

TOWN OF WARE

Planning & Community Development

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Minutes from October 21, 2019 Community Development Authority

Meeting held at Town Hall, Select Board Meeting Room, 126 Main Street, Ware, MA

Members Present: Paul Opalinski, John Carroll, Danielle Souza, Brandy Brusco

Guests: Ted Harvey (PVPC), Rebekah DeCourcy (Director of Planning & Community Development)

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman P. Opalinski opened the meeting at 6:33 PM and led the Pledge.

Welcome to the newest member, Brandy Brusco.

Approval of Minutes

On a Motion J. Carroll and seconded D. Souza, the minutes of July 15, 2019 were approved as amended. Voted 3-0-1 (B. Brusco)

Public Performance Hearing

Chairman Opalinski read the public hearing notice for "FY 18 Community Development Block Grant Program."

a. Ware River Valley Domestic Violence Task Force –

- Monica Moran from PVPC assisted in organizing the 5th Awareness Walk was Saturday, October 19. There was a great turn out.
- The Town of Palmer is interested in joining Ware River Task Force. They will hire their own person for Palmer, but coordinate with us.
- Domestic Violence Chaplain is in successful early stages: they have helped 10 survivors through religion and faith.
- Highland Village has a monthly survivor/victim support group.
- The Ware High School Task Force has over 30 students. There is also a peer advice column in the Ware River News.

d. First Time Home Buyers Program – D. Souza was at Realtors Association of Pioneer Valley on November 5; there are four \$2,500 grants available. Applications for the grants can be found on the "Buy Ware Now" page online.

c. Code Enforcement – demolition of abandoned homes. Street Reconstruction. Discussion of where the CDA can use money from to work on

b. Review Financial Accounts – Discussion of using CD Revolving Funds for streetscape improvements with the Main Street Reconstruction.

- Overall the grants are applied for in February are then awarded in the fall. FY2017 WRV / HR - December will close-out; there is still one HR project in Hardwick. All other Social Services and Housing Rehab projects are closed up. FY17 - 24 HR; 5 Social Services. Each year PVPC is audited by the state. There are some findings: PVPC didn't have all required HR documents in file, some were in the field. The programs funded were Domestic Violence, Adult Literacy, DATCH, Hardwick Senior Center. The Hardwick Youth Center was the one Social Service audited and "inappropriately spent" money on a Blue Man Group Show and a youth hostel. The group did a lot of other historic and cultural activities on the trip, but PVPC will refund the state the cost of the show. They will not need to refund the cost of the hostel.
- FY 2019 Ware and Hardwick – 4 Social Services and Code Enforcement of multi-family properties. November 1st should have funds available. The HR program is coming along and there even may be a need for more applicants.

a. CDBG - Updates

Chairman made a motion to close the Public hearing at 7:00 pm. Seconded by John Carroll. All in favor.

- Final paving will happen in the Spring if not Summer of 2020. Because it is an old street, the contractors want it to settle prior to final coat of paving. There are a few minor things that need to be addressed: drainage, one ADA ramp, and step visibility.
- The contractor had different opinions from Highway, contractor, and engineer on some things, but in the end the project came out really well.
- The remaining budget will cover the several change orders and some things were under budget. Wright-Rearce will be billing more hours than anticipated. They have put extra work into the project than anticipated.

Approved Minutes on Nov 12, 2019

P. Opalinski *Paul Opalinski*

John Carroll *John Carroll*

Danielle Souza *D. Souza*

Brandy Brusco *Brandy Brusco*

Next Schedule Meeting is November 12, 2019

Adjourn
Motion to adjourn by D. Souza at 8:02 pm and second by J. Carroll. All in favor.

Old/New Updates -
Brenda Cooper has resigned from the Committee due to other conflicting commitments. The Committee thanks you for being a member of the CDA.
Discussion was made about possible other potential committee members.

The goal is to have 73 West Street taken down. There is a \$25k grant the town can apply for, but it will be \$70-90k to demolition. The CDA has discussed providing the demo funds for this burned out home for quite some time. The building is a huge eyesore in town. Town meeting allowed the town to purchase the property and then the town would try to sell the property as is with a condition that the building has to be demolished within a certain period of time. No offers came in. In the meantime, the estimated demo cost has increased from to nearly \$90,000. If a grant can be obtained for \$25,000 the CDA is willing to fund the remaining amount with the condition the CDA receives any the funds upon sale of the property. Alternatively, J. Carroll expressed interest that perhaps the CDA could donate money to the purchaser to help as part of funding the demo, particularly if affordable housing was built. Possibly cut down on original demo cost and actually look like a good investment for someone

- e. Monroe Street Brownfields Grant -
At this time \$50k can be awarded, with a match portion of the grant. Time and equipment idea of in-kind match from the DPW and Parks are needed to see what they would be willing to donate.
- f. Abandoned Housing Initiative Grant -