



Rochester City Council

Community Development Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Elaine Lauterborn, Chair
Donna Bogan, Vice Chair
Doug Lachance
Laura Hainey
Palana Belken

Meeting Date:	Monday, February 10, 2020	
Members Present:	Elaine Lauterborn Laura Hainey Donna Bogan Palana Belken	Members Absent: Doug Lachance
Guests/Staff:	Julian Long, Community Development Coordinator John Burns, SOS Recovery Center Martha Stone, Cross Roads House Michael Williams, COAST Deanna Strand, Dover Adult Learning Center Tracey Donaldson, Dover Adult Learning Center Jeremy, Dover Adult Learning Center Cheryl Van Allen, HAVEN Skip Smith, SHARE Fund Bob Dauber, Triangle Club Bob O'Connell, Triangle Club Tracy Hardekopf, Homeless Center for Strafford County Susan Ford, My Friend's Place	

Councilor Lauterborn called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m. Councilor Bogan made a motion to approve the January 13, 2020 and January 23, 2020 committee meeting minutes, and Councilor Belken seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC INPUT	There was no public input.
FY 2021 GRANT APPLICANT PRESENTATIONS	<p>Mr. Burns from SOS Recovery Center explained that SOS Recovery Center is requesting a larger amount of municipal funds for FY 2021 as in the prior year funding was split between municipal funds and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. SOS Recovery Center is requesting FY 21 to fund half of a Rochester-only staff position.</p> <p>Councilor Belken asked about the closing of Dover's Bonfire facility and its effect on SOS Recovery Center. Mr. Burns replied that the main effect is a reduction in already insufficient recovery housing. Councilor Belken also asked about data comparisons between 2018 and 2019. Mr. Burns replied that SOS Recovery Center has seen an increase of about 10%.</p>

Ms. Stone from Cross Roads House stated that Cross Roads House is the largest emergency homeless shelter in the Seacoast region, providing services for single men, single women, and families. Ms. Stone stated that the shelter served 94 Rochester residents last year and now serves more Strafford County residents than Rockingham County residents.

Mr. Williams from COAST stated that COAST provides public transit in the form of the bus routes and paratransit services for residents with disabilities. Mr. Williams explained that a federal funding source has recently ended, and although COAST has redesigned its system to improve services and reduce costs, there is still a funding gap. Mr. Williams added that the redesign is adding service to Washington Street and express service from downtown Rochester to downtown Portsmouth, while eliminating service north of Lilac Mall and the limited East Rochester route.

Councilor Lauterborn noted the large increase in the FY 2021 request from the FY 2020 request. Mr. Williams explained that this is due to the elimination of a large federal grant and the increase in northern Strafford County ridership. Councilor Hainey asked whether a decrease in local funding would mean a reduction in federal funding, and Mr. Williams said that this is the case. Councilor Belken praised COAST for its system redesign process and its responsiveness to public feedback.

Ms. Strand introduced Ms. Tracey Donaldson and Jeremy from Dover Adult Learning Center. Ms. Donaldson explained that Dover Adult Learning Center provides HiSET (GED) classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and other educational services at its Rochester location. She added that the Rochester location has expanded its hours due to increase in demand for services.

Jeremy, a current Dover Adult Learning Center student, stated that the convenience of the Rochester location was a factor in his returning to school. He also stated that he has found the computer classes useful.

Councilor Hainey asked how many Rochester students are served per year, and Ms. Strand replied that about 175 students each year come from Rochester. Councilor Belken asked how students learn about the classes and get enrolled. Jeremy stated that he heard about the classes from word of mouth. Ms. Donaldson added that Dover Adult Learning Center also receives referrals from Bud Carlson Academy and MY TURN.

Ms. Van Allen of HAVEN stated that HAVEN is the primary provider of sexual assault and domestic violence survivor services for Strafford County. The agency also serves part of Rockingham County. Agency services include shelter, supportive services, and educational outreach presentations at schools. Ms. Van Allen added that 63% of all shelter bed nights from last year were Rochester residents.

Ms. Van Allen stated that HAVEN is requesting both public service agency funding, for the Housing First Program manager salary, and public facilities funding, for land acquisition for a larger shelter that will also cohouse the HAVEN offices. This program assists clients to transition immediately to safe permanent housing.

Councilor Lauterborn asked where the new shelter will be located. Ms. Van Allen stated that the proposed location is Portsmouth. She added that HAVEN is also requesting CDBG funding from the cities of Portsmouth and Dover.

Mr. Smith of SHARE Fund stated that the SHARE Fund provides a range of supportive services such as Gerry's Food Pantry, financial literacy education, and rental assistance. The CDBG funding request would support the rental assistance program. SHARE Fund anticipates an increase in demand for the next program year, which is reflected in the increase in requested funds.

Councilor Lauterborn asked where the remainder of SHARE Fund's funding comes from. Mr. Smith replied that funding also comes from outside private donations from individuals and businesses.

Mr. O'Connell stated that he became involved with the Triangle Club as interim director as he saw the need for its recovery services (such as hosting AA, NA, and Al-Anon) when he served as executive director of the homeless shelter My Friend's Place. Triangle Club is requesting public facilities funding to upgrade its electrical systems.

Councilor Lauterborn asked how many Rochester residents are served by the Triangle Club, as it is located in Dover. Mr. Dauber stated that about 20% of its clients served about Rochester residents. He added that while Rochester's SOS Recovery Center tends to serve younger clients, the Triangle Club serves somewhat older clients.

Councilor Hainey asked what Triangle Club's annual budget is and if other communities fund the Triangle Club. Mr. O'Connell replied that the annual budget is about \$300,000 and that Triangle Club also requests CDBG funding from the City of Dover.

Ms. Hardekopf from Homeless Center for Strafford County stated that the center has submitted two applications, one for public service agency funding for operating expenses and one for public facility funding for kitchen installation expenses for its new shelter. Ms. Hardekopf stated that the center focuses on avoiding adverse childhood trauma for homeless families and that recently the center has started admitting single men.

Councilor Hainey asked about many residents the center serves. Ms. Hardekopf replied that the shelter is limited to 26 residents at a time under current capacity.

	<p>Ms. Ford from My Friend's Place stated that My Friend's Place serves as a homeless shelter for men, women, and families. She stated that My Friend's Place has already exceeded its FY 20 estimated number of clients served and will end the program year at nearly double the number of homeless Rochester residents served as anticipated. In recent years, My Friend's Place has increased its capacity from about 17 beds to about 28 beds by bunking beds in its bedrooms.</p> <p>Councilor Hainey asked about the average length of stay. Ms. Ford replied that the average stay has increased to about five to eight months, largely due to low rental vacancy rates in the Seacoast region.</p>
FY 2020-2025 DRAFT CONSOLIDATED PLAN – Review and Approval	Mr. Long provided a brief overview of the draft Consolidated Plan and encouraged committee members to contact him with any questions or requested revisions before the March committee meeting.
FY 2021 DRAFT ANNUAL ACTION PLAN – Review and Approval	Mr. Long provided a brief overview of the draft Annual Action Plan and encouraged committee members to contact him with any questions or requested revisions before the March committee meeting.
PROJECTS PROGRAM REPORT	Mr. Long provided brief overviews of current CBDG activities and projects, including the continuing corrective action efforts in response to the August 2019 HUD site monitoring visit. Mr. Long also explained that he has participated in a City census outreach committee that is trying to increase Rochester participation in the 2020 Census. Having accurate census data will help Rochester when seeking federal funding.
DISCUSSION OF COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS	The committee has decided to meet on the third Monday of the month, except for the joint meeting to be held in April with the Rochester Recreation and Arena Advisory Commission. The consensus of the committee was to meet at 6 p.m. instead of 7 p.m.
OTHER BUSINESS	There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Next Meeting – Monday, March 16th, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in Cocheco Conference Rooms in City Hall Annex (33 Wakefield Street)

Topics – FY 2020-2025 Draft Consolidated Plan Review, FY 2021 Draft Annual Action Plan Review, Projects Program Report