

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Community Hall
January 14, 2014
PUBLIC HEARING – 2014 CDBG-CDF I Grant Application

Called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Sheila Litchfield with Brian DeVriese, Bill Lattrell, Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator, MJ Adams, Director of Community Development at Franklin County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), Brian McHugh, Construction Coordinator, HRA and Peter Wingate, Energy Director at Community Action present.

Reviewed Agenda: No changes.

Public Hearing:

Sheila Litchfield, Chair of Select Board, read aloud the public notice of the hearing as posted. MJ stepped forward and explained reason for tonight's hearing and the complete process of the CDBG application. All criteria must be completed as required by DHCD (Dept. of Housing and Community Development). Application is due 2/14/14. After review by DHCD, awards are announced around July 4, 2014 with activities starting up in fall, 2014. The term of the grant runs from 10/14-12/15. A regional application is being prepared including Heath, Hawley, Ashfield and Charlemont. MJ provided a hand-out with details on the fuel assistance program outlined in the application. With a housing rehabilitation component, the fuel assistance program satisfies the social service component of the application. 22 units of housing rehabilitation will be offered if the grant is awarded. This will be divided across the towns. MJ summarized the process for application by residents for housing rehabilitation assistance and their financial responsibility. She shared that pre-applications have already been submitted for construction season 2015. MJ again described the fuel assistance component of the application termed, "Keeping West County Warm." This will be a supplemental assistance program for delivered fuel designed for hill towns reliant on delivered fuel. Delivered fuel includes oil, wood, and propane. MJ shared, with a hand-out, the eligibility requirements of the program. Brian McHugh shared that assistance has decreased – 30% down from \$1,500 per family to \$950. He added that an average fuel cost for families runs about \$2,200 and higher in hill towns. There are currently 34 eligible families but they are working on outreach. A close relationship with fuel assistance staff is important. When doing housing rehabilitation projects, an energy assessment is critical to maximize energy efficiency. The program for fuel assistance will be administered through Community Action. The Selectmen were very supportive and felt it is a great use of funds. MJ shared that documents will be forthcoming prior to the application deadline for signatures.

7:30 p.m. MJ Adams and Peter Wingate left meeting to attend another public hearing.

Brian McHugh opened the floor for public comment. The answers to questions are as follows:

- Yes, information on this program is shared. There will be an advertisement in the newspaper, on websites, social service agencies and officials. There is a brochure for the program.
- Once program is up and running, all money is spent. Always exceed or meet unit goals but rarely go over limit per unit project. Try not to walk away from projects that may have a public health risk but this is not a substantial aid program. Rather it is considered moderate.
- Septic loan money is separate from CDBG money

On a motion by Brian DeVriese, and seconded by Bill Lattrell, the Select Board of the Town of Heath voted unanimously to affirm that the Town will serve as the lead community in a regional application (Heath Four Town FY14) for FY14 Community Development Block Grant Funding, joined by the

communities of Ashfield, Charlemont and Hawley to seek funding for Housing Rehabilitation and Social Service Activities.

On a motion by Brian DeVriese and seconded by Sheila Litchfield, the Board voted unanimously to close public hearing and resume Board of Selectmen meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Leistyna, Town Coordinator