

December 14, 2022

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a regular meeting on this date at the Stonington Police Department at 5:30 p.m. Present were First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough, Selectwoman June Strunk and Selectwoman Debbie Motycka Downie. Members of the public were present. There was no press present.

(1) Call to Order

Ms. Chesebrough called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

(2) Pledge of Allegiance

(3) Public Hearing – 2022 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Update for FY 2020: Eastern CT Homeless Diversion Funds

Ms. Chesebrough opened the public hearing at 5:32 p.m.

Mr. Scott Umbel, Vice President of Community Impact for the United Way of Southeastern CT, provided an update stating that The Town of Stonington successfully closed on the FY 2020 CDBG Small Cities Homeless Diversion grant with the Department of Housing (DOH) on February 3, 2021 in the amount of \$350,000. An additional \$350,000 and extension through to December 31, 2022 was requested and approved December 15, 2021 by the Town of Stonington and executed by DOH March 2022.

The Town has positioned itself as the pass-through entity for this federal funding to all of Eastern CT. The grant period runs from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2022 but eligible for expenses back to July 1, 2020. As of September 30, 2022, the remaining balance is \$44,662. Additional funds for this contract are under review with the Department of Housing. This is the second round of Homeless Diversion funds for Eastern CT sponsored by the Town of Stonington with annual updates each fall.

The same five social services organization are working under the supervision of The United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, acting as the Program Administrator, to perform the homeless diversion activities. Those organizations are Always Home in Mystic, NL Homeless Hospitality Center in New London, Thames River Family Program, Noank Community Support Services in Noank and Access Agency in Killingly.

Because of these funds and the Town's commitment, these agencies are able to work in 30+ towns in Eastern CT. These funds support what's referred to as the "Front End" of the homeless system. Case Managers and Diversion Specialists perform the initial intake appointment, client assessment, and focus on diverting households from becoming homeless and entering a homeless shelter. These front-line staff then access funds made available through other grants for client assistance such as rent, utility, or other small financial supports that may prevent a household from becoming homeless. The agencies provide conflict resolution, mediation, housing stabilization, and sustainability supports including linkages to other community services.

Since the start of the project from July 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022 just seven diversion specialists across five social service agencies have diverted over 1,500 individuals from shelter.

This funding is only eligible to municipalities and not directly to social service agencies, nonprofits, or other organizations. Mr. Umbel noted that the Town of Stonington continues to be a champion for the future elimination of homelessness in Connecticut and added that it would not be possible without the support of Town leaders, Leanne Theodore Director of Human Services and James Sullivan Director of Finance.

What was once a pilot program in the State is now a critical element in preventing homelessness with small touchpoints and interventions rather than significant expenses involved in emergency shelter and other more intensive actions. The Town supported the launch of the first shelter diversion model in the state which has now been adopted across four additional jurisdictions under the similar municipal and community partnerships.

No residents spoke on the topic and no written testimony was submitted in advance.

Ms. Chesebrough closed the public hearing 5:43 p.m.

The Board reconvened the regular meeting at 5:43 p.m.

(4) Interview – Economic Development Commission

The Board interviewed Donald Fiore, Elsie Bisset and Jim Lathrop for the upcoming vacant seats on Economic Development Commission. Charles Glew, Hannah Creeley Cedermark and Jeffrey Light will be interviewed at a future date as they were unable to attend the meeting due to conflicts.

(5) Comments from the Public

None

(6) Approval of Minutes

- A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 9, 2022.
- A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the special meeting minutes of December 1, 2022.

(7) Correspondence

- Ms. Chesebrough took in correspondence from Charles Glew, Jim Lathrop, Hannah Creeley Cedermark and Jeffrey Light in the form of an application for the Economic Development Commission.
- Ms. Chesebrough took in correspondence from Paul Geise withdrawing his application to the Economic Development Commission.

(8) Appointment/Reappointment/Resignation

Reappointment – Tree Warden/Deputy Tree Warden

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to reappoint Margaret Jones as Tree Warden and Kathy Weinberger as Deputy Tree Warden.

(9) Old Business

None

(10) New Business

Request – Building Permit Fee Waiver for Stanton-Davis Homestead Museum

Mr. Brian McCormick, Vice President of the Stanton-Davis Homestead Museum, requested a building permit fee waiver of \$1,386.12 associated with a building project at the museum including the main house roof and attic.

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the building permit fee waiver of \$1,386.12.

Request – Assign Map 7, Block 1, Lot 44, Street Number 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58 Summer Time Circle, Pawcatuck, CT

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the request.

(11) Comments from the Selectmen

- Ms. Downie stated that the Mystic River Boathouse Park living shoreline final design should be completed in the coming weeks. An application will be going to Planning and Zoning regarding the park. Ms. Downie also gave an overview of the Flood Prevention, Climate Resilience and Erosion Control Board, Beautification Committee, Inland Wetlands and Waterfront Commission meetings she has attended. The water loop environmental assessment will be going to HUD and funds should be released in the near future.
- Ms. Strunk noted the discussion at the Police Commission meeting about the number of events occurring in Town and a new procedure being created around the issue.
- Ms. Chesebrough gave an overview of the third short term rental meeting that occurred on December 8th stating that a draft ordinance was presented to those who attended along with a table discussion guide that posed specific questions to the attendees about the draft ordinance. A fourth meeting will be held on this subject in January (date TBD). Abutting property owners who live near the Circus Lot will receive letters and a map of the proposed park concept to discuss their thoughts in advance of a broader future community meeting. The Stonington Veteran Monument Project continues to move forward with artists working on the installation that will be featured on the sides of the monument. Veteran interviews are underway and have been conducted by Stacey Haskell in conjunction with SEC-TV. The final interviews will be housed on the future dedicated website associated with the monument.

(12) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Stacey Haskell

Stacey Haskell

Recording Secretary