



**Minutes**  
**Community Development Block Grant Committee**  
**Tuesday, June 23, 2020 – 5:00PM**  
**Health and Human Services – Community Room & Zoom**  
**303 W. Chapel Street**  
**Dodgeville, Wisconsin**

**Iowa  
County  
Wisconsin**

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***Any subject on this agenda may become an action item unless otherwise noted.***

1	Call to order. County Administrator called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.
2	Roll Call: Members Present: Jan Nankee, Sue Storti, and Shelley Miess Zoom: Jeff B, Angie Wright, Bruce Paull Absent: None Others Present: Larry Bierke, Craig Hardy, Supervisor Richter
3	Election of Chair: Bierke asked for nominations for Chair. Storti <u>moved</u> , Nankee seconded to nominate Miess as Committee Chair. Storti <u>moved</u> , Nankee seconded to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot. Motion carried.
4	Election of Vice Chair: Miess asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Storti <u>moved</u> , Miess seconded to nominate Nankee as Committee Vice-Chair. Nankee moved, Storti seconded to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot. Motion carried.
5	Election of Secretary: Miess asked for nominations for Secretary. Storti <u>moved</u> , Nankee seconded to nominate Storti as Committee Secretary. Storti moved, Nankee seconded to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot. Motion carried.
6	Agenda of 06/3/20: Nankee <u>moved</u> , Storti seconded to approve the agenda of June 23, 2020. Motion carried.

Open Public Hearing: Chair Miess opened the Public Hearing at 5:06 PM.

Storti moved, Nankee seconded to turn the floor over to County Administrator Larry Bierke and County Highway Commissioner Craig Hardy to manage the public hearing process. Motion carried.

- A) County Administrator Larry Bierke started the public hearing by distributing the Community Development –PFED brochure for the Committee members and audience to review. He noted that there was currently funding available in the CDBG-Public Facilities grant program and that a sample of eligible projects are noted on the brochure with applications due June 26, 2020. He further went over the national objectives of the CDBG program:
- 1- Grant funds must be utilized to benefit at least 51 percent LIM persons as determined by HUD Section 8 Income Guidelines, or
  - 2- Eliminate Slums and Blight, or
  - 3- Show an Urgent and Local Need
- B) Bierke went over the brochure and identified ideas where grant funding could be used and the types of projects that would meet the objectives of the CDBG Program. He spoke of the various programs available and gave examples of future project ideas.
- C) Bierke noted that there are community needs in the Avoca and Muscoda area to increase area incomes through job growth, new employment opportunities, and better public infrastructure.
- D) The Committee Chair next asked if anyone from the public had question for Bierke or if there were any other community needs they wanted to identify as a potential CDBG Project. Bierke read from some of the letters that were presented for the public hearing today.

Committee members shared their stories about Broadband and the need for better internet connectivity in the area.

Lisa Swaziek wrote a letter expressing concerns on the limited options for internet and how Satellite providers were not meeting the needs of the population. It was far too expensive, doesn't all access in poor weather, and was very unreliable.

Becky Miess noted that she has several children who cannot access videos needed for their Math class. That teachers are requiring the use of apps in the kids various classes and they don't have enough internet access to download or open the apps.

Bryann McGuire noted that the letter he emailed in for testimony took over ten minutes for one email to send with the speeds he had access to. He is frustrated with the need to spend money and the lack of service he's getting.

- E) Bierke went on to explain the grant proposal idea of meeting a community need identified through the installation of fiber optic cable that will serve the area. Bierke handed out a map of the project service area and then went over the budget. The project would lay fiber cable in the region and then broadcast the signal out wirelessly and bounce off of high silos were appropriate. An effort would be made to serve residents who lived in areas of the most need.

- F) Those present felt they had expressed their support and how the need for internet access was so strong. Bierke read from a few more letters submitted in support of broadband access.

Both School Districts impacted by the fiber line submitted letters explaining why access was so important.

Kathleen Whitmore wrote in to say that she has to subscribe to two separate internet providers, DishNetwork and CenturyLink. One of the two doesn't work virtually every day and every two weeks they are both down. She noted how important and extremely difficult it is to keep in touch with family and friends and feel connected while experiencing the COVID19 pandemic.

Kelly Miess noted that she can't do Zoom meetings or homework and ultimately her kids had to utilize paper handouts for school because they couldn't receive emailed handouts. Her kids don't have access or ability to do online schooling and are therefore disadvantaged compared to other residents of Wisconsin.

Leah Boebel also had a letter submitted that spoke to the recent CenturyTel expansion and how it really didn't serve anyone. Wants another option as existing providers are terrible.

Bierke next asked that we follow the same process and discuss a second proposal for a CDBG-CLOSE application and asked County Highway Commissioner, Craig Hardy to present to the group.

- A) Highway Commissioner Craig Hardy spoke on what the CDBG-CLOSE program was and how Iowa County became eligible for the program. He noted that there were currently \$568,943 available in the CDBG-CLOSE program that Iowa County was eligible to receive. He further went over the national objectives of the CDBG program:
  - 1- Grant funds must be utilized to benefit at least 51 percent LIM persons as determined by HUD Section 8 Income Guidelines, or
  - 2- Eliminate Slums and Blight, or
  - 3- Show an Urgent and Local Need
- B) Hardy handed out a county map showing Low to Moderate Income areas in comparison to highway improvements that were needed in Iowa County. Several projects matched up for funding opportunities. He then handed out a spreadsheet that noted what projects were eligible and to what extent the grants available would cover a project.
- C) Hardy noted that there are community needs in the Avoca and Muscoda area to increase area incomes through job growth and better public infrastructure. He would like to see an increase improvements in public infrastructure with better county roads.
- D) The Committee Chair next asked if anyone from the public had question for Commissioner Hardy or if there were any other community needs they wanted to identify as a potential CDBG Project. Chair Miess noted that the roads in the County were definitely in need for improvements. Many in the room were nodding their head in agreement.
- G) Hardy went on to explain the proposed idea of meeting a community need by improving County roads in the eligible areas of Iowa County.
- H) The following residents provided input regarding the proposed and other CDBG activities: The Committee discussed the public infrastructure improvement ideas.

8	Close Public Hearing: Nankee <u>moved</u> , Storti seconded to close the public hearing. Motion carried at 5:46 PM
9	Next Meeting Date: Next meeting will be set if a CDBG grant is awarded to host a public hearing after the project is completed.
10	Adjourn: Storti <u>moved</u> , Nankee seconded to adjourn. Motion carried at 5:47 PM.