energy costs and assist the elderly, disabled and children. By providing energy efficiency in homes, it ensures those that live there safety and security that they might not have had before. All clients who received assistance with this program and CDBG funding are homeowners, owner occupied. Some home heating replacements are a minimum of \$5500 to fix the system. Those that are on fuel assistance can be assisted at no cost. If they are not, CAP verifies their income and in some cases are able to get those people onto fuel assistance. IN the Past 18 months CAP has weatherized and/or assistance with emergency system replacement of 89 homes, with 39 of those being assisted with CDBG funding.

Councilor Hainey inquired about the turn around time for how long it takes to receive assistance after a call. Mr. Arnold stated that if they call before 5pm during the week they try to get out to them within 24 hours. During the weekend they try to get to them as quickly as possible to fix the issue.

The money from CDBG is directly for the clients and directly to the client and not to any admin costs. CAP tries to work with as many local contractors as possible and this money not just helps the community by providing safe and secure houses to those in need, but they also put money back into the economy by using local contractors.

Todd Marsh mentioned that they have referred many people to CAP for help with Weatherization and they have helped so many people and alleviated so many concerns that local

residents have. They are able to do things that Welfare cannot, like pay for a furnace. They are very important to the community and help so many people.

Strafford CAP- Melissa Spil (In person)

Melissa Spill stated that Strafford CAP is looking for \$10,000 in Municipal funding. This program has many resources for families within Rochester. Over 10,000 households have been helped this year, with over 4,000 being from Rochester. 2 out of 5 households assisted by CAP are from Rochester. The need for assistance in programs like this is rising, especially for programs like fuel assistance. They have received over 3300 applications for fuel assistance, which is almost double in the last few years. They have almost exhausted their federal funding for fuel assistance. As they are not able to use CDBG funding for programs such as that, Municipal funding gives them more flexibility in assisting residents with this program. The 10,000 would help so many Rochester residents, especially with rising costs of fuel.

Strafford Nutrition Meals on Wheels (SNMOW)- Jaymie Chagnon (Virtual)

Jaymie Chagnon stated that Strafford Nutrition Meals on Wheels is looking for \$5,000 in CDBG Funding. The goal of SNMOW is to assist in providing meals to the elderly and disabled. The majority of those assisted are elderly, with low income, however some clients are those that have had surgery and are unable to leave their homes during their recovery time. Ms. Chagnon stated that while their program does bring meals to those in need, they do so much more than that. Those that drop off meals do a wellness check when they are there. They look for injuries or attitude changes to ensure that they are safe and healthy. About 50% of those who benefit from this program have stated that other than receiving a meal from MOW and seeing the driver, they do not have any interaction with anyone else during the day. These meetings are crucial to keep those in their homes longer. Ms. Chagnon stated that they have been receiving ARPA funds that have helped with the rising cost of food, but those funds are about to run out. They are working on advocating to receiving more funding, but the funds received from CDBG funding are important in providing nutrition meals to the

elderly. Without these funds they are looking at starting a wait list (which the program has not had to do since Ms. Chagnon has taken over) or cutting meals. Before COVID they assisted roughly 450 people per year with varying number of meals, but post COVID they are looking at over 600. The need for programs such as this is increasing.

Ms. Wright requested to know roughly how many meals could be provided with the funds they are requesting. Ms. Chagnon indicated that meals are roughly \$9.62 per meal, meaning \$5000 would providing roughly 520 meals for residents.

Cross Roads- Will Arvelo (In person)

Will Arvelo from Cross Roads stated that they are looking for \$15,000 in CDBG funding. Cross Roads is a shelter located in Portsmouth that also acts as a warming center for Rockingham County. They work with Strafford County Cap as well as the Willand Warming center to help ensure that those in need have a place during cold weather events. So far this year there have been numerous families assisted from Rochester. Cross Roads is looking for \$15,000 to help cover the cost of housing, which is roughly \$70 per night to house one individual. Cross Roads is predominantly funded with private donations. 13% of funding being from Federal funds and 10% from State funding. They have been seeing an increase in older residents, who are staying longer due to health reasons. Many more 55+ residents with low income are staying longer because they have no other place to stay with their poor health, mobility issues or fixed income preventing them from finding housing.

Every individual and family that comes into Cross Roads is assigned a case manager to help them during their time and transition them into permanent housing. Funding would help the staffing of case managers and help with rehousing costs that may occur.

Mr. Marsh provided insight in how Crossroads is beneficial to Rochester even though it is located in Portsmouth. They have the ability to housing people from Rochester that we might not be able to get housing at the Homeless Center or My Friend's Place. This keeps people out of the hotels and is less expensive for the city. Crossroads has been willing to help more and more over the years. Their service helps the city to meet their LEGAL obligation for housing under NH Laws. Even

the ability to offer, even if they don't accept it, it's still an offer that they are able to provide that they might not if Cross Roads wasn't available. Cross Roads has been just under My Friend's Place in terms of reaching out to Welfare office. It is a great offer to provide those who may have mobility issues and would not be able to stay at My Friend's Place as Cross Roads has a little bit more accessibility than My Friend's Place.

After the presenters left Councilor's Hainey and Malone wanted to know if it was possible to offer municipal funding instead of CDBG funding to certain programs like Cross Roads and My Friend's Place as they are crucial in assisting the City of Rochester and their residents. Ms. Wright stated that this would be something that would have to be brought to City Council for their approval but she would also check with the Director of Finance to see if there is anything else that would be required of the committee in order to bring that to the City Council in March. Ms. Wright stated she would let the Committee know during the next Community Development Meeting in February.

Motion was made by Councilor Hainey to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Malone seconded, and Councilor Gilman agreed. Meeting Adjourned at 9:48pm.

Next Meeting – Monday, February 27, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., Cocheco Conference Room, City Hall Annex, 33 Wakefield St.

Topics Follow up with remaining applicants for CDBG and Municipal funding, Meet with Planning Direction and Member from Orton Foundation.