

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
3rd CDBG CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

February 7, 2014, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Third Floor Conference Room, Lewiston City Building

FINAL MINUTES

Roll Call: The meeting was started at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Andy Choate, Nathan Libby, Pauline Gudas, Heidi Brooks, Walter Hill, Richard White and Sue Charron

Staff Present: Lincoln Jeffers, Jayne Jochem and Cathy Lekberg

1. Review and approval of January 24, 2014 meeting minutes

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Richard White** to accept the January 24, 2014 CDBG Citizen Advisory Committee Minutes as presented. Second by **Nathan Libby**.

VOTED: 7-0 (Passed)

2) Public Service Agency Interviews

St. Mary's Nutrition Center – Lots to Gardens – Mia Poliquin Pross and Sherie Blumenthal presenting:

This program's objective is to increase food access for at-risk residents living in Lewiston and Auburn. They have transformed 13 vacant lots into community gardens through their Lots to Gardens program and these gardens will support 350 – 400 people with limited income in accessing fresh produce by growing their own food. The Lots to Gardens program offers unique educational opportunities, leadership and job training, and job placement for underserved teens in the Lewiston/Auburn area. Members asked if they ever have done soil testing and Mia said they test all of their lots every year. She also said that they build their beds above ground. Members also asked if they plan to expand their lots to 15 instead of 13 and she said because of finances, they do not have the resources to expand.

LearningWorks – Lewiston Family Literacy Initiative – Teeyonda Hall and Ethan Strimling presenting and Eric Knutsen was in attendance:

The purpose of this program is through academics and parenting classes, to teach and empower parents with low literacy levels to create an environment at home for children to be successful in school and eventually in college. They also provide much needed literacy skills for adult immigrants in an effort to secure employment. Teeyonda said that they have started classes in January and at this time they have 39 families which is a very strong start. These classes are held at Hillview and River Valley. Ethan said to clarify the \$20,000 versus the \$7,395 request for CDBG funds, he explained that they originally planning on funding the entire director's salary but did not realize that CDBG

does not pay for indirect costs and they reduced their request per Jayne Jochem. There was some discussion about offering the program at the B Street Community Center or other location in the downtown, which was considered by Learning Works, but after consultation with the community being served and limited program capacity it was determined Hillview and River Valley were the best places to be to start the program. River Valley is providing space for the program.

Advocates for Children – Maine Families Androscoggin – Gillian Roy presenting:

This organization works with many of the most vulnerable children and families in Lewiston and Androscoggin County and they would like to add one Home Visitor to the Maine Families Program and that is why they were asking for \$40,000 this year. This is critical because it will enable the agency to privately hire a Somali speaking caseworker that is highly qualified but would not need to meet the rigorous requirements of having secured a Bachelor of Science degree as required by a State of Maine funded position. Gillian said their home visits do lead to more extensive involvement by other agencies and they make referrals on a weekly basis including to mental health services. She also mentioned in the original budget submitted the salary and benefits were incorrect and passed out a revised version. The families this agency serves are low income and 75% live on less than \$19,000 a year. Their goal is to help parents become in tune with their children. They teach the parents about home safety, sleep environment, domestic violence, lead education and also perform screenings.

Cultivating Community – The New Sustainable Agricultural Project – Craig Lapine and Daniel Ungier presenting:

This program teaches very low-income refugee and immigrant families, 73% of who reside in Lewiston to start, build and operate sustainable green food and farming businesses by providing training, workshops, and mentoring. They hold some classes at the B Street Community Center and also have an incubator farm site at Packard-Littlefield Farms in Lisbon, ME. They focus on building income from farm-based businesses. On average, participants in the program saw on average a 30% increase in their incomes. The Committee asked if there would be any effort to integrate the locals and new Mainers and Craig said this program is historically for refugees and immigrants and there are other programs out there for the locals, so they will not be integrating with the locals. It was also asked what the percentage served were Lewiston residents and Daniel said 2/3 were Lewiston and 1/3 were non-Lewiston. Members were concerned that Lewiston CDBG money would be going to South Portland, and Craig said that the funding requested would be used to fund Lewiston clients. Also, this an expensive program and they invest a lot in farmers. When produce is sold, there is a percentage put back into the program.

Lewiston Recreation Department – Youth Right to Play – Maggie Chisholm and Joline Banaitis presenting:

This program allows youth to participate in City programs throughout the year regardless of the ability to pay. Funding will be used to pay full scholarships as well as partial scholarships. It will assist Lewiston families who are in need of financial assistance and increase the opportunity for youth to participate in structured and creative programs as well as have a better quality of life through health and fitness. This funding will provide scholarships for 136 youths and partial scholarships for approximately 40 youths. Members asked if the children were currently turned away because of the inability to pay and Maggie said yes. Maggie explained that the budget was blank because this is a new program and there is no other funding for it. It was brought up that the Recreation Department was late in their reporting of the demographic forms and supporting documents and Maggie explained at that time they had lost a staff person and it made it difficult to submit on time, but apologized and said they would be on time going forward. The Committee asked if these programs were existing programs that disadvantaged kids were not able to participate in, and Maggie said yes.

Pathways, Inc. – W.T. Twarog Senior Enrichment Center – Robert Kennelly and Mariann Bonang presenting:

This program is requesting funds to obtain two computers and software programs to work with individuals that have been diagnosed with early stages of dementia and Alzheimer's. This equipment helps people with Alzheimers stay alert. They would also like to purchase two iPads for their non-verbal individuals. Members asked if there were alternative sources of funding and Bob said they receive funding from Walmart, Mainecare and United Way. They also fundraise by holding golf tournaments and dinners out. The Committee members suggested finding different places to purchase this equipment possibly getting it cheaper. They also asked if they would utilize the Skype program and Mariann said they would not. Walter said he would check into purchasing software cheaper and get back to them.

Tedford Housing – Lewiston Supportive Housing Services – Craig Phillips presenting:

To assist in the 10-Year Plan to end homelessness in Lewiston- Auburn, and at the City's request, Tedford Housing built a ten-unit building on Blake Street to provide permanent supportive housing to assist homeless people. This year's funding request will fund a case manager which will keep the existing level of service of 16 hours per week. The typical stay at these housing units is 2.5 years but people are allowed to stay as long as they want. A case manager is available to assist these families with complex situations like mental health issues and substance abuse. The goal of the shelter is to give people a stable living environment and direction and access to services that will allow them to move on to independent living situations. The case manager develops a plan of care to increase their quality of life. The Committee asked if all age groups were allowed to live in that building and Craig said yes. Tedford also gets referrals from Safe Voices. Members mentioned that at the time of submission of this application, services were discontinued because there was no case manager. They asked if this position would be re-established and Craig said there is still an active position open at this time. It was also

asked if they had any long-term goals in Lewiston in addition to the Blake Street location and Craig said yes, they are committed to Lewiston.

Western Maine Community Action – Work for Success – Jim Trundy and Patti Sharinen presenting:

This program will serve ten disengaged youth/young adults and prepare them to re-enter the educational system or the work world. To do this, staff works with them individually and in groups in either educational or work readiness topics. To reinforce their work readiness topics, the participants will be placed at worksites and paid wages as indicated in the budget. Staff will also monitor their progress in these worksites. Weekly sessions for educational tutoring and work readiness will continue throughout this 12 week program. The goal of the program is to reconnect them with the educational system or be employed. The Committee asked what types of jobs are offered and Jim said that clients would have to meet certain requirements and some might not get served but he said they find them jobs in the retail, restaurant and healthcare fields. He said that this may not be the last stop for these youths and through mentoring, they may continue on to find better positions. Members asked if they used assessments and Jim said they test educational level, aptitude, interests and values. They also are supportive if they need services such as childcare and transportation. Members also asked if wages paid were livable with benefits and Jim said these jobs pay a little more than minimum wage and their goal is to teach them jobs skills so they can find better jobs.

Richard White left the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

3) Status of Loan Programs

Jayne handed out copies of the website that she had created. The Committee will review and discuss this at the February 21, 2014 meeting.

4) Any other business members may have relating to the duties of the CDBG Committee

The Committee decided that they would hold a mini CDBG training/overview to discuss interviewing and scoring. They decided to start the next meeting at 9:30 a.m. before the two pilot programs arrived at 10:00 a.m.

5) Adjournment

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Pauline Gudas** to adjourn the meeting at 12:35 p.m. Second by **Sue Charron.**

VOTED: **6-0 (Passed)**