



TOWN OF WATERTOWN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

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Minutes of Watertown Housing Partnership Meeting June 16, 2020 6:00 PM, Virtual Meeting by Zoom and WCA-TV

Members In Attendance

Fred Reynolds (Chair), Cliff Cook, David Leon, Helen Oliver, Torey Dean, Jen VanCampen.
Non-members present: Laura Wiener, Gideon Schreiber (staff), Tony Palumba and Caroline Bays (Town Council), Elodia Thomas, Joan Martin.

Chair Fred Reynolds called the meeting to order.

I. Review of Draft Minutes

Minutes of Feb. 18, 2020 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

II. Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

Jen VanCampen described the program they have been running for about 12 communities. Eligibility is at 80% of median income. Amount of assistance is based on number of bedrooms (\$750 for 1 bedroom apt., \$950 for 2 bedroom apartment, \$1150 for 3 bedroom apartment), for up to 3 months. Applicants must show that they have reduced income as a result of Covid-19 pandemic.

Newton allocated \$2.5 mil. from CPA and CDBG CovidCARES. Belmont allocated \$250,000 from CPA. Newton got 240 requests for funds. Tony noted that 30 families have approached the Social Service Resource Specialist. Jen added that Watertown's unemployment rate for April was 11.9%, roughly 2400 people.

Marketing the program is a local responsibility. Jen noted that they have been doing a marketing period with an application deadline, followed by a lottery to determine the order in which grants are allocated. It could be September before money is actually disbursed.

David Leon asked if we could use CPA funds. Gideon Schreiber responded that we hadn't gone through the planning process to create a CPA Plan that would need approval by the Council. David asked if we could have a special process because these are unusual circumstances. Gideon didn't think that would be acceptable to the State.

Motion by Cliff Cook to allocate \$175,000 from the CDBG Program Income account, for an Emergency Rental Assistance Program that offers up to 3 months subsidy to renters at or below 80% of median income, to be administered by Metrowest Collaborative Development. Subsidy amounts recommended to be at a rate of \$750 for a 1 bedroom apartment, \$950 for a 2 bedroom apartment, and \$1150 for a 3 bedroom apartment. Vote unanimously approved.

Tony noted that the Town Council Committee on Human Services was meeting June 22 to discuss emergency rental assistance, and encouraged the Partnership members to attend.

Member items: Cliff noted that the HPP was awaiting staff review.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.