

## **Selectmen's Meeting – December 19, 2007**

Present were Selectmen Bruce L. Tatro, Nancy L. Carlson and Deborah J. Davis. Also present was Town Administrator Elizabeth Fox.

Chairman Tatro called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

### **Public Hearing for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Proposal.**

Chairman Tatro called the public hearing to order reading the notice provided – Attachment #1. The Chair opened the first public hearing for discussion of the CDBG project at 6:03 p.m.

Grant Writer Matthew Suchodolski, Community Development Specialist from the Southwest Region Planning Commission, explained that Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities for economic development, public facility and housing rehabilitation projects and feasibility studies that primarily benefit low and moderate income persons. He stated that, “the Town of Swanzey is eligible for up to \$500,000 a year for public facility/housing rehabilitation, up to \$500,000 a year for economic development projects, as well as up to \$500,000 a year in emergency funds”. He also stated that, “feasibility study funds are available for up to \$12,000 per year and that all applications are accepted by the NH CDEA on a competitive basis”. Attachment #2, detailing eligible activities for these funds, was distributed to hearing attendees along with Attachment #3 the HUD Income Limits Table for the State of NH.

Keith Thibault, in his capacity as Housing Director with Southwestern Community Services, Inc. stated that “the proposed application to the Community Development Finance Authority is for \$500,000 in CDBG funds which are proposed to be targeted for a portion of site acquisition and the extension of water and sewer utilities to support a 38 unit senior housing project recently approved for funding through the HUD 202 program. Mr. Thibault showed those present a draft site plan and dialogue followed on the project's early details proceeding for approximately 10 minutes.

Mr. Suchodolski stated that “the project conforms to four goals outlined in the Town of Swanzey's Housing and Community Development Plan”.

- That Swanzey will provide for a full range of safe and adequate housing to meet the needs of all Swanzey residents of all ages and income levels, and to contribute our “fair share” to regional need.
- That the availability of public/private sewer and water in West Swanzey will permit a higher density of both residential and commercial/industrial development. In addition, the recent infrastructure improvements in portions of North Swanzey will also facilitate both residential and commercial/industrial development in those areas.
- Establish appropriate support services for the elderly and those persons with special

needs so they may continue to reside in the least restrictive environment.

- Encourage higher density residential development in areas where community water supplies and sewer systems are available.

Suchodolski reviewed that the proposed project will particularly benefit low (50% MFI) and very low (30% MFI) income seniors as the housing to be constructed is restricted based on income. He asked if anyone had questions on the income table that was distributed. No comments or questions were brought forth.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment on the project.

Tax Collector Ruth Snyder queried whether the project was subject to property taxes. Mr. Thibault advised that a payment in lieu of taxes would be established. Service needs of the residents of a senior housing complex were discussed with Thibault indicating that they tended to be related to EMS and for a project of this size he expected one to two calls a month would be generated.

Selectman Davis motioned to close the public hearing on the project portion of the CDBG block grant hearing. Seconded by Selectman Carlson. All in favor. 3-0. Motion passed

Selectman Carlson motioned to open the second public hearing for discussion of the proposed Housing & Community Development Plan – Attachment #4. Seconded by Selectman Davis. All in favor. 3-0. Motion passed.

Grant Writer Suchodolski explained that the Housing and Community Development Plan was adopted in 2003, and is due for review, comment and re-adoption every three years. Discussion ensued around the plan regarding the updates made as a result of the 2003 Master Plan Update and recent changes in the Town's Zoning Ordinance.

The chair called for public comment. No comments were received.

Selectman Davis motioned to close this portion of the public hearing. Seconded by Selectman Carlson. All in favor. 3-0. Motion passed.

Selectman Davis motioned to open the third public hearing regarding the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Seconded by Selectman Tatro. All in favor. 3-0. Motion passed.

Mr. Suchodolski distributed copies of the Town's Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan – Attachment #5 – and explained that if any displacement takes place as a result of this project, the Uniform Relocation Act must be followed, which requires that any displaced household or business in a project using any federal funds must be found comparable housing in a comparable neighborhood at a comparable price. Displacement and relocation is not within the scope of this project. Under the certification section of the application, the town will certify that the Residential Antidisplacement &

Relocation (RARA) plan is in place, and in the event that it is discovered that this specific project does displace persons or households, a displacement implementation plan must be submitted to CDFA prior to obligating or expending funds.

The chair called for public comment. No public comments were received.

Selectman Carlson motioned to close the public portion of this hearing. Seconded by Selectman Davis. All in favor. 3-0. Motion passed.

Selectman Carlson motioned to adopt the Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan – Attachment #5. Seconded by Selectman Davis. All in favor. 3-0. Motion passed.

Selectman Davis motioned to adopt the updated Housing and Community Development Plan – Attachment #4. Seconded by Selectman Carlson. All in favor. 3-0. Motion passed.

Selectman Carlson motioned to approve the submittal of the CDBG application and vote to authorize the Chair, Selectman Tatro to sign and submit the application, and upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize the Chair, Selectman Tatro to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract. Seconded by Selectman Davis. All in favor. 3-0. Motion passed.

The Chair closed the Public hearing at 6:40 p.m.

**Financial Matters.** Selectmen reviewed and approved accounts payable and payroll manifests.

**Public Hearing – RSA 31:95-e, Emergency Operations Center Base Radio.** Chairman Tatro called the public hearing to order reading the notice provided – Attachment #6 – at 6:41 p.m. Department of Safety through the Homeland Security Grant program has offered to acquire for the town thru grant funds a new base station radio for the Emergency Operations Center. No public comments were received. Chairman Tatro closed the public hearing at 6:42 p.m. Selectmen voted to accept, pursuant to RSA 31:95-e, the radio purchased by the state donated to the town with an estimated value of \$6,600.

**Public Hearing – Proposed Amendment to Cable Franchise Agreement.** Chairman Tatro called the public hearing to order at 6:45 p.m. reading the public notice provided Attachment #7. The amendments proposed to the current agreement for the most part relate to the cable franchise fee. Lee Perkins, of Cheshire TV, reviewed the proposed amendment which includes an increase in the franchise fee from .75% to 2% for calendar year 2008 and a cap for the fee of 3.25% for the balance of the life of the agreement. A copy of the amendments proposed is included with the minutes – Attachment #8. Chairman Tatro opened the hearing calling for comments from the public. Paul Daniello spoke in support of Cheshire TV expressing pleasure with the valuable programming it provides. Peg Schaffler spoke in support of the programming and training opportunities offered citizens by Cheshire TV. In her opinion the service is well worth the increased

support. Peter Schaffler also spoke in support of increasing the franchise fee to support the PEG channel's efforts expressing his appreciation for the opportunities to express opinions to a wider audience. Gayland Tranco, a member of the Cheshire TV Board of Directors, also spoke in support of the amendment and increasing the franchise fee. The point of origination requirements within the current contract, and Time Warner failure to meet existing contractual requirements, was discussed. Lee Perkins advised Selectmen that the town was also permitted a representative on the Cheshire TV Board of Directors. Posting of that position was discussed. Gail Burgess felt that the proposed increase in the franchise fee was not significant but expressed concern about other cost increases planned by Time Warner. Bob Beauregard spoke in support of Cheshire TV and spoke of his history with development of the current franchise fee and Time Warner's unwillingness to fairly treat the community relative to PEG access funding. Lack of responsiveness from the cable provider was discussed at length. Chairman Tatro closed the public hearing at 7:15 p.m.

**Representative to Cheshire TV Board of Directors.** Peg Schaffler expressed interest in ensuring that town had representation on that board. The position posting process was reviewed.

**RSA 41:14-a, Conservation Easement Kibler/Gill Properties in the Perry Brook Watershed, Swanzey.** Selectmen met with Dee Robbins of the Monadnock Conservancy, voting to execute on behalf of the Town the documents securing the conservation easement – Attachment #9 & 10. All board members signed the easement. The owners of the parcels have executed the easements and the President of the Monadnock Conservancy is scheduled to do so on Friday.

**Non-public session – RSA 91-A:3IIc, Family & Medical Leave.** Selectmen voted by roll call to go into non-public session at 8:15 p.m. Selectmen came out of non-public session at 8:17 p.m. Selectmen approved a request for up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave anticipated to begin February 6<sup>th</sup> for Code Enforcement Officer James Weston.

**Tax Deferral.** Selectmen approved deferral of 2007 property taxes on Tax Map 70 Lot 1.

**Sidewalk Tractor.** Updated pricing was shared with board members. Selectman Carlson queried regarding responsibility for shoveling of West Swanzey Water Company hydrants.

**Carry forward Appropriations.** Selectmen voted the attached resolution relative to carry forward appropriations – Attachment # 11.

**Police Department Fleet.** Information regarding historical fleet usage and proposed leasing and costs associated with vehicle conversion and change over was reviewed by Selectmen. Revisions to the fleet plan recommended by Busick resulting 6 department vehicles plus the SRO car after acquisition of three 2008 Ford cruisers were reviewed with Selectmen. If implemented the oldest car in service would be a 2003 Ford assigned for use by the detectives, details and a spare responder vehicle when others are out of service.

**Stratton Free Library Budget.** Details provided for the library's submitted budget – Attachment #12 – which is 20% higher than the 2007 appropriation were reviewed with Selectmen eliminating funds for a groundskeeper requested as town forces currently mow and will in the future shovel the walkway at the library. Additional funds requested for bookkeeping services were discussed with Selectmen eliminating funding for that request as well. Printer services and Supplies were held at 2007 levels. Selectmen also expressed concern about the high cost of liability insurance and what the library was purchasing for that coverage and whether it was necessary given comments made by Trustees Bouffard and Kenney the previous week. Board members requested staff investigate the issue further and that more information about the insurance be obtained from library officials.

**Fire Department.** Status of the pending captain recruitment and a request received from Chief Symonds to reconsider the position descriptions was discussed with Selectmen requesting proposed amendments be developed for their consideration. Proceeding with the recruitment effort for captains is deferred pending resolution of the position requirements.

**Record Retention.** Policy for retention of audio tapes resulting from land use board meetings was discussed with Selectmen setting a retention policy for these tapes of 4 years.

**Pending Budget Issues.** Issues pending related to the 2008 budget were identified and include DPW vehicles, the sidewalk tractor, Stratton Library insurance and capital reserve and expendable trust accounts. Inclusion of a proposal for a full time fire chief also requires additional discussion.

**Consideration of Minutes of Previous Meeting.** Selectmen reviewed and approved as written the minutes of their meeting of December 12, 2007.

**Town Report Bids.** Selectmen consider the bids received noting that 2 bids did not submit their bids in a timely fashion as laid out in the bid request. Fairness to the bidder who complied with the terms resulted in Selectmen deciding they could not waive irregularities in the bid submissions. Board members voted to award to Howard Printing the bid for production of the annual town report and voter guide.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Submitted by,

Elizabeth A. Fox  
Town Administrator