

November 8, 2023

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 5:38 p.m.

(2) Pledge of Allegiance

(3) Public Hearing – 2023 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Update for FY 2021: Eastern CT Homeless Diversion Funds

Ms. Chesebrough opened the public hearing at 5:46 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 2021 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, and this year a last and final amendment to increase funds to \$1,050,000 was executed March 15, 2023.

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, 2023 but eligible for expenses back to July 1, 2020. The remaining balance will be fully expended by November 22, 2023. This is the second round of Homeless Diversion funds for Eastern CT sponsored by the Town of Stonington. the last ran 2019 to 2020, with annual updates each Fall.

The same five social services organization are working under the supervision of The United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, who is acting as the Program Administrator, to perform the homeless diversion activities. Those organizations are Always Home in Mystic (supports at-risk families in New London Cty.), NL Homeless Hospitality Center in New London (at-risk adults in New London Cty.), Thames River Family Program (at-risk youth families in New London Cty.), Noank Community Support Services in Noank (at-risk youth individuals in New London Cty.), and Access Agency in Killingly (at-risk youth, adults, and families in Northeast CT)

Because of these funds and the Town of Stonington'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 October 2023 just seven diversion specialists across five social service agencies have diverted over 2,000 individuals from shelter including Stonington residents.

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. This project and critical support services would not be possible without the support of the Board of Selectmen, 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 of Stonington should be proud as they supported the launch of the first shelter diversion model in the state which has now been adopted across four additional jurisdictions under 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 at 5:55 p.m.

The Board reconvened the regular meeting at 5:55 p.m.

(4) Interview – Planning and Zoning Commission

The Board interviewed Lorraine Tamsky for the alternate seat on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

(5) Comments from the Public

- Mr. Bob O'Shaughnessy of Mystic shared his appreciation of Selectwoman Strunk and all that she did as liaison to the Board of Police Commissioners while he was the Chair.
- Chief Jay DelGrosso thanked Selectwoman Strunk for her support of the Stonington Police Department as well as in her role as liaison to the Board of Police Commissioners.
- Ms. Sara Baker Bailey of Mystic, Chair of the Democratic Town Committee, thanked Selectwoman Strunk for being an inspiration to many and a strong leader.
- Mr. Ben Tamsky of Mystic noted he was addressing the Board as a private citizen for the last time, shared his thoughts on why he believed the Board should consider appointing his daughter, Lorraine Tamsky, to the Planning and Zoning Commission. He also thanked Selectwoman Strunk for her service.

(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 October 25, 2023.

(7) Correspondence

- Ms. Chesebrough took in correspondence from Lorraine Tamsky in the form of an application for the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Ms. Chesebrough took in correspondence from Stephen Bessette who is interested in moving from an alternate to a regular member of the Economic Development Commission. She noted that members Kevin Bowdler and Suzanne Lane will not seek reappointment when their terms end on December 31st.

(8) Appointment/Reappointment/Resignation

Appointment – Planning and Zoning Commission

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to appoint MaryEllen Mateleska as an alternate member of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Appointment – Mystic Harbor Management Commission

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to appoint Patrick Herlihy as an alternate member of the Mystic Harbor Management Commission.

Appointment – Zoning Board of Appeals

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to appoint Mark Bancroft as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

(9) Old Business

Discussion – Complete Streets Policy

Members of the POCD Complete Streets subcommittee, Jennifer Lackner and Don Kluberanz, gave an overview of the policy. Ms. Chesebrough noted that staff as well as the Board of Selectmen had reviewed and suggested edits.

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the policy pending final review from the Town Attorney.

(10) New Business

Request – Street Number Assignment: Map 39, Block 2, Lot 3Q, Street Number 53 High Ridge Drive, Pawcatuck, CT 06379

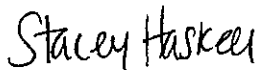
A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the request.

(11) Comments from the Selectmen

- Ms. Downie gave an overview of the Pawcatuck River Harbor Management Commission that she attended. She noted that the Flood Prevention, Climate Resilience and Erosion Control Board would be meeting and discussing working on a stormwater utility. She thanked Peter Anderson, Director of Operations and Facilities for Stonington Public Schools as he will be leaving the district for his leadership stating he was instrumental in improving communications with the school department. She thanked the Registrars and all of the volunteers who work at the polls.
- Ms. Strunk stated that the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center provides many services for Stonington residents at no cost and noted they provide many opportunities for senior including wellness, learning and social as well as transportation and lunches. Ms. Strunk thanked Ms. Chesebrough and Ms. Downie for the past four years serving as the first all-female Board of Selectmen noting her admiration for them both. She is looking forward to continuing to volunteer and serve the Town.
- Ms. Chesebrough and Ms. Downie thanked Selectwoman Strunk for her years of service to the Town of Stonington as a member of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Planning and Zoning Commission as well as in her liaison roles to many different Boards/Commissions including the Climate Change Task Force and Commission on Aging. They noted her knowledgeable, grounded, level-headed approach to the many issues that came before them and appreciate her years of service to the Town.

(12) Adjourn

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.



Stacey Haskell
Recording Secretary