

TOWN OF CONCORD PUBLIC HEARING
 Re: Community Development Block Grant

October 10, 2019
 6:30 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED BY CLYDE M. DRAKE, SUPERVISOR

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: CLYDE M. DRAKE, SUPERVISOR
 JAMES M. KREZMIEN, COUNCILMAN
 KENNETH D. ZITTEL, COUNCILMAN
 WILLIAM F. SNYDER, III, COUNCILMAN
 PHILIP DROZD, COUNCILMAN

ALSO PRESENT: DARLENE G. SCHWEIKERT, Town Clerk
 DENNIS DAINS, Hwy Supt
 BRIAN F. ATTEA, Town Attorney
 DENISE CISZAK, Bookkeeper

KELLEN M. QUIGLEY, Springville Times
 GEORGE DONHAUSER
 LINDA GELLATLY

MAX BORSUK, Springville Journal
 MARY JANE MIESS

Supervisor Drake opened the hearing at 6:30 p.m. Town Clerk Schweikert had published the Notice of Public Hearing in the Springville Times on September 27, 2019. The Public Hearing Notice was posted on the signboard at the Town Hall and on the Town's website: townofconcordny.com on September 20, 2019.

Supervisor Drake advised that currently one of the things that has been funded for the Town is the Rural Transit Van. Supervisor Drake asked those in attendance if anyone had any other suggestions that the Town should be requesting from CDBG. It was noted that last year the Town of Concord income levels raised up enough that the Town no longer qualifies for grants other than something to do with Senior Citizens. The Rural Transit Van is used by several different towns. In the Town, this van is basically used to drive people around the Village to their appointments. The Town has their own van that takes people to medical appointments; that van puts on about 45,000 miles a year just running back and forth into Buffalo.

Supervisor Drake asked for comments. Bookkeeper Ciszak addressed the Board. She does the coordinating for the Town of Concord Senior Van. It goes anywhere within Erie County. Rural Transit has not been as aggressive as they could to get volunteers and until recently the Rural Transit Service was only available two days a week: Mondays and Fridays. That being said that was three days a week that the Town Van has to try to fill in. There were many times that the Town drivers would have to come back from Williamsville/Buffalo just to take a person from the new apartments on Waverly Street to a local doctor's office or the hospital. As a taxpayer, she finds that very unacceptable. When she started with the Town in 1992 that service ran 5 days/week and they could have had three vans running. Rural Transit has made it very hard for seniors to sign up for that van; taking as much as 6-8 weeks to have their application approved. That is unacceptable too; nothing in that application process should take that long. When Bookkeeper Ciszak brought it to Rural Transit's attention, there was always had a song and a dance. She thinks this should be the year that the song and dance stops. Rural Transit should be accountable to the residents of the Town and she feels it is a great service but it is not being run properly. Councilman Krezmien advised that the Town is not getting their money out of it. Bookkeeper Ciszak finds it very wrong that the Town drivers that the Town pays back to pick up their slack. It wasn't until recently that they got another part time gentleman that would go and drive in the morning to fill in on Wednesday and Thursday; this is still not helping because residents can't always get morning appointments. This means that if a senior has to go to a local doctor appointment for a one o'clock appointment, that van is already closed and that appointment now falls on the Town Van. She feels that this needs to be addressed with the Board that is in charge of Rural Transit. As a taxpayer, this is not acceptable.

Councilman Krezmien asked if it was a volunteer driver problem; Bookkeeper Ciszak says yes, that is what they are saying. The Village is a three-mile square area to cover and most of the residents that are being serviced by the Rural Transit Van are the Village residents. There are very few that the Van goes outside the Village to service. Bookkeeper Ciszak noted that the Rural Transit Van services seniors and low-income residents. Bookkeeper Ciszak noted that luckily the Town of Concord Senior Van drivers step up to help with these situations.

Councilman Drozd feels that this is a complete management at the top matter and it needs to be addressed to get it back to somewhat where it was in the past. Bookkeeper Ciszak noted that she does not feel that the Town is getting what they are paying for this service. Councilman Krezmien questioned if it was because the Town has our own van picking up the slack that they are just letting it go? Bookkeeper Ciszak said personally she thought so. Supervisor Drake advised that last month at the Association of Erie County Governments meeting Rural Transit presented. Afterwards he went up to Brenda Henderson, Executive Director of Rural Transit Service, and told her that we had serious problems in Concord and it needs to be fixed. She said it was not having enough volunteers for driving and working in the office; but she promised that she would advertise more. Supervisor Drake suggested that she reach out to the churches for volunteers; that's where she may find volunteers. She was to send Supervisor Drake something to give to the churches to put in their bulletins and it has not yet been received. Supervisor Drake then followed up with Mayor Krebs and explained the situation and the ranking of the CDBG projects; that we are not getting our money's worth out of the Rural Transit Van. At that point they were only running two days a week and they were shutting down early so that they would not have to take people to the nutrition site-pick them up after. Mayor Krebs also called Brenda Henderson as well and she made a commitment to him that one of their drivers was coming back. Bookkeeper Ciszak advised that the driver leaves at 11:30 a.m. so he can't take anyone to the nutrition site; Tuesday they are still closed; the drivers that volunteer on Mondays and Fridays will make sure the residents at the nutrition site get home. The gentleman that took over Thursday has decided to stay until 1 p.m. now so that the residents can get home from the nutrition site. Bookkeeper Ciszak noted that the Town is trying to get the people to the Senior Center and also to their medical appointments; and to get back as well. Supervisor Drake noted that if we don't rank the Rural Transit Van, that it may leave town. Supervisor Drake noted that the Town will need to keep pressure on them. There is a Board of Directors; one member is Gary Eppolito so the Town will need to lean on him too; maybe write Mr. Eppolito a letter asking for his assistance. The Town has one of the oldest vans in service. Mary Jane Miess volunteered to help the Town and speaking with Brenda Henderson. Supervisor Drake noted that if the Rural Transit Service doesn't ask for volunteers, they will not find volunteers. Bookkeeper Ciszak knows of someone who wanted to volunteer and she was never called back.

The Public Hearing remained open until 6:45 p.m. No one else addressed the Board.

Motion by Councilman Krezmien, seconded by Councilman Zittel, to close the hearing at 6:45 p.m. Councilmen Krezmien, Zittel, Snyder & Drozd; Supervisor Drake, voting aye. Carried.



Darlene G. Schweikert
Town Clerk