The Legislature of Rockland County

NANCY LOW-HOGAN
Legislator, District 17

Chairwoman, Economic Development Committee
Vice-Chairwoman, Environmental Committee

Members Present:	**Members Absent:**	**Others Present:**	
Leg. N. Low-Hogan, Chair	Leg. I. Schoenberger	Leg. A. Paul	N. Doliner
Leg. H. Cornell, Vice Chair		E. Yeger, Esq.	S. Powers
Leg. J. Meyers		T. Vanderbeek	A. Miller
Leg. A. Wieder		R. Nagabundi	D. Schuetz
Leg. D. Jobson			
Leg. C. Carey			

MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2014

ADOPTION OF MINUTES, FEBRUARY 26, 2014 AND MARCH 26, 2014

MOTION TO ADOPT: **UNAN**
JOBSON/CAREY

1. REF. #5128 - *DISCUSSION ITEM:* OPERATIONAL REVIEW OF COUNTY DEPARTMENT FUNCTIONS AND PROGRAMS
(HON. NANCY LOW-HOGAN, LEGISLATURE)

- PLANNING

Attached is roster prepared by Legislative Fiscal Analyst Nicole Doliner on salaries, revenues, local share and state and federal revenue streams. Mr. Vanderbeek and Ms. Arlene Miller spoke about the services provided by the Planning Dept. including state-of-the-art technical assisitance in the areas of comprehensive land use and transportation planning.

- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Please see attached overview of programs administered by the Community Development Office as presented by Commissioner R. Nagabundi. Also attached is information prepared by Fiscal Analyst Nicole Doliner including Community Development Block Grants, Home Investment Partnership Program, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS, Emergency Solutions Grant, Continuum of Care, Economic Development Loan Program and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.

MOTION TO ADJOURN : **7:20 PM** **UNAN**
CAREY/MEYERS

"The Rockland County Legislature is committed to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To that end, the Legislature is committed to creating an accessible environment for all. To request accommodations that you may require, please call Damaris Alvarez at 845-638-5248 (845-708-7899 for TTY/TDD). Please request these accommodations three (3) days in advance so that we can seek to meet your needs."

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Overview of Programs administered by the CD Office

The CDBG process consists of annual entitlement applications that are distributed to municipalities and not for profit organizations interested in obtaining a federal grant through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, the HOME Investment Partnership Program or the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program. Upon final approval of project eligibility grant announcements are made and projects are included in the yearly Action Plan. In accordance with our Citizen Participation plan, public hearings are held in each consortium community. It is encouraged that citizens participate in the development of the Consolidated Plan, Action Plan and in the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), comments are forwarded to the Office of Community Development.

CDBG – On an ongoing basis, municipalities and not for profit organizations are assisted in administering their grant. National objective data is collected with each voucher submission, this data is then reported to HUD. Throughout the grant period there are annual and semi-annual reports due to HUD that ensure that certain requirements are being met by the grantee and the sub-grantees. In addition there are labor inspections performed at worksites, site visit project monitoring of files, and reminders sent to sub-grantees regarding grant monies. Subgrantees are encouraged to voucher at least monthly in order to maintain their programs and to meet federal spending and reporting requirements. Any organization that is interested in receiving a grant is invited to request a meeting to discuss eligibility of their proposed project.

ESG - Homeless Prevention (576.103)
Funds will be used to prevent the initial occurrence of homelessness by providing legal counsel to eligible tenants who are subject to eviction proceedings and cases will be settled by paying the rent arrears to avoid eviction.

Rapid Re-housing Assistance (576.104)
For families exiting an emergency shelter or transitional housing program listed on Rockland County's Housing Inventory Chart based on program requirements, and are unable to pay full monthly rent on an ongoing basis. A rental subsidy will be provided for no more than 24 months depending on case circumstances.

Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services (576.105)
Housing-related case management will be provided to assist families with housing relocation and stabilization services to include: rental application fees, last month's rent if necessary to obtain housing for a program participant, moving costs such as truck rental or hiring a moving company, and assisting in developing a housing plan with the family and monitored by the case manager. The goal will be to insure that at the end of the supplement period the family will have the means to pay their full monthly rent. Security/Utility Deposit and Utility payments will be available to those families who have exhausted all available benefits for security/utility deposits and utility payments will be offered assistance if they are need a deposit to secure housing or are faced with a shut off.

Short-term and Medium-term Rental Assistance (576.106)
For families facing eviction, already in the court system, who due to loss of income have rental arrears and are unable to pay full monthly rent on an ongoing basis. A rental subsidy will be provided for no more than 24 months of assistance during a 3-year period, depending on case circumstances. The subsidy amount will be determined following Section 8 HCVP guidelines.

HOME - HOMEBUYER ASSISTANCE LOAN PROGRAM
Under this program the County lends qualifying households $7,500.00 or 5% of the purchase price, the lesser of the two, to help pay a portion of the down payment and/or closing costs. The total amount the County will lend is based on the total amount needed to "close the gap" in financing. In addition, the prospective homeowner is required to "match" our loan amount with their money, another grant or a gift from a relative. The county places an affordability period of 15 years on all assisted properties, but forgives the loan from years 7-15 at a 10% annual incremental decrease. The loan is totally forgiven after 15 years.

Since the program's inception we have assisted 200+ new homeowners with loans totaling $1,610,240.50. During program year 2012 we assisted 1 new homeowner with loans totaling $8,335.00. The program continues to be more and more difficult to qualify for. A family of four, earning the maximum of $68,700.00 a year would qualify for a mortgage of $206,100.00.

With average home sale prices dropping but still above $400,000.00, qualifying has become almost impossible. Qualified clients have increasingly been purchasing condominiums, needing co-signers to loans, and receiving hefty gifts in order to achieve the American dream of buying a home.

TENANT BASED RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
The program guidelines for the Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program are the same as the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Housing Choice Voucher Program. Annual recertifications, to include HQS inspections, are performed to ensure program eligibility and compliance. The assistance is for one year, with the maximum time a person or family can receive assistance being a total of 24 months. To be eligible, the person or family must meet all Housing Choice Voucher enrollment guidelines.

The HOME Tenant Assistance Program assisted qualified clients with rental subsidies in 2013. The program requires assisted families to pay the total tenant payment as determined in accordance to Section 8 Housing choice Voucher regulations.

Continuum of Care – The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and State and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Supported Housing
The Office of Community Development was awarded a new Supportive Housing Grant to assist 10 homeless families with permanent housing opportunities for disabled. The grant will utilize the same partnership with the RCOCD, the Department of Social Services and Legal Aid Society of Rockland, Inc., providing case management and other services.

HMIS

In May 2002, the county launched its work on implementing the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). The system tracks the county's homeless population and provides services and referrals. A vendor, Foothold Technology was selected and the program implemented in July 2003. Full implementation has been completed as the Rockland County Continuum of Care sought $220,000.00 and was funded in the FY2005 Continuum of Care and renewed every year since for $74,000.

Rockland County Economic Development Program - The Office of Community Development was approved for $1,867,000 from the Section 108 Loan program. The Section 108 Loan would established a new program, a for Micro-loan Program of up to $100,000. The program has approximately 7 loans approved and closed. RCOCD submitted a new loan in December 2013 and approval was just received by HUD.

HOPWA

The County of Rockland will utilize $559,447 to finance a tenant based assistance program as in prior years with the client/household portion of the rent payment, plus the Department of Social Services shelter allowance for qualifying households. This leveraged financing is estimated to provide approximately $800,000.

The County will continue to operate a tenant based assistance program with legal and counseling services, modeled after the Section 8 Housing Voucher Choice program with two modifications. The County of Rockland will also utilize funds for a second HIV\AIDS housing complex with a tenant based rental assistance program, bringing the total count of assisted persons and their families to 25.

Determination of eligibility, screening and assistance in finding suitable apartments is done through the coordinated efforts of the Department of Health. The Office of Community Development handles enrollments, recertifications, and day-to-day client services.

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM

The Office of Community Development is the Local Administrator for the New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal Statewide Housing Choice Voucher Program. The program currently has 1082 vouchers and 185 families on the Wait List. The Wait list was opened for pre-applications on May 1, 2007 for a 90-day period and closed on July 31, 2007. A lottery was held for placement of 1350 pre-applications selected. RCOCD anticipates opening the Wait List in late 2014 or early 2015 based upon available funding and vouchers.

MEMORANDUM

To: Hon. Nancy Low-Hogan Chair, Economic Development

From: Nicole Doliner, Fiscal Analyst

Date: May 8, 2014

Re: Operational Reviews: Community Development

The Office of Community Development serves the people of Rockland County by obtaining federal and state grants to provide affordable housing and improve the quality of life to low and moderate income residents in Rockland in an ethical, courteous, timely and cost-effective manner.

Community Development Block Grants

This program provides grants funds to local and State governments to be used to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing with a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities to assist low- and moderate-income residents.

The CDBG program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. CDBG is an important tool for helping local governments tackle serious challenges facing their communities. The CDBG program has made a difference in the lives of millions of people and their communities across the Nation.

Home Investment Partnership Program

A Federal grant program designed to help jurisdictions expand the supply of decent and affordable rental and ownership housing for low and very low income persons.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS

The HOPWA program provides housing assistance and supportive services for low-income people with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Emergency Solutions Grant

The purpose of the ESG program is to assist individuals and families quickly regain stability in permanent housing after experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness.

Continuum of Care

Policies designed to address the critical problem of homelessness that include a coordinated community-based process of identifying needs and building a system to address those needs.

Economic Development Loan Program

Economic Development Loan programs to assist local business in expansion, job creation and retention.

Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program

A Federal program that provides rental assistance to low-income families who are unable to afford market rents.

Attached is a roster of current employees.

Salary and Benefits account for 86% of the department's expense budget.
The Department has no local share as total revenue is equal to total expense.

Included is a history of actual revenue for the last ten years.

CC: Hon. Alden Wolfe, Chairman to the Legislature
Laurence O. Toole, Clerk to the Legislature
Mary Widmer, Deputy Clerk to the Legislature

MEMORANDUM

To: Hon. Nancy Low-Hogan, Chair, Economic Development

From: Nicole Doliner, Fiscal Analyst

Date: May 8, 2014

Re: Operational Reviews: Planning Department

The mission of the Planning Department is to protect and enhance the quality of life for the residents of Rockland County by providing superior, innovative, professional expertise and state-of-the-art technical assistance in the areas of comprehensive land use and transportation planning.

Attached is a roster for the Planning Department.

Salary and benefits account for 73% of the total expenses of the Planning Department. Allocations account for 18% of the total expenses. The remaining expense is for contractual accounts. Maintenance agreements in the amount of $125,000 is the largest expenditure in this category, The Planning Department has GIS programming which requires yearly maintenance fees to keep it current.

The Planning Department derives revenue from Central Service allocations, expenses charged to other departments for work done by the Planning Department. Central Service Intra-fund Revenue is no longer recorded as revenue starting in 2010. Central Service Inter-fund Revenue was recorded at a high of $1.7 million in 2010 and is no longer recorded as revenue. The 2014 revenue is budgeted at $84,900.

Local share for this department grew dramatically starting in 2011. Since the expenses for this department are primarily personnel and benefits (74%), reducing local share will have to be achieved by increasing revenue.

State and Federal revenue streams have fluctuated over the years. Congestion Mitigation was as high as $648,000 in 2008 and has disappeared since 2010. Federal Transportation Aid with a high of $612,000 in 2010 is budgeted at $50,000 in 2013.

The Planning Department is tied to the Transportation Department with one Commissioner heading both departments. Personnel have been transferred between the two departments over the years. An explanation as to how all these employees work together and how revenue is determined for each department is something the department should explain.

CC: Hon. Alden Wolfe, Chairman to the Legislature
Laurence O. Toole, Clerk to the Legislature
Mary Widmer, Deputy Clerk to the Legislature