

Minutes of the October 5, 2020
Special Meeting of the Yancey County Board Of Commissioners
Held at 6:30 pm in the Courtroom
Yancey County Courthouse, Burnsville North Carolina

Present at the special meeting held October 5, 2020 were Chairman Jeff Whitson, Commissioner Mark Ledford, Commissioner David Grindstaff, Commissioner Jill Austin, Planning and Economic Development Director Jamie McMahan, and Clerk to the Board Sonya Morgan. Commissioner Johnny Riddle was absent from the meeting.

Call to Order

Chairman Whitson called the meeting to order.

Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Whitson asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Grindstaff made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Austin seconded the motion. By unanimous vote the agenda was approved. (Attachment A)

Public Hearing for 2020 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application

Chairman Whitson opened the floor for a public hearing for the purpose of receiving citizen input on the submission of an application for the 2020 Community Development Block Grant funds for the Coronavirus Program. The CDBG funds will be used to help Yancey County prepare, prevent, and/or respond to the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 and will be designed to assist the low and moderate income residents of the County. No one spoke during the public hearing and no written comments were presented. Chairman Whitson asked for a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Grindstaff made a motion to close the public hearing with Commissioner Ledford seconding the motion. By unanimous vote the public hearing was closed. Next, the Board considered the Citizen Participation Plan describing how Yancey County will involve citizens in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the Community Development Block Grant program. (Attachment B) Chairman Whitson made a motion to adopt the Citizen Participation Plan for the CDBG grant with Commissioner Austin seconding the motion. By unanimous the motion was approved.


Adjournment

Having no further business, Commissioner Ledford made a motion to adjourn, with Commissioner Grindstaff seconding the motion. The Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn.


Approved and authenticated this the 12th day of October 2020.



Jeff Whitson, Chairman



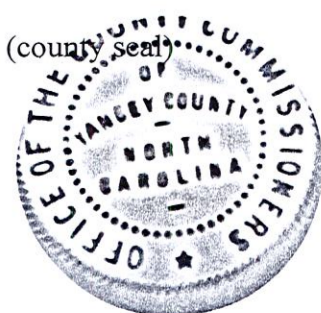
Mark Ledford, Vice Chairman



Jill Austin, Commissioner



Sonya Morgan, Clerk to the Board





David Grindstaff, Commissioner



Johnny Riddle, Commissioner

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN

This plan describes how Yancey County will involve citizens in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The funds must be used for projects which benefit low and moderate-income persons and aids in the elimination and prevention of slums and blight. The program is intended to assist governments in understanding neighborhood improvement programs. The regulations give ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of the program to local elected officials and require that citizens be given an opportunity to serve in a key advisory role to these elected officials.

SCOPE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Citizens will be involved in all stages of the CDBG program, including program implementation, assessment of performance and design of changes in the Citizen Participation Plan. There will be three (3) general mechanisms for their involvement:

1. To serve as an advisory committee to the project;
2. To attend or hold public hearings or community meetings; and
3. To provide individual citizen efforts in the form of comments, complaints or inquiries submitted directly to the Program Administrators or designated Town official.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Citizen participation in program implementation will occur primarily through consultation with Yancey County. The County will be asked to review and comment on specific guidelines for approved projects. They will also meet to review any program amendments, budget revisions and program modifications. All such changes will be discussed with the County and their comments considered prior to acting. If program amendments require approval from the North Carolina Department of Commerce, a public hearing shall be held, specifically on the amendment. Citizens may also be involved in implementation of projects specifically requiring citizen participation, such as self-help projects. Their roles will be defined as the project develops. Technical assistance will be available as needed.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Program assessment activities by citizens will occur in a variety of ways. A performance hearing will be held thirty to sixty (30 to 60) days prior to the start of planning for the next program year. The Program Amendment will be asked to provide citizen commentary for the Grantee Performance Report.

As a part of the orientation to the program offered at the public hearing, citizens will be invited to submit comments on all aspects of program performance through the program year. Comments should be submitted in writing to Lynn Austin, County Manager. She will respond in writing within ten (10) days. If the response is unsatisfactory, the complainant should write directly to Chairman of the Yancey County Board of Commissioners. He shall respond within ten (10) days.

If the citizen is still dissatisfied, he/she should write to the NC Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division/State CDBG Program, 4346 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4346, Attention: Citizen

Participation Matter. Program staff will also be available during normal business hours to respond to any citizen inquiries or complaints at 919-814-4663

The Citizen Participation Plan will be subject to annual review and proposed revision, to occur in the period between the performance hearing and the public hearing on the subsequent year's application.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical Assistance will be provided to citizen organizations and groups of low/moderate income persons or target area residents upon request to Yancey County. Such assistance will support citizen efforts to develop proposals, define policy and organize for the implementation of the program. It is expected that such assistance will be provided directly to the County in response to their request. Assistance could be provided in the form of local presentations, informational handouts, research of a specific issue or other short-term efforts.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Yancey County will also undertake public information efforts to promote citizen participation. These efforts will include the following:


1. Public Notice of all Public Hearings will be published in the non-legal section of the local newspaper at least five (5) days before the scheduled hearing. These notices will indicate the date, time, location, and topics to be considered. These notices will also be made available in the form of press releases, as a public service announcement to local radio stations and will be provided to churches within the target area of distribution.
2. Orientation Information will be provided at the first public hearing. The Program Administrator(s) will make a presentation which covers: (a) the total amount of CDBG funds available and the competitive basis for award; (b) the range of eligible activities; (c) the planning process and the schedule of meetings and hearings; (d) the role of citizens in the program and (e) a summary of other program requirements, such as the environmental policies, fair housing provisions and contracting procedures.
3. A Public File containing program documentation will be available for review at the Yancey County Courthouse during normal business hours. Included will be copies of the Application, Environmental Review Record, the Citizen Participation Plan and the Annual Performance Report. Other program documents are also available for citizen review on request at the Yancey County Courthouse consistent with applicable State and local laws regarding personal privacy and obligations of confidentiality.
4. Public Hearings an interpreter will be provided for all non-English speaking individuals and/or deaf individuals.
5. Public hearing accommodations and accessibility

Virtual Hearings - During a declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor or General Assembly, and if a local unit of general government is concerned about significant public health risks that may result from holding an in-person public hearings, the local unit of general

government may undertake a virtual public hearing (alone, or in concert with an in-person hearing) if:

- It allows questions in real time, with answers coming directly from the elected representatives to all "attendees." Therefore, members of the public must be entitled to participate and address the governing body during any telephonic or video-conference meeting.
- The governing body must post a written notice that gives the public a way to participate remotely, such as a toll-free dial-in number, and that includes an electronic copy of any agenda packet that officials will consider at the meeting.
- As with an in-person hearing, the grantee must select a virtual hearing method or platform that provides accessibility for persons with disabilities and limited English proficiency (LEP) to the greatest extent possible. These accommodations must be free to these populations.
- A governing body must provide the public with access to a recording of any telephonic or videoconference meeting.
- The local unit of government must document its efforts and the reason for them.
- Additional specific communication requirements and requirements for conducting remote meetings can be found in Article 1A of Chapter 166A and Article 33C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.

ADOPTED, this the 5th day of October, 2020.


Chairman

ATTEST:


Clerk to the Board

