



TOWN OF WARE

Planning & Community Development

126 Main Street, Ware, Massachusetts 01082
t. 413.967.9648 ext. 186 f. 413.967.9642
pcd@townofware.com

Meeting Minutes from **January 8, 2015** Community Development Authority

Authority members present: Mary Harder, Vice-Chair, Bill Cooper, Paul Opalinski, Tracy Opalinski

Authority members absent: Dave Gravel, Chair

Staff present: Karen Cullen, Director

Public: Harry Commerford, (Hardwick Board of Selectmen), Theresa Cofske, (Hardwick CD Advisory Committee), Andrew Loew (PVPC), Monica Moran (DVTF), Peggy Baxter (DVTF), and JAC Patrissi (PATCH)

M. Harder called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Administrative (taken out of order)

- a. *Minutes of December 15, 2014* – not prepared; tabled.
- b. *Financial Report* – Karen handed out the financial report which is the first completed in several months; CDA members reviewed, no questions. Karen mentioned that over the next two months we will be discussing how the CDA wants to use the funds in the program income account which will be over \$100,000 soon (the transfer of the 2014 recapture account, 2134, is in process) and the ED Revolving Loan fund, 1005.
- c. *Meeting days* – tabled discussion of switch from Monday to Thursday until all members are present. The February meeting can be either Thursday Feb. 12 or Thursday Feb 19; decided to make sure Dave is available so will decide via email.

2. New Business

Review proposals for social services for FY15 CDBG application

Andrew Loew gave a brief introduction to tonight's discussion. Karen stated that the total requested by all proposers was just under the maximum amount we expect to have available, which will depend on the total grant amount once the budget for the other activities is worked out. The CDA then invited each of the proposers to give a brief review of their proposal. Noting that funding over the last few years has been lower than hoped, Karen invited the proposers to also give the CDA an idea of how a

little extra money might make a difference in their services, given that the CDA does have a substantial amount of program income.

A. Domestic Violence Task Force (DVTF), Monica Moran and Peggy Baxter

- 14-20 meeting attendees per month, service providers and survivors
- Have worked extensively with Bay State Mary Lane hospital this year, providing training for nurses and others to effectively help survivors.
- This education is a process, not something the nurses can learn and incorporate into their routine overnight. At this point the nurses have become skilled in how to ask questions and follow up when a survivor indicates a willingness to talk about their situation.
- Resulted in increase in calls for service from survivors.
- Years ago survivors were advised to go to Northampton or Springfield; with our well established local program there has been significant improvement in providing services to survivors.
- The high school now has its own task force with 33 students and 2 teachers; this is the result of extensive work of the DVTF with the school over the last couple of years, providing training on healthy relationships, etc.
- The DVTF is currently discussing becoming a true regional task force with Ware, Hardwick, and Warren. All three towns have had some level of a task force in the past, but establishing a strong regional TF would help those in need in all three towns. Challenges have been the two counties, thus two court systems, but the logistics of serving the survivors are becoming less of an obstacle as the TF handles cases in all three towns.
- In answer to a question, it was noted that when dealing with survivors, seeking the services of the DVTF is entirely voluntary; nobody (on the task force, police force, hospital, etc.) pressures a survivor to seek services. The task force does provide training for bystanders, so relatives, friends, or co-workers can effectively support a survivor and that may result in the survivor seeking services.
- Current and past funding, in addition to CDBG funds, comes from Country Bank, a STOP grant to assist with follow-up through police departments, a grant from the hospital, and the Zonta club.
- Additional funding could be used to hire someone who would be dedicated to working with the schools, which would allow the Quaboag Middle & High School to benefit from the program as the Ware schools do.

B. Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH), JAC Patrissi

- Replaces the Under Five Thrive/Family Support Services program. Purpose is to provide “behind the scenes” services to help young adults, with children under 5 years old, attend classes at WALC to further their education so they can obtain employment and become productive citizens.
- Roughly 30 clients are served, the maximum that can be served under the current funding and staffing. Believe there are a lot more people who could

benefit from the services if additional funding was available so they could hire more staff.

- Additional funding is provided by the United Way. In the past, they could leverage health insurance funds but the insurance companies have been tightening the criteria for this type of service to the point it is all but gone. They have sought funding from other sources but so far have not been successful, in part because they are part of a large organization. (Valley Human Services, which is part of The Carson Center, will soon merge with the Behavioral Health Network).
- Provides links to services as well as direct services to the community.
- PATCH is intentionally very flexible, providing services where needed to clients, not a one-size-fits-all approach. Analogy is to first watch where people walk, and then build the sidewalks on those pathways instead of trying to guess where to build the sidewalks.
- Over the last few years working with young families in Ware and Hardwick, staff and volunteers have learned more effective ways to serve this population; the PATCH model is a much better approach.
- A PATCH team consists of many different people who specialize in providing different services (e.g. housing, daycare, nutrition).
- PATCH teams continue to work with clients until major issues have been resolved (e.g. getting into an apartment they can afford).
- A pilot PATCH program has been running successfully in Hardwick for the past year, and will help provide the needed services to the population served (young families).
- The staff will work in both Hardwick and Ware, and will provide transportation to services from either town.
- T. Opalinski suggested JAC reach out to the new administrative team at the Ware schools to promote the PATCH program, so the schools can help to identify kids in need (e.g. drop-outs, pregnant teens).
- If extra funding was available, JAC would use it to enhance the opiate addiction program as that is a crucial issue in the area now.
- Andrew Loew asked about how they determine if the clients are low-moderate income, in regard to required reporting to DHCD. Suggested he and JAC talk to Chris Dunphy at PVPC to determine how that is handled.
- In response to a question regarding measuring success, JAC said they measure outcomes but do not have the data to measure impact. They know when clients have reached their goals (e.g. passing the HiSET) and track their clients quarterly at the least, but they have no way to follow up with past clients to see if they are gainfully employed or in college after they leave the program.
- On average, it takes about nine months to see significant changes for the clients.
- Theresa Cofske noted that 20 years ago when none of these services were available, life was much worse for people in need; these services are extremely

important and have made a huge difference to those being served as well as to the community at large.

C. Hardwick Council on Aging, senior lunch program, Harry Commerford and Andrew Loew.

- When the Hardwick senior center was forced to close several months ago, they moved to the municipal building which does not have a kitchen and thus the congregate lunches that were prepared for the seniors could not be prepared.
- Hardwick contracted with the Quabbin Regional School District to provide lunches for 12 seniors four days per week. This request is to run this program from December 2015 through November 2016.
- Arrangements are being made to obtain meals from the Age Center of Worcester Area during school vacations.
- Meals will be transported to the senior center in Hardwick.
- No other funding resources are available at this time.
- It is expected that a new senior center will not be built for a number of years.

D. The Literacy Project, Ware Adult Learning Center (WALC)

- No one in attendance to speak directly about this program, but the CDA is very familiar with the center and its programs.
- A question was posed to JAC with the PATCH program regarding transportation to WALC (in Ware) for Hardwick residents who do not have their own transportation; Andrew Loew noted the WALC proposal mentioned subcontracting with PATCH for transportation. JAC added they could provide more consistent transportation as well as transportation for non-PATCH clients if they had additional funding.

Andrew Loew noted again that if the total amount of the grant is not reduced due to reductions in any of the other activities in the application, then we will be able to fund each of the four proposers to their requested amounts.

Paul Opalinski made a **motion** to approve all four of the social service proposals and to fund them to their requested levels, contingent on remaining within the 20% of the grant total allowed. This includes WALC at \$75,000, PATCH at \$45,000, DVTF at \$48,000, and the Hardwick COA at \$12,000; for a total of \$180,000. **Seconded** by Bill Cooper, the motion passed unanimously (4/0/0).

Mary Harder made a **motion** to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that the FY15 CDBG application be approved for submission to DHCD as drafted, including Housing Rehab for 16 units in Hardwick and Ware, with Ware's portion focusing on properties with two or more units as identified in the Property Assessment and Reuse Plan (PARP), for a total of \$542,000 (including temporary relocation and delivery); Social Services as detailed in a previous motion for a total of \$190,800 (including delivery); a planning activity for an environmental hazards study at 179

Main Street, Gilbertville (the vacated senior center) for \$49,500; and General Administration for \$117,345, for a total grant request of \$899,645. It was noted these amounts may be slightly modified as the grant documents and budgets are finalized before the application is submitted in February. **Motion seconded** by Bill Cooper and passed unanimously (4/0/0).

The public hearing on the submission of the application will be held January 20, 2015 at 7:15 at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting. CDA members are encouraged to attend, especially since Karen is not available. Andrew Loew will fill in for her at the meeting.

3. Updates

- a. *Housing rehab* – Karen informed the CDA that there are a couple of projects that have run into difficulties and there may be additional funding that allows another unit to be done; Andrew Loew said that the staff at PVPC are income-qualifying the next few applicants on the waiting list so any additional units should be completed before the deadline.
- b. *High Street Improvements* – Fay, Spofford & Thorndike (FST) have been hired to oversee this project and are currently preparing bid documents. The bid process will begin at the end of February with an April construction start in mind.
- c. *Prospect Street design* – FST won the bid for this work as well; contract documents are currently being executed.
- d. *FY15 CDBG application* – discussed earlier in meeting; Andrew Loew noted that he has a web page on the PVPC website for this application, where people can go to see all of the materials available on the application. There is a link to this site from the Town’s CD page as well.
- e. *Master Plan* – no activity recently due to other pressing needs.
- f. *Visioning/Wayfinding* – consultants will be in town next month.

4. Other (any discussion and action may be postponed until next meeting) – it was noted that the Carson Center has merged with BHN, the Behavioral Health Network. (UPDATE: at the February 12, 2015 CDA meeting, D. Gravel noted that the merger has been postponed until July 2015).

5. Adjourn – 7:54 p.m.

Prepared by Karen Cullen
Planning & Community Development Department