

**Public Input Hearing
Shepherdstown Grant Committee
CDBG-CV Grant Opportunity
3.6.2021
3:00p.m.**

Attendees:

**Steve Pearson (Media: The Observer)
Mark Kohut (Board Member, Shepherdstown Shares)
Chris Stroeck (Committee Chair)
Mary Fortuna (Committee Member)
D.W. Gregory (Committee Member)
Julia and David Springer
Jan Hafer**

Welcome

Introductions

Overview

Chris Stroeck reviewed the purpose of the meeting and the basic details of the grant opportunity. Cares Act Funding, through the State of West Virginia and for COVID Relief is available to beneficiaries within the corporate limits of Shepherdstown. The grants are competitive and must benefit 100% persons who are low to moderate income for our town.

The deadline for submitting the applications has been extended to March 31st, 2021. There was a previous hearing to gain input from the community about existing needs that could be met with these available funds. There will be a third hearing at the end of March to review the completed applications. This hearing is to obtain input from the public about needs within the corporation. Specifically, food, housing, and utility insecurity. This committee has been communicating with Shepherdstown nonprofit Shepherdstown Shares and Catholic Charities. We are looking at applying for funding for two separate projects: food and other personal necessities through Shepherdstown Shares, and rent and/or utility relief for persons in danger of eviction or utility shut-off.

The first application under consideration is to seek funding for food and equipment for Shepherdstown Shares' food pantry, which was established in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. This would provide up to \$1,000 per month or \$12,000 total. The second application being considered is for rent, mortgage and utility assistance in partnership with Catholic Charities. This would provide up to \$5,000 per month or \$60,000 total. In both cases, the town would have to "float" the funds, reimburse the nonprofit partners, and apply for reimbursement from the state. At this time, the committee is not available of any applications for this funding being set forth by the County. Identifying need has been a challenge.

Comments/Questions

Jan Hafer: thanked the committee for this much needed effort, commented that residents in need could be identified with help from local churches. It was also acknowledged that materials left at laundromats, the post office, and the town hall could alert the public to available funding. There is also the town email list serve and possibly mailings to the water board list.

Dave Springer??: Thanked the committee, felt the funding is worth pursuing, withdrew from meeting because his interest is in properties and tenants outside the corporate limits.

Mark Kohut: The grant would help everyone, both in and outside of town limits, by allowing the pantry to focus resources on service expansion. Noted that Shepherdstown Shares does not turn anyone away.

Steve Pearson: mentioned that there had been a piece in the Observer about the possible extension of the eviction moratorium. It was noted that April would be the challenging period if the grant monies have not been awarded or disbursed yet but the moratorium has been lifted. It was discussed that the town's ability to "float" a certain amount of funding is a limitation on the amount of the "ask."

Mary Fortuna: Catholic Charities has been engaged to help in part with referral to any additional assistance for which applicants may be eligible.

Jan Hafer: asked about available funding assistance for businesses. It was noted that a goal of the committee, as possible, is to support education for the Shepherdstown business community about available funding and grant seeking best practices. Suggested the committee explore childcare assistance as another funding source.

It was noticed that in addition to the public hearings, need identification was explored through committee brainstorm, networking with contacts, advice and input from the mayor and town council, and consultation with Shepherdstown Shares.

The committee thanked Shepherdstown Shares and Catholic Charities for their input and assistance with the preparation of the grant application and for their service to the community.